

WOMEN AND SUBJUGATION: AN EVALUATION OF FEMINIST RHETORIC IN
SELECTED NOVELS BY MARY KAROORO OKURUT, CHIMAMANDA NGOZI
ADICHIE, UNITY DOW, ELIESHI LEMA AND KALENI HIYALWA

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ABSTRACT

This study is an examination of feminist rhetoric in selected novels by African women fiction writers namely *The Official Wife* by Mary Karooro Okurut, *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Screaming of the Innocent* by Unity Dow, *Parched Earth* by Elieshi Lema and *Meekulu's Children* by Kaleni Hiyalwa. The focus was to evaluate women fiction writers' perspectives on social, economic and political subjugation of women and how they employ persuasive tools in their writing to persuade the readers. The study was primarily a qualitative, desktop research where a total of five novels were purposefully selected and analysed. The analysis used Aristotelian proofs of persuasion and invitational rhetoric theories. The Aristotelian theory is used to show how the selected novels employ persuasive arguments in articulating the social, economic and political oppression of women. Invitational rhetoric theory assists in determining how the novels promote the idea of equality, immanent value and self-determination in dialogic contexts. This study contributes to the understanding of feminist rhetoric, and recognises the presence of women rhetors who in history, have been ignored.

Based on the findings of the selected novels, it is revealed that patriarchal settings are the reasons for women's subjugation in different societies. Male dominated institutions make it challenging for women to make their contributions as they desire. It is shown that women characters in the selected novels are conscious of the oppression they undergo, but some allow it to advance due to economic reasons and fear of breaking cultural norms. Others are not deterred by societal conventions, but rather are strong challengers of patriarchy. Remarkably, the study found out that even as women are striving for self recognition, they are willing to work together with male counterparts.

The study further indicates that women employ persuasive techniques in articulating their plights. Women characters provide evidence to support the validity of the arguments made in voicing the injustice of patriarchal societies. The logical proofs presented evoke emotions when the audience learns the kind of hardships they face at the hands of their male counterparts. Furthermore, the study concludes that women characters in the selected novels adopt strategic agency to combat patriarchal settings that oppress and silence them and this makes their departments credible, manifesting Aristotle's proofs of persuasion. It has also been found that education seems to be the key to economic, political and social freedom to women and that

without it some women tend to depend on their spouses and in return give them hegemonic power to subjugate them further. In addition, this study reveals that invitational rhetoric promotes equality, immanent value and self determination of both genders.

The study recommends that future studies use the same theoretical frameworks in combination with the reader-response theory to examine feminist rhetoric to determine how readers are impacted by novels. Future studies should be conducted to underscore the importance of employing invitational rhetoric in conversations to enhance equality, self-determination and immanent value of all participants in conversations.

Key words: feminism, rhetoric, patriarchy, subjugation, equality, economic, political, social, freedom, perspectives

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to our beloved brother, Petrus Mwetulundila and our parents: Elizabeth Nangolo and Elifas Shikongo Mwetulundila.

DECLARATION

I, Rauna Mwetulundila, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any institution of higher education.

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Rauna Mwetulundila

Date

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

This study aimed to evaluate the feminist rhetoric in five selected novels by African women fiction writers namely *Meekulu's Children* (2000) by Kaleni Hiyalwa, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Official Wife* (2003) by Mary Karooro Okurut, *The Screaming of the Innocent* (2002) by Unity Dow and *Parched Earth* (2001) by Elieshi Lema. These writers use fiction to express African female oppression in the private and public spheres emanating from patriarchy and colonialism. The writers realised the need for an agency to speak out on behalf of other women to dissolve their subjugation so that both genders can contribute equally in the private and public spheres. Their construction of literary voices is a way of discussing and sabotaging the patriarchal society of oppression. Kivai (2010) states that African female writers like Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Ama Ata Aidoo, among others, have written stories seeking to eliminate women's marginal positions, and that their texts give the courage to the readers to expose subjugation and inequality. It is the aim of these writers to pronounce that there should be economic, social and political equality between men and women. An African woman wants to escape the home confinement and exercise power and authority in her society so that she can actively participate in the public sphere. It is advantageous to have autonomous power because one can reach desired goals. For this reason, some women writers, as part of the "dominated individuals or groups are in perpetual search for forms of resistances, consciously and unconsciously, actively and passively" (Odiemo-Munara, 2008, p. 3). It is the aim of this study to discuss the perspectives that these writers employed to challenge the dominant norms that marginalise and prevent women reaching their full potential.

According to Emenyonu (as cited in Ugwanyi, 2017), as a social movement, feminism spread its wings beyond the margins of the Western world, including the interiors of Africa. However, African women refuse to treat feminism as a collective worldly phenomenon because Western feminism seems to be anti-male, which is not the case in an African context. African feminism does not work against men but rather accommodates them in order to understand the plight of women and attain equality together (Sadek, 2014). Ogunyemi (1996) and Kolawole (1997) consider African women writing as womanistic rather than feministic because they support complementarity. Ugwanyi (2017) points out that feminism differs according to culture; the scope of feminism in the West is different from the African concept even though their goals are the same - correcting the stereotypical representation in work by men as well as struggling for equality with men.

Male dominance over women is revealed in the family set-up and how cultures and traditions are prearranged. This has resulted in depriving women access to power to exercise their actualities by contributing to the social, economic and political spheres. Some women have been limited to household roles of being mothers and wives so their contribution to the public sphere has been minimal. However, Kabira and Burkeywo (2016) state that African women have been speaking for themselves through literature, and in this way they validate the meanings of being female. Their literature can no longer be ignored, therefore their contributions started to be appreciated. In their fictional works, they exhibit the changing roles of African women in their effort to reach self-actualisation and contribute to discourses on marriage, love, motherhood and nation building by bringing their experiences to the mainstream discourses and offering new perspectives (Kabira & Burkeywo, 2016, p. 26).

Marriage has been seen as the centre of oppression to some, be it either physical or psychological oppression. In some societies, couples are expected to live according to the set of cultural norms that might not be favourable to those involved in these marriages. Victor (2013, p. 53) points out that unfavourable social and psychological factors may lead to spousal abuse; a situation in a marriage whereby one partner in the marriage becomes a punching bag and that this can easily break the union. The punching bags are commonly women because in some African societies they are considered as submissive, emotional and subordinate. Bouziani (2015) states that women have been shouldering patriarchal domination for many years, and that African women started to shape and change their destinies radically through literature. They have questioned the set-up of African society that gives men hegemonic power to control women in marriage. Thus, this study looked at how the marriage institution treats women in some African contexts in which the set norms of the traditions play a big role in women subjugation.

Moreover, while many women have been excluded from political participation, recently Africa has seen a rapid increase of women participation in political structures. There are various interventions that women advocate to accelerate the participation of women. Tripp (1999, p. 75) states the improvement in educational opportunities for girls and women as one of the factors that has influenced the participation of women in politics. Tripp (1999) outlines that education has empowered many women to join or form political parties. It has led women to compete with men in power at various levels with varying degrees. Ndlovu and Mutale (2013) note that despite the fact that African women's political participation has increased tremendously; there is still a gap to be filled for equality to be realised. This inequality is visible to women; hence the some texts of the women focused on in this study have highlighted existing participation of women in politics and ways in which it can be improved to ensure fair representation for both genders and

how this can be maintained. The study discusses the trend of women's political participation and the factors that contribute to an increase in women's participation in politics.

Religion is one of the instruments that influence the subjugation of women. According to Tripp (1999, p. 76) some religious beliefs and values are sexist and patriarchal in structure and continuously seek to suppress women. Most religions have patriarchal views of the relationship between genders and this has made it difficult for women to fully participate in affairs affecting their societies. Patriarchy has been taught through religion at church, where people are taught that God created man to rule the world and everything in it and that it was the work of women to help men perform these tasks; to obey and to always assume a subordinate role in relation to a powerful man. What is taught in church is used by some men to validate their dominant position and to justify keeping women in an inferior position in society. Another purpose of this paper is to look at how the selected women writers interrogate the state of African men in Christianity who have one leg in Christianity and another leg in traditional beliefs.

This study came about because it was realised that a gap exists and that there is a need for a rhetorical analysis of women's feminist literary works as a means of persuasion. Ullen (2016, p. 142) indicates that literary studies have shown little interest in pursuing rhetorical analyses because rhetoric and literature have come to be seen as contrasting rather than complementary practices. According to Whitehead (2007, p. 1) the subject (rhetoric) needs to attract rhetorical critics to examine the novel as a vehicle of persuasion. "To increase communication about the novel as source of persuasion is important because fictive worlds exert influence beyond that of aesthetics" (Whitehead, 2007, p. 1). When rhetorical critics apply rhetoric to fiction, they look at the novel as an instrument for communication; therefore, it is important to look at how the novel persuades the readers with the arguments made by the writer. This is in line with what Booth

(1983) alluded to when he says novels are rhetorical, not necessarily that they persuade us to do what the text implies, but as an instrument where the author tries to convey his/her vision to the readers and to persuade them of its realness. For Burke, “the rhetorical nature of literature must be seen in the light of its function as a social act and as a form of rhetorical discourse among others” (Ullen, 2016, p. 143). This means the writers of these novels reflected on what was happening in their societies, and use the literary form of communication as a persuasive tool to speak for the subordinated group.

Matos (2015) indicates that women’s rhetorical contributions are still overlooked in the field of rhetoric. Furthermore, Matos (2015) shows how the rhetorical movement has little scholarship that analyses and critiques modern discourse about women’s rights in public discourses. This is not a surprise because the rhetorical tradition has a long history of excluding female or feminine ways of speaking (Kuypers, 2009, p. 259). Kuypers (2009) argues that sometimes this was done either by making public address unavailable to women through systematic discrimination or by refusing to recognise the many women who took to the podium to such an extent that women would even reach a highly educated audience by translating their erudition through the words of men. However, Gale (2000) argues that women rhetors have been in existence; they were just not recognised. Gale (2000) indicates that by means of secondary sources, fifth century BCE Aspasia of Miletus for example, provides one of the earliest examples of women’s use of alternative delivery method; her work has been delivered to the audience in the form of writing, for none of her work was delivered in primary sources. It is the intention of this study to recognise the rhetoric of women’s fiction that has been used as a weapon to invade the rhetorical battlefield that has been occupied and dominated by men.

In order to understand the complexities of the selected novels (why they are written the way they are) the rhetorical strategies have to be taken into consideration. It is the job of the rhetorician to establish what the literary text seeks to persuade the readers of, how it does so and why (Ullen, 2016, p. 146). In this study, the researcher discusses how the construction of gender is used as a means of oppression and how that process can be challenged and resisted. It is hoped that this study would facilitate the understanding of feminist rhetoric to expose the various ways women voice their exclusion, suppression and victimisation in social, economic and political settings. This means that the arguments women make to voice these subjugations and how they overcome them are the central point of this study. Therefore, these arguments are presented in Aristotle's three distinct appeals of persuasion: logos, ethos and pathos.

According to Murthy and Ghosal (2014), persuasion is possible with three appeals; the speaker should be able to create logical reasoning with his/her character, and to persuade the emotions of the audience while formulating his/her discourses. With the audience in mind, the speaker will subsequently bring the right impact. Murthy and Ghosal (2014) further state that it is generally believed that rhetoric is the art of mere persuasion but according to Aristotle it is a tool that establishes what is just and true. Rhetoric deals with situations and circumstances with concrete backgrounds. Although the rhetorical tradition had been embedded in spoken form, especially speeches, it is now extended to be used as an analysis in literary works, as emphasised by Burke (as cited in Keith and Lundberg, 2006) who argues that rhetoric may be found in everything we do. It is very difficult to evaluate how the selected novels directly affect the readers; therefore, the study examined how these writers try to persuade the readers of the existence of patriarchal society and how they can subvert it.

Nevertheless, Foss and Griffin (1995) equate the persuasion of Aristotle's rhetoric to violence as it attempts to change the listeners to the viewpoint of the speaker. Gearhart (as cited in McPeters, 2017, p. 4) also urges for "a feminist rendering of rhetoric that repudiates control and domination. She cautions that rhetoric be translated into more productive and constructive modes of communication and modes associated with the womanisation of rhetoric". Gearhart rejects the rhetoric of domination and acknowledges the form of rhetoric that appreciates everybody involved in the communication. It is from this point of view that Foss and Griffin (1995) offer their proposal for invitational rhetoric as an alternative to rhetoric of persuasion, suggesting that it is a non-patriarchal mode of communication rooted in the feminist principles of equality, self-determination and immanent value.

Foss and Griffin (1995) suggest that invitational rhetoric differs from efforts to win over or advocate the correctness of a single position and is a multifaceted issue. In invitational rhetoric, the aim is not to change people but to create an environment where mutual understanding can occur among the participants. However, invitational rhetoric has not been embraced by a number of critics who question its effectiveness in arguments. Ryan and Natalle (2001) view invitational rhetoric as a non-violent perspective with a dialogic structure which is appealing but it remains criticised by many scholars. They believe that invitational rhetoric suffers from misinterpretation of its epistemological foundation and as a result it ends up not being used as a useful dialogic communication or alternative rhetoric tool (Ryan & Natalle, 2001).

The intention of this study is to examine invitational rhetoric in selected women's fiction that offers perspectives that can assist in alleviating hegemonic patriarchy in societies. It is used as a weapon to invade the rhetorical battlefield that has been dominated by men. Invitational rhetoric focuses on practises that do not aim to persuade but create an understanding so that differences

may be eliminated. The creation of understanding is underscored in a conversational way of communicating in order to maintain the participation of people involved in the conversation. This approach is an option that can be chosen to make social changes that embrace both genders.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate feminist rhetoric in selected novels written by African women fiction writers. African women's writing has flourished in the 21st century and these writers have interrogated practices and institutions which are patriarchally constructed (Bouziani, 2015). Patriarchy is a socio-political system that insists that males are dominant, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and are endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak, and to maintain that dominance through terrorism and violence (Hooks, 1984, p. 1). Matos (2015, p. 1) indicates that globally, in the period 2010 to 2014 women's share of the population ranged from 49% to 53% in each country, but in most cases women do not enjoy the same representation of power and equality within the private and public spheres. Through literature women resisted patriarchal settings so that all social classes can have equal representation in the private and public spheres. Many critics have studied and analysed women's fiction writing, focusing on gender and female oppression, however they neglected the rhetorical aspects of the novels. The problem is it is not evident how persuasive and inviting these novels are at the same time as being a means of rhetorical effect, which can be critically examined. Therefore, the research focused on how the novels use feminist rhetorical devices to instil an understanding about gender inequalities, exploitation, colonialism, exclusion and oppression of women in patriarchal societies. The study also examined how the novels use dialogic communication among characters to promote gender equality, self-determination and immanent value in order to eliminate women's subjugation.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study has the following objectives:

- To examine the feminist perspectives and ideas offered in articulating social, economic and political subjugation in the selected novels.
- To evaluate how the selected novels promote ideas of equality, immanent value and self-determination.
- To analyse and interpret how the selected novels employ proofs of persuasion to appeal to the readers.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study adds to the growing number of rhetorical papers in Namibia. It aims at contributing to the understanding of feminist rhetoric, and recognises the presence of women rhetors who in history, have been ignored. This study hopes that analysing literary works of African feminist fictional writers would help others to construct persuasive arguments on the same topic that help women to redefine themselves and take charge of their own destinies. In addition, this would also assist men to understand that it is normal for women to have autonomous power to realise their dreams. Readers of this study should understand what effective and non-effective rhetorical strategies are, and how it might be possible for women to be included in all spheres of life. The study adds to the body of knowledge which seeks to recognise the agency of women in questioning patriarchal settings. This study contributes to interdisciplinary studies; particularly feminism and rhetoric. Interdisciplinary studies are important in opening avenues for reading and research.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study is limited to the critical examination of the novels themselves, only of which it could have been beneficial to interview the authors – however due to time, logistical and resource limitations; this is not possible. The results obtained from this might not be generalised to all societies in Africa as the novels could have represented experiences of societies in which they are set.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

There are many women fictional writers in Africa, who have written against gender inequality, but this study is limited to five novels, which are set in Africa. Only fiction written in English is considered, as fictional works written in other languages fall out of the scope of this study.

1.7 Methodology

Creswell (1994) defines the research methodology as the system of collecting data for a research project. Therefore, this section presents the methodology that has been used to conduct this research.

1.7.1 Research design

Qualitative method was the central point of this study. A qualitative study design is defined as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problems, based on building a complex, or holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of respondents or informants, and or contacted in a natural setting” (Cresswell, 1994, p. 2). This was a desktop study where already published sources were used. Fahnestock and Secor (1990, p. 77) indicate that qualitative is “rather deductive, since we will begin with some assumptions about argument as widely held

as possible, which we then test against a body of evidence as representative as we could make it, on the way to some conclusions, as tentative as they must be”. The qualitative research design is concerned with the understanding, experience and interpretation of the social world. It is both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced (Masson, 2002, p. 3). The qualitative method is used to organise and stimulate the meaning of the content in the novels and draw conclusions from them. This method is also good in gaining in-depth understanding and providing descriptions of how characters bring forth the feminist arguments in connection with rhetoric. According to Mlambo (2013), qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors whose role in the research issue may not be easily apparent. Therefore, since a qualitative method was used in this study, there has not been any fieldwork, but rather a literary analysis of imaginative short fiction. This study used literary analysis whereby imaginative characters’ conducts and conversations are interpreted to expound feminist rhetoric according to the identified themes.

1.7.2 Population

The population of this study consisted of all literary texts written by African women who have written against patriarchal oppression and how some women defied patriarchal settings. The study examined only the novels that are written in English.

1.7.3 Sample

Purposive sampling was employed to select the five novels by African women fiction writers namely *Meekulu’s Children* by Kaleni Hiyalwa, *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Official Wife* by Mary Karoro Okurut, *The Screaming of the Innocent* by Unity Dow and *Parched Earth* by Elieshi Lema. “Purposive sampling groups, participants, or phenomena to be researched according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research”

(Mlambo, 2013, p. 43). Purposive sampling, also called judgment sampling is a deliberate choice of information by the researcher. The researcher relied on his/her own judgement in choosing the novels with the objectives of the study in mind. In this case, the novels were purposively sampled according to their themes of feminist arguments that are explored in the stance of rhetoric. The novels were considered for how these women writers condemned and highlighted patriarchy, and how the women imaginative characters attempt to surpass patriarchy. However, the results from the sample cannot be generalised to the whole population because of African women's different experiences.

1.7.4 Procedure

The data was collected through critical reading of the selected novels using the feminist rhetorical analysis approach in order to unravel the presence of rhetorical strategies in the novels. The Aristotelian and invitational rhetoric theories have guided the analysis of this study. These theories are relevant because they demonstrate how women fiction writers employ rhetorical approach in their writing. Particularly, the theories are used to attest if the women fiction writers used the proofs of persuasion and how they have emphasised the collaboration and consensus of men and women in order to end women subjugation through the lens of invitational rhetoric. Although only five novels were selected, reference was made to other texts that augment the ideas from the novels. Hence, the conclusions were drawn depending on the analysis made on these novels as well as other sources that were consulted.

1.7.5 Data analysis

Data analysis was in the form of content analysis due to the nature of this study. The researcher used the narrative form and rhetorical analysis to study the texts whereby each novel was

analysed individually. The novels were read several times in order to understand the general meaning of the texts. The researcher then took down notes of how the novels have constructed gender realities; patriarchy, how it is challenged and how these arguments are presented to appeal to the readers. The novels were analysed based on Foss and Griffins' (1995) invitational rhetoric which is rooted in feminist principles of equality, immanent value and self-determination. Invitational rhetoric is related at how women writers want men and women to collaborate in order to subvert patriarchy when they are employing the feminist principles in their conversations. Aristotle's three means of persuasion: ethos, logos and pathos are used to examine how the characters persuade the readers. The characters in the novels were explored and interpreted according to how they would appeal to the reader's emotions, their credibility and the arguments they make. The close textual reading is done to identify the change in behaviour of characters and how behaviour change led to their emancipation.

1.8 Research ethics

The data collected from primary and secondary sources were used merely for the purpose of this study and is acknowledged accordingly. The direct quotations are presented as they appear in original sources without alterations. All the quoted or cited sources are listed in the reference section. The analysis of the novels aimed at objectivity and the elimination of bias and ridiculing the authors. This was attained through the use of the guiding principles of the theoretical lens that is applied in the study.

1.9 Outline of the chapters

This study consists of eight chapters which are divided into titles and subtitles. Chapter One is the introduction which contains the background of the study, statement of the problem,

objectives, significances, limitations, delimitations, methodology and research ethics of the study. Chapter Two reviews the literature related to African feminism, women subjugation, rhetoric and incorporates the theoretical frameworks of the study. Chapter Three examines how resilience leads to self-fulfilment. The chapter pays attention to the influence of polygamy on women subjugation and the reaction of educated women to the polygamous marriage. It also presents the agency of challenging polygamy, how women embrace sisterhood to attain freedom from patriarchy. It is indicated in this chapter that some cultural practices like pulling portray women as sex objects.

Chapter Four presents women full of determination to battle patriarchal institutions despite the the presence of dominant parties. It examines the women's interventions to question patriarchy, the empowerment gained from education and inclusivity of all gender as a way to attain equality. Chapter Five pays attention to how socio-economic dependence on the husband might contribute to women oppression. It sees how the man tries to maintain obedience through physical beatings. Religion and cultural norms seem to contribute to women subjugation; therefore, some women believe acting out of the norms is the way to overcome patriarchal settings. The chapter also identifies the type of dialogic communication that contributes to equality, self-determination and immanent value.

Chapter Six examines the influence of patriarchy in love affairs. The chapter confirms that a woman can be empowered through difficult circumstances they encounter. In some instances the woman is surprised by the man who turns to be reliable. The chapter also views the importance of empowering women from a young age to be able to handle challenges in their adulthood. It is also stated in this chapter that understanding in conversation is an agency in invitational rhetoric.

In addition, Chapter Seven pays attention to the recognition of women's contribution to the liberation struggle alongside their male counterparts. The chapter emphasises that men are not to be generalised as oppressive because society is comprised of some good men. It also pays attention to how colonialism negatively affects education of women and how cooperation acts as a tonic in maintaining equality. Finally, Chapter Eight concludes the findings of the study and connects the research findings to the theoretical frameworks to show their interconnectedness. The contribution of the study to new knowledge and recommendations for future researches are also presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to review relevant literature in order to identify the gaps, weaknesses and controversies in the existing body of knowledge on feminism and rhetoric. The review of the literature is imperative because it offers an understanding of the subject and its relation to the research. Previous research and existing literature is recognised as helping the researcher to critically examine the novels identified for this study. “A review of prior, relevant literature is an essential feature of any academic project. It facilitates theory development, closes areas where a plethora of research exists, and uncovers areas where research is needed” (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xiii).

The literature review defines the notion of feminism and how African women understand feminism; how they relate feminism to the African context and different theoretical frameworks that African women may deem to fit an African context. Subjugation of women in patriarchal society is reviewed. This shows how women are oppressed and how societies play pivotal roles in women’s oppression. The literature shows that there are women who are not defined by their societies, but by themselves, and that they see the urgency of changing the way their societies are structured. It reviews the relevance of education to women, the participation of women in politics and how religion influences patriarchy. Challenges for African feminism are discussed. Women have contributed to rhetoric through their fictional writing and other means; rhetoric as persuasion and rhetorical style are also reviewed. Invitational rhetoric is explained as are

criticisms of this style of rhetoric, and finally this is related to the theoretical framework and how it is suitable to this study.

2.2 What is feminism?

Different scholars have defined the term feminism. Bersey and Moore (1989, p. 116) define feminism as a “specific kind of political discourse; a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism”. Sadek (2014) defines feminism as the movement for the social, political and economic equality of men and women. It is maintained that women and men are treated differently by society and that women have been isolated from participating fully in all available social arenas and institutions. Feminism is the movement seeking reorganisation of the world on the basis of gender equality in all human relations. It is a movement which rejects every differentiation between individuals upon the grounds of gender and that seeks to abolish all gender privileges and burdens, and which strives to set up the recognition of the common humanity of women and men as the foundation of law and the custom (Kramarae & Treichler, 1996, p. 158). Mcfadden (2011, para. 3) says that feminism is the rejection of patriarchy and is also a celebration of freedom for women everywhere. Feminist theory seeks to analyse the conditions which shape women’s lives and to explore cultural understandings of what it means to be a woman. Feminists refuse to accept that inequalities between women and men are natural and cannot be avoided and that they should be questioned.

2.3 African feminism

African women’s writing emerged in the 1970s mainly with the aim of overturning and avoiding pejorative male representation of African womanhood. Feminist writers and activists sought to demonstrate that they were relevant to the African context and in particular that they did not

want to imitate their Western feminist counterparts (Mekgwe, 2008). Therefore, African feminist literature concerns itself with the liberty of all African people. Although it has taken the overriding notion of emancipation from the global feminist movement, African feminist discourse shows concerns that are situated in African cultures, questioning the features of traditional African cultures without criticising them because these might be viewed differently by different classes of women (Mekgwe, 2008).

According to Sadek (2014, p. 172), unlike Western feminism, African feminism does not work against men but rather accommodates men. Chukwuma (2007) also notes that African feminism is not anti-male nor anti-mother. Male is not ‘the other’, as Nnaemeka (2004, p. 378) says that “Each gender constitutes the critical half that makes the human whole. Neither sex is totally complete in itself. Each needs a complement of the other, despite the possession of unique features of its own.” Chinweizu (as cited in Chukwuma, 2007) is in agreement with the interdependence of men and women and argues that:

Because every man has a boss, his wife or his mother, or some other woman in his life, man may rule the world, but women rule men who rule the world. Thus, contrary to appearance, woman is boss, the overall boss, of the world. (p. 2)

The above quotation indicates that African men are complemented by women and that women are ready to work together with men to achieve their desired goals. African feminism seeks to involve men in the transformation process, which has led Mekgwe (2008, p. 16) to support the perspective that if African feminism is to succeed as a humane information project, it cannot accept separatism from the opposite sex. Avoiding male exclusion becomes one of the defining features of African feminism. For example Amaka in Nwapa’s *One is Enough*, after the failure

of her marriage, told her mother: “No mother I have said goodbye to husbands. Her mother replied that is better. Goodbye to husbands not goodbye to men. They are two different things?” Even though she is divorced, she still needs men in her life. Sadek (2014) is not surprised at this phenomenon since most African women are also committed to the institution of the family and certainly do not want to do without their men. However, they do not want to be maltreated and are readily interested in working out guidelines that defend women and get rid of the preconceptions against them.

Apart from power dominance, African women voice the importance of their roles as mothers and career women and they characterise African feminism as family orientated, arguing that African feminism entails the creation of space for women to participate in the management of the well-being of their societies (Attanga, 2013, p. 308). Similarly, Oyewumi (2005) argues that African feminism does not focus on male dominance with female subordination or on fighting battles with men, nor on fertility rates and poverty, but also challenging the status quo, describing the ways patriarchies in Africa prevented them from realising their full potential. On the Africa continent, millions of women and girls have been and are being prevented from reaching their full potential as human beings, whether that be the possibility of being writers, artists, doctors and other professions outside traditional roles assigned to women. The African feminist approach then is one that makes an attempt to educate, empower and elevate these women to a position where they can own their power not against men, but alongside them (Azodo, 1997, p. 201).

Furthermore, Attanga (2013) indicates that Africa in itself is very diverse and therefore talking about “African feminism can also be interpreted to mean feminism in Africa” which essentialises Africa by implying that all African women live under the same condition and face the same challenges. Attanga (2013) is of the opinion that feminist scholars should be careful not to treat

Africa as a single entity because women of the North face different problems to those in the South of the Sahara. For example, Moroccan women face problems that relate more to Arab women in the Middle East as opposed to Black women living South of Sahara. The diversity of Africa and its women's experience complicates an attempt to formulate and theorise an African feminism.

Additionally, Davies (as cited in Da Silva, 2013) points out that African feminism is also about the necessity to overcome the gender disparities brought by colonialism. According to Attanga, (2013) and Nnaemeka (1998) African feminism is very dependent on temporal scale shaped by political eras. These eras are pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa. Because of these eras there are African feminisms. Thus, African feminism should not contain a monolithic view of the continent, but rather a pluralism (African feminisms) that encompass the fluidity and dynamism of different cultural beliefs, historical forces, localised cultural beliefs and localised women movements (Attanga, 2013 & Nnaemeka, 1998). Akin-Aina (2011) clarifies that African feminisms are still changing continuously based on the context in which they are wrought. It is crucial that African feminists pay close attention to the continent's history following colonisation but also the present struggle under neocolonialisation and neoliberalisation; all these periods contribute to changes to African feminisms. Thus, Nnaemeka (1998, p. 9) states that to meaningfully explain the phenomenon called African feminism, it must be documented in an African environment. African feminism must not be treated in a reactive sense but as proactive. It has life of its own that is rooted in the African environment. It has a specific place of origin, which is Africa. African feminism must be built on the indigenous for any development to make progress in Africa. Ake (as cited in Nnaemeka, 2004) highlights that:

We cannot significantly advance the development of Africa unless we take African societies seriously as they are, not as they ought to be or even as they might be; that sustainable development cannot occur unless we build on the indigenous. (p. 376)

This means if African feminism is built on what is indigenous, it creates feelings of ownership that opens the door of participation and democracy amongst women and men. African feminism needs to be understood contextually because issues that may be of concern to women in one place and time may be completely different for other women in another place and time. According to Tegomoh (2002), expectations of women can be different in different settings. What is considered feminine and appropriate in one setting is considered inappropriate or indecent in other. Therefore, being a feminist can be challenged from many standpoints because of the religious and cultural diversity on the continent. “Feminist activists are seen as rebels, vandals, home breakers, as disrespectful with no sense of being a woman in them. They are generally frowned upon because of the way such women carry themselves” (Tegomoh, 2002, p. 27). Tegomoh further highlights that the negative reception of feminism by African scholars is because of its failure to address the many specific African historical and cultural contexts. It attempts to globalise African women’s experience and ignore cultural factors. African women initially rejected feminism perceiving it as a Western ideology imported to Africa to ruin the family structure. Therefore, some African thinkers have rejected the word completely, considering it as “unAfrican” and declaring “feminist as sexually unattractive and humourless man hatters, trouble makers, Westernised and sexually disreputable women who pose a threat to tradition culture and society” (Horowitz, 2005, p. 50).

Moreover, Kamau (2014) has indicated that in Kenya for example, the electorate has continued to have a negative attitude to the term feminism and they would find it difficult to associate with

those who refer to themselves as such. This may lead women who describe their position as feminist not to say so publicly for fear of being labeled as against men or as radical women who stand against family values. This could be a reason why some African women distance themselves from the notion of feminism even if their works support it. According to Alkali, Talif, Yahya and Jan (2013), it is surprising that many African female writers declare that they are not feminists, as if it were a crime to be a feminist. Ogundipe-Leslie (as cited in Alkali et al., 2013) finds it very difficult to understand why African women such as Bessie Head, Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa and even Mariama Ba distance themselves from supporting the theory of feminism. There is a contradiction between what they have written and the theory they seek to deny, which might show that there is misunderstanding of what feminism is or that they are afraid of the stigma against those who associate with it (Selasi, 2015, p. 44). Although African women generally do not want to be associated with Western feminism, some scholars find African women to have taken the path that is taken by their counterparts in the West. Frank (as cited in Verba, 1997, p. 4) places African women writers into Western feminist frames by speaking of their work as a more radical extension of the Western feminist tradition. Frank indicates that Mariama Ba, Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emechata and Ama Ata Aidoo's novels are more radical, more militant than their Western counterparts are. To Frank, the path that is taken by African women writers is more intense than the one taken by Western writers.

Notwithstanding, the rejection of the term feminism in Africa has inspired some women to come up with alternatives that better describe the conditions of an African context. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) pronounces that when sexuality became a part of the feminist agenda, you would have thought that it would be something that brought unity amongst women, however, it created more divisions because it distracted African feminism from the focus of economic empowerment of

poor women of the South and too much attention was paid to African women in matters of sex. African women and diasporic African women rejected the term feminism, as they argued that feminism is in reference to white middle class women and not inclusive of other experiences of women and class (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994). Alkali et al. (2013) indicate that later on the term womanism, after Alice Walker's term, was adopted instead of the term feminism. It has been considered by some African women as black centred, unlike the Western feminism. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994, p. 228) clarifies that black women argued that womanism is more inclusive of people and it focuses on differences between women themselves. Womanism is the lived experience of women of colour and is also based on the struggle of the African women. Alice Walker prefers to use womanism and defines it as "a black feminist or feminist of colour... commitment to survival wholesomeness of entire people, male and female...not as separatist, except periodically, for health ... love struggle, love the forks and loves herself..." (Amadiume, 2001, p. 48). These quotations serve as an introduction to the appreciation of women recognition in giving their voice. The objective is to give women a voice and place in affairs that are directly affecting them.

In addition, according to Panirao (2014, p. 176), womanism is a movement towards harmony and progress. It is a liberating movement focused on women of colour, it also aims at the essential wholeness of any race. As a move towards gender equality, it is tolerant because it promotes the elevation of both male and female. The author concluded that womanism is an answer to the plea of women of colour to address issues that the white feminist movement fails to include, especially those issues imperative to the daily life experience of the women of colour. Akung (2013, pp. 27-28) points out that the needs of black women are not the same as those of white

women, womanism desires that man and women are complementary and must be in harmony in the home and society at large.

Moreover, Ogundipe-Leslie is one of the women who dissociate themselves from the word feminism. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994, p. 228) “African feminism for me, therefore, must include the issue around the woman’s body, her person, her immediate family, her society, her nation, her continent and their locations within the international economic order that determines African politics and impacts on the women”. She later preferred using the term STIWANISM because of issues that revolve around using the term feminism. Attanga (2013) explains that the general feminist’s approach of STIWANISM, from the acronym STIWA – Social Transformation in Africa Including Women, was found to advocate for correction of negative aspects of African cultures, without necessarily employing the Western feminism models. “STIWANISM is designed to discuss African women’s needs and agendas in context of strategies fashioned in the environment created by indigenous culture (Andima & Tjiramanga 2015, p. 81). The founder, Ogundipe-Leslie (1994), declares that African women need to participate as equal partners in social transformation in Africa and they need to be conscious not only of the fact that she is a woman but that she is both an African and a third world person. According to Andima and Tjiramanga (2015), African women need to be aware of the context in which their feminist manner is made. This implies that they must be conscious of their African customs so they aspire to act according to their own African customs and beliefs.

Motherism is another branch of African feminism. Ode (2011, p. 90) defines motherism “as an African feminist theory that sees the relationship of women in terms of reproduction and child care”. It considers that it is mothers’ responsibility to bring up a child in an African family. In Africa, a woman lives for her child (Alkali et al. 2013). They want to be present in the child’s

growing life and be there for him/her. Acholonu (1995) supports the theory of motherism, which refers to the ability of the women to nurture a child into adulthood and that she ought to be the person to care for the child as it is the mother who gave it life. The weapon of motherism is tolerance, mutual understanding and love of all sexes. A motherist can be someone who is committed to the survival and maintenance of mother earth. Acholonu (1995) makes it clear that a motherist can be a man or woman; it does not have sex barriers. Therefore, she dismisses the term patriarchy and opts for patrifocality because to her men and women are complementary in traditional society. Acholonu (1995, p. 92) feels that Buchi Emecheta, Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie and Ama Ata Aidoo “misunderstood feminism to be synonymous with violent confrontation, militancy and aggression”, maintaining that “Alice Walker’s brand of womanism is unsatisfactory because her womanist is first and foremost lesbian”. Critics like Selasi (2015) and Alkali et al. (2013) are not in agreement with Acholonu’s claims; if Acholonu understood feminism the way it was supposed to be then she would not have come up with motherism, which she wishes would replace some of the theories in existence, because the feminist work of the women she criticises is not violent, confrontation, militant as she claims.

Nnaemeka (2004) is of the belief that African feminism is indigenous and opens doors for inclusion for both men and women. Nnaemeka (2004, p. 372) sees the brand of feminism that is unfolding in the African context and calls it nego-feminism. “Nego-feminism is the feminism of negotiation, second, nego-feminism stands for “no ego” feminism. In the foundation of shared value in many African cultures are the principles of negotiation, give and take, compromise and balance.” African women’s willingness to negotiate with and around men even in difficult times is common and there are men willing to listen and work together with women. There are men of good will and we cannot treat them as monolithic. Ba (1980) dedicates her novel *So Long a*

Letter to men of goodwill to indicate that there are good men out there and there are bastards too. African women are more inclined to reach out and work with men in achieving their goals; through negotiation, accommodation and compromise (Nmaemeka, 2004). Though there are several African feminism theories they are marked by contradiction, exclusion and uncertainty, all of which signify the difficulty of proposing single theoretical frameworks for people with different cultures and histories (Nkealah, 2016). For this reason, it may be difficult to choose a theory that can be used throughout the continent.

This study evaluates the reaction of women writers to the status quo of women in societies. Africa is diverse with diverse cultures and traditions, thus the reaction of these women writers is determined by these differences. African women fiction writers raise and address issues of misrepresentation and representation of women, the education of women, access of women to the economic means of survival, motherhood, women in the domestic sphere, women's roles in politics and revolution, sexuality and the direct treatment of women by men, and men by women (Verba, 1997). As aforementioned, women react due to different issues affecting them. Akung (2013, p. 281) points out that in the case of Nigeria, feminist novels came as a reaction to the negative image of women as presented in male authored works; the image of women in male-authored works has been conditioned by male ambition. So it becomes a problem for the women to create a parallel image to correct the image that is negatively presented by men. For example in Amadi's *The Concubine*, the woman is presented as voiceless with no power of her own and is limited.

Akung (2013) continues to say that the female has risen from ignorance and naivety to experience and selfhood; she is no longer defined by the man, but rather defines her role in the society. This is seen in the creation of assertive female characters, like in Nwapa's *Efuru*. *Efuru*

refuses to allow traditional beliefs to stand between her and her love by marrying without a bride price. She allows assertiveness of the female voice and launches women into the commercial economy as a means of economic independence (Akung, 2013). So women voiced their pains rhetorically in order to end patriarchy in their societies. However, this observation calls for further research about this phenomenon as there is a general dearth of literature focusing on this critical area of feministic rhetoric.

2.4 Understanding patriarchy and oppression of women

Hooks (1984) and Amouzou (2006) explain patriarchy as a political system that insists that males are inherently dominating and superior to everything and everyone who is seen to be weak, especially females, and men are endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and fierceness. Ogun-dipe-Leslie (1994) indicates that, in some cases, through the institution of marriage, women become property in their husbands' lineages; lose all personal rights and self-identities. When a woman loses, a man gains, as marriage and motherhood further strengthen men's existing powerful position in the kinship system and interpersonal relationships, along with their position in the wider political and economic spheres, meaning a man is given the hegemonic power to rule a woman and all institutions in societies. This study aimed to examine what women fiction writers highlight in the issue of dominance and how they depicted women characters in search of their freedom, such as in the analysis of Amouzou (2006), who indicates that in Flora Nwapa's novel *One is Enough*, women characters are remarkable, strong, competent, courageous and successful. They are economically independent, self-reliant, rejecting all subjugation and male oppression, and protesting against the second position of their gender.

In Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, Mr Sigauke does not consider women as his equals, but as second class citizen who should do what men like him say. He always feels that Nyasha must do what he says, and when she tries to tell the truth about herself, he feels she is challenging him (Moyana, 1994). In some cases, the choices in a woman's life have to be made by the father because the woman is viewed as not able to make the right decisions. Tegomoh (2002) toured many African countries and in Cameroon men still believe that tertiary institutions spoil and corrupt women and make it difficult for them to marry. Once the decision not to send girls to school was challenged; men became suspicious and aggressive as they feared they were losing their man-ness. This idea has affected young girls, who often prefer to end their education to get married in order to gain acceptance and respect in society (Tegomoh, 2002). In addition, Andima and Tjiramanga (2014) analyse the short story "We Must Choose Life" that depicts a young girl in a patriarchal society who is married off at a tender age. Getting married is her father and other elders' negotiations, however, she cannot reject her father's negotiation because according to their tradition, women and girls are not involved in decision-making even on matters that directly affect them. Niilenge (2008) states that patriarchy empowers men, but deprives women of their rights making them powerless and vulnerable. They are excluded from decision-making so they have to obey what men decide on for the sake of the culture.

Marriage is considered an important aspect of African cultures. Even though it is the union of two people, families get involved in the process. Marriage is undertaken in different ways depending on the culture of the people involved. In some cases love or emotional attachment to a person is not a pre-requisite, but it can develop along the line (Selasi, 2015). In the process of acquiring a wife, lobola has to be paid to the girl's family. Edwards-Jauch (2016) argues that:

The payment of lobola/bride wealth is central to patriarchal control over women's sexuality. Lobola represents an exchange relationship that enslaves and entraps women, because in some culture women have to double the amount of lobola (either in cattle or in cash) initially paid for them by the groom's family in order to get a bride. (p. 58)

Lobola is believed to contribute to the inferior position of women because some men believe that they own and control their wives because they paid lobola. In some societies, it is the duty of men to negotiate and determine how much should be paid as lobola (Hubbard & Solomon, 1995). This turns a woman into a commodity as some men see women as objects to be negotiated for and share their value (Kabira & Burkeywo, 2016).

Furthermore, polygamous marriages are of concern in this study. Selasi (2015) states that polygamy exists because a woman cannot meet all the needs of her husband, so a co-wife is needed. Andima and Tjiramanga (2014) assert that many women in polygamous marriages experience emotional and physical abuse. In some cases they are powerless and have no choice but to accept the situation. For example in the narrative "A love slave" Susana is married to a traditional healer, who already has two wives. Susana was never loved nor shown any affection by her husband. She does not receive support from the co-wives because they do not like her. There was nothing about this marriage for her to enjoy, she is rather portrayed as a sex slave (Andima & Tjiramanga, 2015, p. 85).

Similarly, traditional beliefs also dictate what women are supposed to do. Traditionally, women are expected to stay at home as moms and work in the field. Selasi (2015, p. 51) outlines that domestic duties are always seen as a requirement of the female with little or no involvement of the male. The preference of a male over female can be heart-breaking. In the Akan society of

Ghana when a male child is born it is said “W’ awo nipa” meaning a human being has been born. This further affirms how the male becomes the head over the female, which is a patriarchal system. However, there are women who break such norms to attain important positions in their societies. Kabira and Burkeywo (2016) state that in the novel, the *River and the Source*, by Margaret Ogola, through the protagonist, Akoko, a woman’s personality that contrasts with what the society expects of a woman, is articulated. Akoko is a strong woman who challenges the institution of patriarchy. She goes against the stereotype that women should be confined to the kitchen, bear children and serve men. Because she refuses to give birth to too many children as expected by society, her mother-in-law accuses her of bewitching the husband.

In addition, in some cultures women are expected not to talk, or talk little, in the company of men, suggesting that their silence is gender-based, which broadly limits women’s ability to exhibit empowered responses (Biscaia, 2010, p. 16). Asante (2002) argues that silence is a representation of the historical muting of women under the formidable institution known as patriarchy; that form the social organisation in which males assume power and create for females an inferior status. Asante (2002) further declares that destroying the emptiness of silence, is therefore an appropriate metaphor to describe the writing of women in Africa. Asante (2002) links women’s social responsibilities with their ability to talk about their experiences, understanding and desire, an articulation that cannot be realised unless the silence imposed upon these women is destroyed. This can be illustrated in African women’s literature; through fiction, women express their views, experience and understanding of issues around them. Chukwuma (2007) confirms that:

An Africa woman happens to be that woman who suffers the effects of oppression and neglect and who must maintain a silence and passivity in order to remain good. Silence

and passivity are two principal features of the good women. Apart from passivity and silence in the face of radical change, she is also the form that culturally fits into the mould shaped for her by patriarchy. (p. 3)

Some women are aware that the silence they are subjected to is the form of patriarchy, but they remain silent to maintain respect. Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* presents two women; the good woman and the real woman. Beatrice is a good woman who at the beginning of the novel is quiet and obedient to the point that her life was endangered to the extent of losing her pregnancy, while Aunt Ifeoma is a real woman who is not afraid of anyone and will speak up when things are not right (Ann, 2015).

Nevertheless, sometimes the exploitation of women can be empowerment in disguise. This can be seen in the case of Malawi's first female president, Joyce Banda. Kamwendo and Kamwendo (2015) have realised that the exploitation of women in politics can sometimes be disguised as women's empowerment. Initially used as an instrument to advance president Bingu wa Mutharika's ambition for a second presidential term of office, Banda's path illustrates this. "Once Mutharika had been elected, Joyce Banda has been castigated and marginalised and ultimately fired from the ruling party in 2010" (Kamwendo & Kamwendo, 2015, p. 77). While not at first elected in her own right she then became Malawi's and Southern African Development Community's first female president despite the castigation and harassments she encountered. Kamwendo and Kamwendo (2015) further states continue, stating that by choosing her as his presidential mate, Mutharika could be seen to be advancing women's role in decision-making, but his move was actually instrumental; designed to draw votes from women. Therefore, there is a need to discover how African fiction writers portray women characters that are exploited and eventually get empowered through their plights.

Moreover, it appears that women's dependence on their husbands is economical. Chukwuma (2007) confirms that most of these women sufferers have neither education nor viable means of livelihood. Patriarchy, which pre-supposes the male superiority over women, upholds women's dependence on men in all spheres of life. All the power and authority within the family, the society and the state remain entirely in the hands of men. The only lasting solution to free them is being economically independent. In Nwapa's novel *Efuru* this is indicated and Chukwuma (2007) indicates that:

From *Efuru*, Belle, who is unlettered but intelligent and insightful, refuses to accompany her husband to farm because it is labour intensive with a low economic yield, rather persuading him to join in her long distance trading which is less taxing and yields more money. Because of her economic stability, she could survive comfortably when her husband deserted her. (p. 8)

Belle's economic independence has led her to make her own decisions on how to live her life. She chooses what makes her happy rather than accepting to follow her husband to the farm. The issue of independence is also illustrated by Ashanti women in Ghana. According to Amadiume (2001, p. 24), Ashanti women have always been traders, farmers, and politically active citizens, controlling a market system network. They control and dominate the vegetable market through the Ohemma (female chief) structure of leadership. Ashanti women are a matriarchy whose natal homes are their homes for life; their strong ties are with their mothers and children. They pass on their earned trading positions and titles to their daughters. Women work hard for the sake of their children, to feed and educate them. The report by the United Nations (2017) shows that women in Africa are more economically active, particularly as farmers, workers and

entrepreneurs than anywhere else in the world. They perform the majority of agricultural activities and in some countries make up some 70% of employees.

Even though there is still much to be done to achieve the reality of gender equality, there is something to be noted in this African case. According to the United Nations (2017), African women have made significant progress including higher female participation in many legislatures, but women of the continent still face challenges in higher rates of sexual violence. In Namibia for example, position of influence in pre-colonial communities were generally held by men, although there were some exceptions, and men usually had larger economic decision-making power within extended family units. Things changed after independence (Becker, n.d.). Becker (n.d.) shows that since independence, women have been appointed to positions as headwomen, senior headwomen and traditional councilors, although still in the minority. Women have also begun to emerge from the invisibility and silence to which they were formerly confined in the traditional environments of customary, court hearing and community meetings.

The critical observation of literature in connection with women feminist literature is that of women's urge to surpass the domination of women in societies by realising their abilities in the private and public spheres. Women writers use women characters that are competent, strong and successful despite the presence of men that are trying not to acknowledge equality and stick to strict traditional beliefs. It is worth noting that these analyses are restricted to coverage of the feminist perspectives concerned, and this has led to the realisation of a gap regarding the examination of rhetoric that needs to be covered. Thus, the result is a study of feminist rhetoric in the novels selected. Matos (2015) indicates that women's rhetorical contributions are basically unnoticed; there is little scholarship that analyses and critiques the contemporary addressing of women's rights in public discourse.

2.5 Education and women's participation in politics

Education brings insights that help women to participate in matters pertaining to their lives. Tripp (1999, p. 75) confirms this by noting that the improvement in educational opportunities for girls and women has influenced the participation of women in politics. This has led women to compete for power with men at various levels. Tripp (1999) continues to say education has empowered many women to join political parties and form political parties. Research has shown that education is one of the most imperative paths for encouraging women to speak out because they are enabled to acquire knowledge and improve their communication skills. Education is very important in imparting knowledge and empowering women. Chukwuma (2007) indicates the willingness of a woman who is yearning to study further, but is hampered by circumstances. In El Saadawi's novel *Woman at Point Zero*, the protagonist Firdaus strives to be educated, encouraged by her cousin, who took care of her at the death of her parents, and who is a university graduate. Her cousin saw her through high school and she showed brilliance and promise. However, on her request to be sent to the university, her cousin told her that "girls do not attend university". She turned out to be a prostitute, but her life would have turned out differently if she was given the opportunity of education.

In some cases, women defy patriarchy to better their lives. Moyana (1994) analyses Dangarembga's *Nervous Condition* and comments that Tambudzai refuses to be cornd into gender apartheid from an early age; she resists oppression from her brother chiefly by sending herself back to school at a time when their parents say they can only afford her brother's fees. As a child of eight, she works on her own plot determinedly and successfully, in spite of problems earning enough money to finance her whole primary education. Tambudzai decides to free herself from the chains of patriarchy and at the same time become self independent. Her culture,

like many cultures in Africa, believed that education is for men not for women. In the case of Amantle in Unity Dow's *The Screaming of the Innocent*, her parents made an effort to get finance to support her education despite the impoverished living conditions they experienced which had delayed her finishing school for some time. At least her father said "She must be prepared for a new tomorrow and for greater things. I believe the child must go to school. Yes, we must help her meet the new wind" (Dow as quoted in Biscaia, 2010, p. 13). Tripp (1999) and Kellow (2010) affirm that it is the cultural attitude of both men and women that prohibits women being educated. The demand of the family and household responsibilities are also an issue and due to the influence of patriarchy, men continue to be in authority of the state of affairs and decision-making.

Furthermore, colonial education benefited men more than women. Mikell (1997, p. 20) articulates that Western education privileged the scholarly advancement of men over women. Male education was emphasised as men were expected to later be integrated into the labour market and formal systems of production. Da Silva (2013) indicates that women had fewer opportunities for professional careers because most of them were not afforded the opportunity to master the official language. This situation has contributed to women's economic dependence on men. The coloniser allowed males to attend colonial schools, which further complicated women's situations. A number of factors have affected women in post-colonial societies as well. In some cases, women accept rules from their husbands because they are entirely dependent on them. In Paulina Chiziane's novel *Niketche*, Tony, a powerful and wealthy man, has the rights to five women's bodies and takes advantage of their inferiority, but Rami the first wife, refuses the authority and power delegated to her. Rami fights for solidarity and helps other women achieve their economic independence. Rami uses solidarity among other women to create ways to

overcome patriarchal power and women's subjugation. If it is only Rami fighting for her rights, where are the other four women? Do they just have to succumb to abuse because of their dependence on their husband?

Notably, Selasi (2015) indicates that African women are reactionary in nature. It is believed that the influence of friends or people around them can have effects on how they react to feminist issues. Selasi (2015) explains that for example in Tracie Chima Utoh's *An African Doll's House*, Nneora left her business for the sake of marriage; her husband does not want a working woman but a housewife. Her friend, Linda, draws Nneora's attention by telling her that gone are the days when a husband has to dictate his wife's life. Consequently, Nneora tells her husband that she is going to re-open the shop and after giving birth, she will go back to school to further her education. Selasi (2015) further declares that education brings enlightenment, knowledge, awareness; these realisations are geared towards the duty a woman owes herself. This is the duty of every woman to make herself happy and not to depend on a man to be her source of happiness.

Nevertheless, Moyana (1994) finds that educated children find their traditional culture conservative, sexist and patriarchal, regarding women as second class citizens and as people who should work at home, tending their husbands and children with no opinion of their own to be vocalised. If children get educated they do not want to conform to their traditions, thus sometimes fathers refuse to send girls to school. Kanazoe (as cited in Selasi, 2015) is in support of this view and states that a woman's education is not worth it because when you educate her, she will rebel against you and her traditions. Some women take it upon themselves to blame colonial education for distancing them from their cultures. Amadiume (2001) pronounces that Aidoo's protagonist in *Changes* is educated and is a statistician who works for the government

which gives her the right to live in a nice house as part of her job contract. She earns higher income than her husband. Though she has a good job because of the education she received, she feels displaced from her own culture; she thinks about how colonial education has contributed to disconnecting her from her people and culture. When she goes to the village Esi can understand that she cannot have a close relationship with her mother because they belong to different worlds. An African woman feels discounted if she is disconnected from her culture and people. Again, Amadiume (2001) notes that Ashanti girls go to school and simultaneously do housework, which is seen as helping their mother, but the higher the education they get, the more they turn away from traditional ways and seem to desire “whiteness”. This is the reason why Esi has to blame the colonial education for distancing her from her people. Esi has the independence that African feminists would want an African woman to possess, but she feels something is stolen from her; her culture.

However, Chukwuma (2007) declares that some use colonialism as a whipping boy when it is colonialism that eventually offered women’s education and exposure, propelling contact with the outer wider world and recognition by the community of women’s subjugation. Education is crucial for unblocking other opportunities women need for political participation and it enables women to access high income jobs that provide the resources for political activity (Schlozman & Verba, 2001, p. 141).

It is through education that women are exposed to political participation and get jobs of their own, in return questioning the state of subjugation in Africa, but the problem is that the level of illiteracy is still high in the continent. This may lead to the persistence of subjugation because many women remain trapped in ignorance. Chesaina (2015) outlines that the illiteracy rate in Africa is higher among the female population. Culturally, the justification is that when resources

are scarce, it is better to educate boys than girls because girls will marry and go to their husbands, while boys will remain at home and look after their aged parents. Illiteracy means that women are kept ignorant about their rights as individuals and institutions take advantage of that. Very few females challenge discrimination, for example in employment recruitment; after all the institutions which would be approached to amend the issue are male-dominated, thus likely to dismiss women's claims (Chesaina, 2015, p. 54). For example, uneducated women are not employed even though they partook in their countries' liberation struggle. Gaidzanwa (2013) affirms that some women who were linked to political parties in the pre-colonial era, especially in countries like Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique, among others, were excluded from post-colonial armies, employment and the economy because of their poor education and lack of links to the liberation elites.

In addition, both men and women contributed to the attainment of political independence in Africa. Gatwiri and McLaren (2016) state that African feminism pays attention to the continent's past history of colonialisation, but also looks at the present struggles under neo-colonialism, neo-liberalism and globalisation. Although fighting colonialism was equally done by women who fought alongside men, their efforts have been largely unacknowledged. Namibian women participated in political activities in pre-colonial and post-colonial eras. Hubbard and Solomon (1995) also state that political attempts to achieve independence were supplemented by women who overcame initial male opposition to participate as combatants in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), the guerrilla force which was a military wing of South West African People's Organisation. These women left their families in an attempt to liberate their country. An equally important role was played by women who remained inside the country and provided curial material and psychological support to the freedom fighters. The same can be said in South

Africa where a number of women recruits in the African National Congress dramatically increased in 1976 (Goredema, 2009, p. 36). They had faced a lot of challenges but never wavered. They slept in the same camps and did the same training activities. According to Hassim (1991), women in South Africa partook in the national liberation movement believing that the movement would secure their emancipation. “Autonomy of women’s organisations has been sacrificed in the belief that the overthrow of apartheid (and capitalism) would also overthrow patriarchy” (Hassim, 1991, p. 68). In the end these did not happen as anticipated. In addition, Akin-Aina (2011) and Asante (2002) point out that women in Nigeria have been involved in political actions in African history. Upon finding out that they were to be taxed by the colonial government, women in the South-Eastern Region of Nigeria proceeded to sit at British warrant offices to rebel against the decision. The mass movement, involving more than 10,000 women with painted faces and fern-covered sticks, set the administrative offices of the colonial government on fire. They destroyed the colonial government buildings before intervention by soldiers and police resulting in the death of 50 women and 50 more were wounded.

As a result of political instability in Africa, more literature on Africa women politics has increased to interrogate women’s involvement of mass movements. According to Odiemo-Munara (2008), in Mary Okurut’s novel *Weevil*, the constant struggle of women to become non peripheral in the post-independence liberation struggle, by participating in it, is shown, portraying their thoughts and military activity as students, workers and mothers. In the struggle, they were confident to question masculine-informed excess by men, an activity they carried out well because the liberation struggle itself is a representation of masculine/feminine; domestic/public. The two central characters in the novel, Nkanzi and Mama are liberated as they participate in rebuilding Uganda as a nation that would guarantee gender equality. Odiemo-

Munara (2008) further indicates that the women in *Weevil* contest power/authority not to superficially possess it, but to restructure it and impart it into institutions that are inclusively accessible to both men and women in Uganda. Furthermore, Simon and Obeten (2013) highlight that in Buchi Emechata's *Destination Biafra* and Debbie, the two protagonists in the novel, choose to join the army in order to make a difference in Nigeria. Debbie wanted to do something more than a child bearing, rearing and being a good, passive wife. When Debbie joins the army, she commands the male soldiers who see her as a mere woman. Debbie's feminist ideologies come to the fore when she helps to mobilise other women during the war by helping them in the struggle for emancipation of their race and gender. This mobilisation and emancipation foster bonding, create awareness and help strengthen women, which Kolawole (1997) pronounces that it is rooted in African women's tradition of bonding and is positive as it is based on cultural, economic, political and spiritual collective action. Simon and Obeten (2013) say feminism means a rejection of inferiority and striving for recognition. It seeks to give women a sense of self worth as contributing human beings. Feminism is a reaction to stereotypes of women which deny them positive identity. This is what these women are striving for, to be contributors and be recognised for their contributions.

There are a growing number of women involved in politics in Africa. Tripp (2013) and Ndlovu and Mutale (2013) have indicated that one of the fascinating developments in African politics has been the increase in women's political participation since mid 1990s. Rwanda claims the world's high ratio of women in political participation. In 2003, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became the first elected woman president in Africa. In 2005 Joyce Banda was chosen as a presidential running mate who took over the presidency after Bingu Mutharika's death in 2012. Kamau (2014) further notes that in Kenya, since 1992, the number of women holding political office has

been increasing. Many Kenyans have had an opportunity to understand how women lead and what they stand for. Women parliamentarians have influenced the passing of a sexual offences act, increased maternity leave and introduced 14 days of paternity leave.

Despite the positive trends of women participation in politics, there are some issues to be considered. Ndlovu and Mutale (2013) argue that there is still a gap in women's representation in decision-making, as well as leadership. For example, Liberia had a female president, only 11% of women were represented in the lower house and 13% in the upper house. It is a dream for women to be represented fairly in decision-making spheres, but progress has been slow. According to Ahikire, Musiimenta and Mwiine (2015), the status of Ugandan women is lower than that of men in all spheres: from politics and citizenship to the economy and socio-cultural spheres. Women believe that if they are represented in these spheres, their issues will be addressed. But this notion faces several hurdles. At local and national levels, patriarchy manifests in the nature of state, and its political process provides a conducive environment to men as political actors. At the local level, patriarchy also plays a role in the existing cultural institutions, which portrays women's gender differences as limiting women's effectiveness (Ahikire et al., 2015, p. 32).

2.6 Manifestation of patriarchy in religion

Religion is one of the instruments that influence the subjugation of women in an African society. According to Tripp (1999, p. 76) religious beliefs and values are sexist and patriarchal in structure and continuously seek to suppress women. Most religions have patriarchal views of the relationship between genders and this has made it difficult for women to fully participate in politics. Patriarchy has been taught through religion at church with people being taught that God

created man to rule the world and everything in it and that it was the work of women to help men perform these tasks, to obey and to always assume a subordinate role in relation to a powerful man. What is being taught at church contributes to the understanding of women's inferior position in societies.

In addition, Victor (2013) states that the Genesis account of creation in the Bible says that Almighty God Himself solemnised the first marriage in human history. That is why a man will leave his father and mother, says Genesis 2:24, and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh (Victor, 2013, p. 53). This account shows that marriage is from God, and because of the love the husband has for his wife, he leaves his parents' home to be with his wife. It is mutual love that holds the institution of marriage.

Therefore, Fiorenza (as quoted in Akung, 2013, p. 25) argues that "theological feminism understands women as people of God and indicates the death dealing powers of oppression as structural sin and life destroying evil". This is what Victor (2013, p. 14) alluded to in Andreas's novel *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* where reference is made to a "hypocritical religious set-up which is blind to all the sins that a man may commit provided he fulfils his financial obligation to church". To understand a woman, is to accept her as a person of God and hurting her is considered a sin. Ann (2015) asserts that in Adiches's *Purple Hibiscus*, the violent action by Eugene on his wife is against Catholic beliefs. He has violated and cause physical harm on his wife to an extent of killing an unborn baby which is against humanity and also the will of God; who he claimed to worship and love. This kind of situation contradicts the fate which his Catholic doctrine emulates. As a good woman, it is his wife who must protect the image of her husband, she came back from the hospital and told her kids that there was an accident and lost the baby, instead of telling them what actually transpired. Since this area needs to be redefined,

the current study evaluates Christian ideology in selected novels in relation to feminist viewpoints.

Western Christianity has changed much of social and cultural life in Africa. Mikell (1997) emphasises that Western Christianity disregards polygamy, instead emphasising monogamy, as well as sketching out a pattern of female subjugation, obedience and domesticity in the defined roles of African wives, mothers and daughters. Christian marriage, however, often gave property rights to women, something traditional marriages did not. So then, an African man has to battle two identities: cultural and religion. He can find it difficult to choose whether to live in a polygamous or monogamous home. Witness Tony in Chiziane's novel *Niketche*, whose "identity is somewhat disturbing because while his African identity gives him license to be polygamous, his Christianity identify thwarts it, imposing monogamy on him" (Da Silva 2013, p. 112).

2.7 Depiction of women in African male authored literature

The way some African male fiction writers depict their female characters reflects that they are unworthy and indifferent. Amouzou (2006) states that Chinua Achebe, a renowned Nigerian writer, mirrored this reality of patriarchy in his literary works. The man is made the subject of the narrative; he is an important person and dominates a woman. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo the main character is portrayed as a strong man whose wives, especially the youngest, live in fear. Women and children are never realised because they are entirely dependent on him. Women and children are lumped together because it is believed that they are unimportant creatures who have nothing important to contribute to nation building (Amouzou, 2006). Women are viewed as companions of men and without men they cannot function properly. Peter (2010) sees the patriarchal system, as it is commonly found in literary works written by men, as leading to

female characters being regarded as the other. Females are under the authority of their father and later their husbands when they get married. Rajah (2015) declares:

Women, more often than not, have had a side role in African literature, or in other words were marginalised. They were mainly allotted the role of a mother or a wife but always in the context of a woman helping the head of the family, whether as a mother providing an heir, or a wife taking care of house affairs and proving worthy in bed. As if the roles weren't demeaning enough, the cultural norms and traditions surrounding these roles are themselves a definition of oppression. Women were portrayed as more of a commodity than a self aware human being and this was actualised in various plays where the daughter had to be married at an early age so the family could use the bride money to send the son for education. (para. 2)

The above account shows that women's potential is limited to household chores, therefore limiting their outside contribution to the society at large. They are limited to defined spaces that oppress them by portraying them as commodities of men.

In addition, according to Peter (2010), some male writers support the practice of arranged marriages which in many cases, has the blessing of some female characters, especially those who perceive marriage only as a means of social mobility and material enrichment for their families. A girl is similar to a lamb being sacrificed, like many others on the altar of materialism. What happens then when the bride price is paid and a woman married? What happens after the bride price is paid remains between the wife and the husband. Mutunda (2009) pronounces that in Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kola*, Niam, because of the bride price he has the right to exploit, subordinate and make her his property. His wife works as a housewife and takes care of her

husband's farm and is more of an economic asset, a piece of property, than a wife to him. This shows how patriarchy has socialised Niam into believing that men are superior to women and must be in complete control.

In some cases, women are always the victims of the polygamous home. Lere and Iyabode (2010) admit that woman cannot stop her husband from marrying another wife, if she does, she will be send out. Sadek (2014) points out that one of the traditional sufferings in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's novel *Weep Not, Child* is polygamy. Ngotho's wives have no voice and have learnt to live in harmony within hostile polygamous structure. They cling to cultural structures without challenging them. What Ngotho's wives do "is to keep the centre safe and sound because the deep rooted traditional ideology is that if you have a stable centre, then the family will hold" (Sadek, 2014, p. 173). Uwah (1993) confirms that before the late arrival of African women's literature, some black male writers portray women as passive mothers with neither personality, character nor problems accepting their condition and having no spirit of freedom. Although numerous works came through to critique the negative portrayal of women, few serious attempts have been made to correct this widely held view that male writers hold for women. The same view is shared by Kolawole (1992) that women are associated with the task of raising and bringing up children. The male writers are definitely not showing the pains, agony and suffering women go through at the hand of their husbands and societies. However, there are some exceptions to this trend. Some male writers champion women in their writing.

In some instances, women are portrayed as centres of social change. This study has shown that there are women who are propelled to be drivers of social change. This is indicated in Zakes Mda's novel *The Madonna of Excelsior*, in which the main character Popi is the determined woman who is willing to partake in the negotiation process prior to the first democratic elections

in South Africa in 1994 with an active role after this in the newly elected municipal council (Ibinga, 2007). Popi's determination shows that she does not want to be a bystander anymore; she wants women to be included in public sphere. Popi's election as member of the municipal council indicates the departure of the formerly oppressive people in decision-making institutions. Popi has established her resistance against racial, gender as well as class discrimination. Ibinga (2007) further mentions Popi was against corrupt practices that her male counterparts are involved in. She does not hide her resistance towards such acts even to her own brother who is favouring his personal interests over the people he is leading. Here, Mda wants to show the male characters as dishonest and that women's honesty can bring about genuine social and economic development.

Moreover, Odonkor and Bampoh-Addo (2014) analyse Sembene Ousmane's novel *God's Bits of Wood*, in which the women characters are crafted as partners who work together but are not slaves to men. These women are not afraid to step in their husbands' steps when the going is tough. They turn out to be breadwinners of their houses when it is not going well with their men. Men recognised their women's bravery; albeit at later stage of the novel. This shows that the society needs to rethink about the handling of women with the view of giving them the proper place in society. Odonkor and Bampoh-Addo (2014) maintain that Ousmane's positive portrayal of women has to do with women or feminist consciousness. Consciousness has to do with an awareness that helps an individual to become a brand new person. It offers new alternatives for both men and women. In addition, Sadek (2014) pronounces that in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's novel *Wizard of the Crow*, Nyawira, the heroine of the novel, is able to reject her father's attempts to control her. She marries a poor artist against her father's will. When she realises that the artist married for her wealth, she divorced him. Nyawira is showing other women that they can live the

life of their choice. Mutunda (2009) argues that societies must do away with the stereotype that women cannot be leaders and that no society can develop effectively without the input of women.

It is apparent from the discussion that men and women do not enjoy equal rights. Even though interventions have been made to normalise gender equality, inequality persists in some societies. The strong cultural and social beliefs of African patriarchal societies could be the cause of this continuous oppression of women.

2.8 Depiction of males in African female authored literature

Some African women literary writers portray men as violent and attached to their African heritages. In *The Sun Hath Looked Upon Me*, Beyala's first novel, men are depicted as superior to women because of their social status and religious belief. Mutunda (2009) analyses that Jean Zepp in the novel seeks to dominate women by forcefully engaging them in sexual acts. He forcefully grabs Ateba (a prostitute) by her hair. "He forces her down low, forces her to crouch, with her head pushed into his manly smells, her mouth against his penis" (Mutunda, 2009, p. 115). To Jean Zepp, women do not have other value than to provide sexual pleasure to men. Jean Zepp says, "it is no accident that God created her from the rib of man" (Mutunda, 2009, p. 118). In the same novel, one of Ateba's clients, a rich fat man, refers to the Bible, saying women are sculpted for men. This man believes that he is given heavenly power to control women. By justifying the oppression of women in religious terms, men see their power over women as a gift from God and so believe that it has been divinely ordained that women should satisfy men's sexual pleasure (Mutunda, 2009). In addition, Da Silva (2013) and Asante (2000) specify that in Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes*, Oko, Esi's husband, thinks he is not man enough because he is

failing to control Esi (an educated woman). Oko is described to have forced his wife into sexual relationship, which Esi considers as marital rape. When Esi tells Oko that she is not willing to comply with his rules, Oko starts to reinforce through aggression and violence. Oko is scared to show his weakness because other men in his society would laugh at him. To this, Cham and Eldred (1987) advise that any movement in society must have its feet firmly rooted in healthy cultural grounds if it is to be of any lasting and valuable welfare to individuals and society at large. A healthy culture is where equality prevails, free from all forms of exploitation and rooted in the true traditions of people. Cham and Eldred (1987) propose that the above discussed cultural beliefs motivate men to think that they are superior to women and that such beliefs hinder African women from fully living the life of their choice and contributing to the development of societies.

On the contrary, some female writers depict men who consider women as allies in the fight against male domination. Mutunda (2009) states that in Ba's *So Long a Letter*, Abou is married to Ramatoulaye's daughter, Daba, and he believes in equality between spouses. Their relationship is based on complementarity; they share equal rights and duties, which is unusual in their society. Abou even expresses his view to his mother-in-law that Daba is not his 'slave nor his servant', a statement that delights Ramatoulaye who sees her daughter's marriage in a positive light. Ba understands that women and men should work in line with each other. Similarly, Zhuwarara (2016) points out that in Andreas's *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, Michael is depicted as a good husband to his wife Mee Ali. Michael has an intimate relationship with his wife, putting his arms around her waists, which sends a thrill through her body. This shows a sign of love, compassion, care and understanding. Michael has defended his wife from

his mother who accuses Mee Ali of being a whore; despite the accusation, he stands on the ground of love he has for his wife.

Studies of literary works by women (for instance, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Mary Karoro Okurut, Unity Dow and Elieshi Lema Ama Ata Aidoo, Mariama Ba, Buchi Emecheta, and Flora Nwapa) reveal that there is a gap in information about rhetoric in feminist literary studies; African fiction to be precise. From the foregoing analysis of previous studies, the researcher has noticed that much has been done to bring forth gender realities, how patriarchy is constructed and maintained and how it can be challenged, but few works have explored how rhetoric has played a role in exposing these challenges.

2.9 Challenges of African feminism

African feminism possesses a number of problems that may affect African women writers and critics. Nkealah (2006) outlines that African women writers and critics tend to deny any affiliation to the feminist movement, even though their writings support feminist views. Their detachment may be because of misconceptions that surround the term feminism. Feminism is normally interpreted as anti-male, anti-culture and anti-religion. Therefore, it becomes difficult for women writers who share none of these ideologies to take feminist points of view because they may think of these as are not valuable. Initially, Nkealah (2016) argues that the definition and use of the term feminist in African literature poses a number of problems for African women writers and critics. Aidoo (as cited in Kolawole, 2002, p. 93) rejects feminism: “You know how we feel about that embarrassing western [*sic*] philosophy? The destroyer of homes. Imported from America to ruin nice African homes.” So, Da Silva (2013) gives reasons why some writers and critics refuse feminism as an ideology. Some writers and critics do so because of feminism’s

implications as a movement theory replete with practices related to white middle-class women's experiences. It is also dangerous to place the local into the global through applying Western experiences to the rest of the world. Certainly, if any ideal global feminism puts all women in one box in order to examine how they are oppressed by nature and culture, these women then become victims to be saved from their own reluctant ignorance.

Nkealah (2006) further points out that the African woman has to accept feminism with its implications, some of which might oppose her cultural norms, reject it completely, or redefine it in the way that is appropriate to her cultural experiences. The aim of this study is to point out the different manners in which women decided to act against the norms of their societies in order to redefine practices that subjugate them. It might not be easy for an African woman to understand women identified in the texts because of different cultural backgrounds, thus there is the theory that can better define is the one that is inclusive of their diversities. An African critic on the other hand, finds it difficult to categorise a writer as feminist because the writer completely refuses to be identified as such (Nkealah, 2006 and Kolawole, 2002). According to Kolawole (2002) the attempt to globalise African women's experience and ignore their cultural beliefs has led to this negative attitude towards feminism. African women want a movement that is inclusive, as many women prefer to engage themselves in the gender theory and activism by bringing men on board because policy changes that will address women's needs cannot succeed if men are not part of the process.

According to Abdul et al. (2011), in the case of Nigeria, feminists have a common target in the emancipation of women and deconstruction of patriarchy in the organisational structure, but they face challenges. Challenges faced by feminists can be classified as both external to the movement and within the feminist collectives. Some external challenges are from societal

perceptions about feminism and on the other hand, governmental policies and laws. Though women demand an equal society, with the male dominated structure of the government, the approach of feminists' advocacy on human rights is yet to be politicised and institutionalised. The Nigerian government's interventions on women's issues need to be put on the front burner in the national debate and this is a concern of feminists that the government needs to address. The other challenge they have noticed is double standards within and outside the movement. Some Nigerian women are playing double standards because of negative press and societal attitude towards feminism. It is observed that within the movement they openly discuss and support feminist issues, but outside the movement especially on family structure, it becomes very difficult to introduce a feminist belief system as it might be seen as disrespectful to the family structure (Abdul et al., 2011). Therefore, according to Sangonet (2010), a broad collective of nongovernmental organisations based in South Africa, views African feminism as a movement without cohesion because it has failed to reach an agreement between African men and women, which it is supposed to be its aim, and instead has caused divisions among women themselves. Nonetheless, Kamau (2014) argues that those against feminism do not always understand what feminism stands for and many of them simply dismiss the position without taking time to understand feminism, despite some of the work they do every day reaffirming the feminist position. Those against feminism tend to oppose the movement because of misunderstanding, because as Hooks (1984) highlights, they get third hand information and have not had first hand experience of the feminist movement. They think feminism is about a bunch of angry women who want to be like men, so there is the need for clarity on the bottom line of what feminists stand for. For this reason, this study has revealed how some women from different milieu have

stood for the positions they are advocating in good and bad times without fear of being discriminated against.

2.10 Feminist rhetoric

African women have accomplished persuasion through literature to get their voices heard and contribute to issues affecting their livelihood. “Feminist rhetorical criticism is grounded in the assumption that historically and currently women and men often have different access to channels and positions of power” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 135). These differences have led women to show they are also able to resist the belief that they are unable to affect changes and facilitate empowerment socially, economically and politically.

Different scholars define feminist rhetoric differently. Three definitions are used to define feminist rhetoric in this study. Meyer (2007) defines feminist rhetoric as a commitment to reflexive analysis and critique of any kind of symbol use that positions people in relation to other people, places and practices on the basis of gendered realities or gendered cultural assumptions. Sloane (2001, p. 308) defines feminist rhetoric as “an advocacy for women, analysis of patriarchy, a style of communication, the extrapolation of theory from women’s practice and the development of critical methods responsive to the special conditions that women face as rhetors”. Feminist rhetoric analysis is a form of rhetorical criticism committed to social justice through dissolving patriarchal forces that have silenced women’s voices while also providing perceptions for rethinking the social creation of gender from rhetorical perspective (Chavez & Griffin, 2012). These three definitions define feminist rhetoric as the discourse that is geared to advocate for social justice when it comes to gendered issues. It is responsive to what women are not happy with and questions the systems to bring about change and benefit for all. According to

Glenn (1995), feminist rhetoric draws its premise from radical analyses of patriarchy, which define the oppression of women, and it incorporates the style of communication known as 'consciousness rising'.

Until the late twentieth century, the rhetorical tradition had been constructed as a history of good men speaking well (Heenan, 2007, p. 1). Richards and Thorne (2007, p. 2) present reasons why women did not intervene openly in rhetoric - because of the cultural prohibition against women speaking in public and also not having received the formal education that would have prepared them to do so. Instead of producing articulate female subjects, women's education was meant to shape and manage women's moral character and conduct and to prepare them for their domestic roles as wives, and household managers. Similarly, Goredema (2009) argues that though South Africa talks a big game on gender equality, it is in many ways the same as the rest of the world; women's rights are suppressed because of different factors such as culture, sexism and what was thought as feminine behaviours. Cultural beliefs here and in Africa are still influencing how women are treated in public and private spheres. Inequality in some cultures is described by sex roles. Mikell (1997) affirms this, saying indigenous African cultural patterns, especially gender roles and relationships, do indeed continue to influence African women's attempts to achieve gender equality today. However, there is a hopeful sign that women will talk about their social, personal, economic and political challenges.

Moreover, there are some qualities that rhetors were supposed to possess, but it was believed that women did not possess these qualities. Sloane (2001) states that qualities traditionally valued in rhetoric were assertiveness, leadership, argumentation, debating skills and expertise which are associated with masculinity. This means those who are to engage in public discourse are

expected to behave and display qualities traditionally associated with masculinity. Larner (2009) emphasises that:

Long ago, critics asserted that since women had small bodies, thus, using their brains to speak, debate and persuade would have weakened the small amount of energy they did have for menstruation. Aristotle and Hippocrates agree that public speaking was too strenuous for women and would damage their ability to conceive and bear strong children. (p. 13)

Women's physical look also influenced how men perceived their contributions to the field of rhetoric. Yet, this does not mean that there were no women rhetors at all. Even if women rhetors made significant contributions in their days, historians erased them or cast doubts about their moral character (Heenan, 2007). According to Richards and Thorne (2007) women's writing took the form of private devotion works as well as poems and plays shared among family and friends. If women undertook to publicise their works, it would ruin their reputation.

Women rhetors have been in existence since the fifth century BCE. Gale's (2000) rereading of Aspasia of Miletus shows that Aspasia is the first Orator in the Western tradition. Aspasia is the woman who is considered by feminists as one of the silenced voices and buried glories of antiquity. Gale (2000) pronounces that, though there is a scarcity of written documents on her works, Aspasia's influence reached Socrates, Pericles and Plato. In addition, Glenn (1995) confirms that Aspasia had taught Pericles how to deliver persuasive speeches in the fifth century BCE. South African feminist writer and social theorist Olive Schreiner (1885-1920), also a well-known political essayist and social commentator, is also one of the women rhetors in history (Denisoff and Kooistra, n.d.). Denisoff and Kooistra (n.d) add that Schreiner has written

numerous social and political treaties, public letters, short stories, and extended feminist polemic entitled *Woman and Labour* in 1911. The polemic *Woman and Labour* demanded labour and the training which fits people for labour, for all women. She used her own evolutionary theory to suggest that only through union and love would equality between sexes be attained (Denisoff & Kooistra, n.d.). These are examples to indicate that women rhetors indeed existed and still exist. Rhetoric has been for both women and men, though there are few records for women because of stereotypes, ignorance and fear of publicising women's work.

Besides, there is need of research in feminist rhetoric to expand the space as requested by some feminists' writers. Atwater (2010) compiles a list of contributors to feminist rhetoric of African decent. Atwater (2010, p. 141) writes, "I have expanded my space and my identity to include feelings of extreme pride and amazement at how courageous all these women were and still are. Now I look forward to others who will take a challenge and expand the narrow space and keep the focus on positive images of women of Africa decent". Mattingly (2002) adds that women are active participants in a rhetorical tradition long conceded to men, however, the study of women's rhetoric is in its infancy, which is accompanied by understandable difficulties and conflicts. This study aims to add to existing literature on women's rhetoric.

Over the years, women's literary works have increasingly questioned the inferior status of women in their societies. Literature is persuasive and conveys the value of society in a persuasive manner (Chesaina, 2015, p. 48). With the emergence of African female authors, their work started to generate interest, their literature could no longer be overlooked and their contribution to knowledge is eventually being appreciated (Kabira & Burkeywo, 2016). Chesaina (2015) further indicates that women have decided to develop strategies to liberate themselves by voicing their plights; self-liberation for African women being more reasonable than through

external sources, because African women know their plights from their experiences and know what needs to be changed. They know the challenges of patriarchal institutions that overpower their identities.

Furthermore, African literature as a whole has been enriched by voices of women expressing their concerns. Since 1966, various inhibitions of women exercising their human rights have found expression in literature especially in fiction written by women and their outputs have been feministic in portraying the female characters (Chukwuma, 2007). African women through literature have been speaking for themselves and in this way disagreeing with the meaning of males and at the same time validating the meaning of females (Kabira & Burkeywo, 2016). African women in many ways have been left out of mainstreams of knowledge making because their experiences have always been deemed invisible; they were just viewed as wives, mothers and labourers who play minimal roles (Kabira & Burkeywo, 2006). Nevertheless, the last three decades have brought changes. Women have emerged as rhetors, but most importantly as sister rhetors. In 2011, then Liberian president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, upon accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, eloquently said, “I urge my sisters, not to be afraid...even if your voice be small, each of us has her own voice” (Glenn & Lunsford, 2011, p. 2). Johnson-Sirleaf acknowledges the sisterhood amongst them and that the individuality and uniqueness has to be celebrated, no matter how small.

In addition, Durant and Fabb (1990, p. 45) point out that in many texts women are represented as subjects to be discussed, exchanged and evaluated by men and are also represented in forms of sexual display or seduction geared to ‘voyeuristic’ pleasure of men. These ills have driven women to use literature to highlight the subjugation of women and make wrongs right. Da Silva (2013) declares that this ill-treatment of women is one of the reasons why woman like Ken

Bugual and Pauline Chiziane make use of political literature to voice the wrongs in societies. These writers offer themselves and their communities a means of recognising and interrogating the female body and sexuality. This means the characters in these stories do not act according to the expected norms, but rather challenge societal rules and open up a space for change.

Kabira and Burkeywo (2016) indicate that women's fictional works reveal the changing roles of the African women in their efforts to realise the self and contribute to discourses such as manhood, marriage, love, motherhood and nation building as well as bringing their experiences to the majority and offering new perspectives. According to Chavez and Griffin (2012) women have developed ways to exercise their influence at the same time strengthening and inspiring cultural norms of femininity and that the private spheres, the space of family, was a women's space where she could develop her natural talents for nurturance and domesticity by being submissive.

Furthermore, feminine rhetoric fosters intimate relationships that can be beneficial to both men and women. Larner (2009) shows that if men resort to feminine rhetoric they appear caring and credible when sharing personal narratives with their audiences, and they are moved, and conclude that they know, like and trust the rhetor. Self-disclosure is also useful as some people consider the rhetor as more genuine and more reliable when they feel they know him/her. This is supported by Chavez and Griffin (2012) who say feminine rhetoric "produces discourses that display a personal tone, use personal experiences, anecdotes and examples as evidence, exhibits inductive structures, emphasises audience participation and encourages identification between speaker and audience".

Larner (2009) states that even while women are competing in the political domain, they create rhetorical techniques that help them maintain their female associated goals, such as acquiring respect and facilitating unity in a compassionate manner. The language of women is even sensitive and cooperative, pronouncing togetherness of all. Richards and Thorne (2007) state that feminine language is considered intimate and unifying and is viewed as passive for political activities; women adopt nurturing and inclusive linguistic behaviours, and therefore, they are suited to be professionals. Sociolinguistics have characterised female language as emotional, pleasing, supportive and consolidative for example women use tag questions (isn't it?), hedges (I wonder) and inclusive pronouns to initiate addressees into conversations (Larner, 2009).

One of the most important aspects of feminist rhetoric is silence. According to Glenn and Lunsford (2011), some women have been silent in order to draw attention to their situations and invite understanding and exchange. Silence has been long overlooked as a source of rhetorical power. Glenn and Lunsford (2011, p. 25) refer to positive silence and listening as feminist rhetorical negotiation because a person honors another person's desire to be heard by listening attentively. Instead of concentration to talk back, one attends to another person's position, anticipating negotiation and collaboration. What should be noted is that silence of women might be a way of creating performative rhetoric, the one that is not tied to written texts.

On the other hand, silence does not always achieve the positive goal and even if it does, it is not always recognised as doing so. "Silence has been gendered a lamentable essence of femininity; of weakness, passivity, stupidity, obedience" (Glenn, 1995, p. 45). Silence can also be used as a strategy to avoid troubles. According to Glenn (1995, p. 46) "silence can be used strategically, without the kind of spoken, one-to-one confrontation that can be witnessed by others or regretted

later”. So, when it is willfully employed, the delivery of silence can be powerful - it can help maintain control.

Silence can also mean to be illiterate. In the famous case of Saara Baartman, her voice was quiet because she could not express herself in English. “In Londoner’s eyes, she was the epitome of potent European fantasies about female African sexuality. Saara had no voice in the press debate over her freedom” (Atwater, 2010, p. 11). Saara’s contract was discussed and that she had to return to Cape Town in six years, would get her share in profit, and get better medical treatment but this did not happen. Saara was not educated she could neither write nor read, so how much control did she have over the contract? (Atwater, 2010). Saara’s illiteracy has determined the domination the Londoners have over her sexuality. Ann (2015) emphasises that the literacy movement tends to bring about a change in society especially in how women are treated, by trying to discourage discrimination and humiliation of women. Women are often downgraded by the decisions made by men without their consent.

The words of literature are written to expand our experience. The writer writes what we do everyday as we translate the symbols we encounter into units of meaning based on our experience and this helps us to understand and identify with the message (Campbell, Huxman & Burkholder, 2015). Once the writers identify the aspects of their society’s experience, they use language to address the issues. It is the writer’s everyday experiences that shape his/her attitude and in return influences his/her writing. This paper argues that African women writers define their own realities by using tremendous eloquence in their writing. The literature reveals that there is little on women’s contributions to rhetoric (Matos, 2015). What is clear from the scholarly literature is that women’s rhetoric continues to be ignored in rhetorical realm. With this in mind, this study aimed to evaluate the rhetoric of women within the rhetorical field.

2.11 Rhetoric as persuasion

Rhetoric influences people through effective language use meant for an intended audience. Rhetoric is the process by which people influence each other through different symbols. ‘A rhetorical act is an intentional polished attempt to overcome the problems in a given situation, with a specific audience, on a given issue, to achieve a particular end’ (Campbell et al., 2015, pp. 8-9). Capps, Page and Rouse (1926) explain that persuasion is clearly a sort of demonstration since we are persuaded when we consider something to have been demonstrated. Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. Capps et al. (1926) indicate that Aristotle furnishes three modes of persuasion: the first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker. Persuasion is achieved by the speaker’s personal character when the speech is spoken so as to make us think him credible. Murthy and Ghosal (2014) add that ethos, the speaker’s personal character, is a critical element, without which rhetoric would not be functional. Ethos is the audience perception of the speaker’s authority on the subject he/she is speaking on. The speaker’s credibility and authority are reviewed according to how well the speech is convincing the audience. Maafiadoc.om (n.d.) however indicates that:

A novelist knows that, though reason should dominate our thinking, man is often influenced by passion, prejudice and customs, therefore the appeal from the writer’s character has persuasive value. The words themselves must impress the audience that the writer is of high moral character and benevolent. The writer or speaker must have a good grasp of the subject, viewed in the proper perspective, must have read widely, must have a good taste and discrimination judgement, must show an abhorrence of unscrupulous tactics and the specious, and should have a respect for commonly acknowledged virtues.

(p. 3)

The speaker and writer's ethos is of the utmost importance to the audience. The audience wants to see compassionate and moral characters in those addressing them. The knowledge of the subject is also important if the audience is to have trust in the speaker or writer. For these reasons, the authors use the rhetorical devices to evoke emotional responses in their readers. The goal of rhetoric is to persuade towards a particular frame of view or particular course of action, so appropriate rhetorical devices are used to construct sentences designed both to make the reader receptive through emotional changes and to provide a rational argument for the frame of view or course of action (Albashir & Alfaki, 2015, p. 37). Capps et al. (1926) indicate that persuasion may come through the hearers, when speech stirs their emotion. Our judgements are different when we are happy and friendly from when we are pained and hostile. Thus, Fosmire (2015) illustrates that emotions are those things on account of which people change and differ in regard to judgements and upon which attend pain and pleasure.

Pathos is an important part of persuasion, people judge what they read or hear according to their emotions. This means the hearers need to be emotionally engaged: pity, anger, fear to make the judgement of the subject. In Mariama Ba's novel *So Long a Letter*, Ba stirs the emotions of the readers by appealing to their imagination. She captures the emotions by word pointing that uses sensory and specific details. It is clear that nobody can be commanded to feel emotion, but it is for example, for a large part, possible for the writer to influence one way or the other the reader into being angry at seeing Ramatoulaye, the mother of twelve children at twenty-five years of dedication and service to Modou Fall, abandoned so that Modou can marry a school-friend of his oldest daughter, Dada (Mafiadoc.com, n.d.).

In addition, Capps et al. (1926) maintain that persuasion is affected by the speech itself, when we have proven a truth or an apparent truth, by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the

case in question. In other words, according to Murthy and Ghosal (2014), if the statement is attempting to persuade the audience with a reasonable claim, the speaker must offer proof in support to his/her statement in the form of a logical argument. Logos referred to any appeal to intellectual reason, based on logical conclusion. These conclusions come from assumptions derived from the collection of solid facts and statistical data. It is important to know what you are writing or speaking about as indicated in Colleran (1988) because for Aristotle, rhetoric is the faculty of observing in any given situation the available means of persuasion. It is beneficial to have the knowledge of the means of persuasion because it enables the speaker to better defend the truth and denounce falsehood, it also gives him the ability to instruct popular audiences because it improves his own grasp of issues since it requires him to analyse both sides.

Furthermore, Campbell et al. (2015) highlight that Aristotle recognised a different sort of truth consisting of the wisdom or social knowledge required to make choices about issues affecting communities. This truth cannot be discovered through science or analytical logic, but it depends on cultural values, the situation or immediate context and the nature of the issues. According to Campbell et al. (2015, p. 15), “rhetoric addresses issues that arise because of people’s values. These will change through time and in the face of altered conditions”. The rhetoric of African women fiction writers addresses what their cultures negate. They are aiming for this to be changed through time. Therefore, Campbell (2006) is in support of this claim by stating that rhetoric is indigenous, linked to cultural history, traditions and values. Aristotle described all rhetoric and theory that underlies it as closely related to time and place. The novels in this study are written in a particular cultural time and place, and the culture might not be the same today as it was yesterday; culture is dynamic.

2.12 Rhetorical style

Those who define style relate it to communication, though they do not mention the word communication directly, they refer it to rhetoric. Brummett (2008, p. 2) defines style as “the peculiar manner in which a man expresses his conceptions, by means of language”. Brummett (2008) states that style in this sense refers to the ways in which actions, objects, events, gestures, and commodities, as well as properties of language are used to create influential outcomes in the self and other. In addition, Kennedy (2007) postulates that rhetorical style is not just a mere decoration of ideas, it is the filling out and forming of ideas in order to allow them to stand on their own and organise themselves as coherent whole.

Style includes both parts of the speech; “figurative style” as well as the tone of the speech in its entirety. Style guides an audience through a speech and makes translations between different items gathered through invention, and structured through invention and then structured through arrangement. Cope and Sandys (2009, p. 2) emphasise that style is important “for it is not sufficient to know what to say, it is necessary also to know how to say it and this contributes greatly to the impression conveyed of a certain character in the speech”. The kind of language used by the orator will materially assist the impression of moral character that the orator wishes to assume on the minds of the audience.

Furthermore, Kennedy (2007) points out that figurative style represents specific elements designed to capture the attention and seduce the ear of the audience, thereby making them engaged with what is being said and creating more of a feeling of continuity and unity. Figurative style focuses on sophisticated, effective parts of speech that give clarity and power to specific ideas or images. Figurative style is valuable in rhetoric because it provides a sort of

“musical accompaniment” to the text, thereby placing the audience in a certain frame of mind to receive the messages. An example of figurative style is metaphor. Aristotle (1973) defines metaphor as the application of a word that belongs to one thing. Metaphors must be drawn from things that are related to the original thing and yet not obviously so related, just as in philosophy a serious mind will perceive resemblances even in the things far apart. The use of figurative or metaphorical language grasps and defines the intangible qualities of experience, and it can be used to explain difficult concepts, which may not be verifiable, involving another kind of precision the vividness of immediate sensory experience. It also holds the reader or their memories (Campbell et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the writers may switch to their vernaculars to associate with their readers, to show that they belong together. In the novels *Purple Hibiscus* and *Meekulu’s Children*, the writers switched to their vernaculars to identify themselves with the readers. Campbell et al. (2015) point out that people identify with each other, and as an individual, the audience will respond to you, specifically as an individual who represents general qualities and characteristics. This in turn builds the relationship of trust because “we learn to trust by sharing, by mutual exchange, and by sensitivity to the other person” (Campbell et al., 2015, p. 258). Burke (1931) explains that identification is needed as a rhetorical strategy because there is a division among people. He contends that the need to identify arises because humans are born and exist as biological separate human beings and their social class, political and history make up are different as well. There would be no need for rhetoricians to preach for unity if there were no differences. Burke warns rhetors to avoid the “I” instead use “we’s” when identifying with the audience as the way of inclusivity.

2.13 Invitational rhetoric at work

Invitational rhetoric came into being when it was thought that classical rhetoric was patriarchal, violent and cruel in a way. It is believed that since rhetoric is the art of persuasion, people are power hungry and want to influence others to change. Influencing others devalues the lives and beliefs of those being influenced and gives the influencer much power. Craig and Muller (2007) are of the opinion that the Western discipline of rhetoric has been defined as the conscious intent to change others, and then every communicative encounter has been considered as primarily an attempt to change or influence other. Milotta (2011) argues that classical rhetoric did not just seek to persuade, but to work with the audience. Rhetors often sought to establish good relationships with their audience in order to gain understanding and trust between the rhetor and audience. Milotta (2011) further mentions that ethos is a good example of how rhetors sought to establish a relationship with the audience. The audience can trust the rhetor if it perceives a sense of goodwill in him/her. A sense of mutual respect between the rhetor and audience is of the utmost importance in establishing the good relationship between the rhetor and audience.

Some feminist scholars have looked at theory that includes all participants in the communication process. They have identified communicative modes that previously have not been recognised because they are grounded in alternative values (Craig & Muller, 2007). Invitational rhetoric was introduced as an alternative rhetorical option promoting rhetoric as an agency of voluntary transformation. Kindred (2007, p. 8) declares that the characteristic of invitational rhetoric is of offering not imposition. Space is created in a communication setting for willing transformation because of a personal decision to learn, choose and change. According to Gearhart (as quoted in Park, n.d.):

Communication can be a deliberate creation or co-creation of an atmosphere in which people or things, if and only if they have the internal basis for change, may change themselves; it can be a milieu in which those who are ready to be persuaded may persuade themselves, may choose to or choose to learn. (p. 195)

Gearhart (1979) emphasises that individuals are the ones to decide if they want to learn and be changed by the act of communication. Communication must take place in an environment where people are enabled to choose for themselves, but not forced to change or learn. Lozano (2013) also indicates that in invitational rhetoric, two rhetors engage without intent to change or persuade others. It is a rhetoric that equalises both the speaker and audience. The purpose of the dialogue is to offer information in order to provide further understanding of the rhetor's point of view, to invite each other into each of their perspectives. Each rhetor must be willing to engage with the other's perspectives and judgement freely. This creates a safe environment for the rhetor to offer their offerings. Lozano (2013, p. 13) states that "once all parties accept the situational conditions: safety, freedom and value they embody their message with the three feminist principles of self-determination, immanent value and equality". Thus, Craig and Muller (2007) do not accept communication that tends to oppress and dominate others. There are better humane and enriching ways to live. These efforts to dominate and gain power over others cannot be used to build relationships of equality. Therefore, it is better if feminists decide to do away with alienation, competition and dehumanisation and instead guarantee relationships with intimacy, mutuality and camaraderie attitudes (Hooks, 1984). This study aims at finding the conversations that promote economic, political and social equality among women and men; where everyone is considered as a contributor to the conversation. This is emphasised by Lloyd (2013, p. 250) who indicates that invitational rhetoric addresses the rare conditions of economic, political and social

equality among participants. Even if the rhetor's offer is rejected, the maintenance of the connection between the rhetor and audience remains the same because the audience is still valued.

In addition, in invitational rhetoric, all participants are encouraged to engage in a dialogue to find their common grounds. Kindred (2007) is of the view that dialogues force participants to reconcile their views with their values, it obliges them to confront their own thinking, and they see different ways of seeing an issue. This is a way of liberating the participants from division and prepares them to find a way to mutual understanding and transformation. Kindred admits that invitational rhetoric's goal is social equality. According to Lozano (2013), in Starhawk's novel *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, equality is depicted when the society is cooperative and works together despite different perspectives. Each enacts their own cultures and languages, but they are all grounded in the knowledge of respect of the sacred things. On the day of Reaper, Maya gives a speech reinstating the agreement the community has with each other and the spirit of nature: and when she speaks she uses "we" pronoun to include all members of the society Lozano (2013). Kindred (2007) emphasises that in invitational rhetoric, the aim is not to control others, but something that can be employed by all participants of an interaction so that everyone can learn from the interaction. This interaction creates knowledge and the decision made is shared between the initiator of rhetoric and the audience. The initiator of rhetoric acts as the facilitator for exchange of information to flow freely in the communication process.

One of the focuses of invitational rhetoric is immanent value. "Immanent value professes that every human being is unique and necessary part of the pattern of the universe" (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 4). According to Sharier (2015) as humans, we must first realise that we exist with the sphere of equality, that we share the same image. When we create the mentality of opposition,

we oppress the object of oppression and demonising others' traditional beliefs. This type of inequality is a problem as it views others as less than humans. This is what Amouzou (2006) refers to in Flora Nwapa's novel *One is Enough*; the protagonist responds to the issue of inequality by not depending on her husband for her livelihood. Rather, she is the breadwinner in the family. Nwapa is celebrating uniqueness and equality of men and women. There is a need to break free from the beliefs and customs that keep women down. Amouzou (2006) believes that Nwapa does not view women as passive and voiceless. The female characters in her novels do not only exist to do household chores; they get involved in matters affecting their communities and national life.

Diverse perspectives are viewed as important resources in the interaction. Kindred (2007) indicates that not only different perspectives are respected, but also they are honoured as valuable resources. Individuals have to choose whether they want to engage in the dialogue or not. For example in Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, the North's central sense of respect and sharing are emulated through actions and through their speech acts; when they meet together to make a decision everyone is represented, but participants have the choice to participate individually. This represents the feminist principle of self-determination since everyone in the group has the freedom to engage in the community's decision-making process (Lozano, 2013).

2.13.1 Offering perspectives

In invitational rhetoric, the rhetor just offers a point of view to the audience instead of imposing ideas on them. Makinen (2016) points out that when a rhetor offers perspectives in her/his speech, the audience is given a view through the rhetor's eyes to the surrounding world or on a specific issue. The aim of invitational rhetoric is to provide the audience, in a dialogic-oriented

situation, the rhetor included, with new perspectives instead of trying to inflict changes on the audience. Bone, Griffin and Scholz (2008) indicate that:

In offering perspectives rhetors do not seek to impose their position on audience members, rather, they articulate their perspectives as fully and carefully as possible: offering is the process of giving voice to a perspective rather than imposing a position or view on another rhetor. When rhetors offer perspectives, they articulate a point of view not gain adherence to that view, but, rather to enhance understanding of it. (p. 436)

In invitational rhetoric, rhetors do not impose their positions because they are offering perspectives to the audience. This is what happens in the works of fiction. Fictional writers do not convince their readers to change towards their views, rather they offer perspectives on certain issues and the readers will see to it themselves whether they want to change or not.

Furthermore, in offering perspectives, one can use personal narratives. As confirmed by Langellier (1989), personal narratives, whether spoken or written, are mutually created in accordance with shared knowledge and interaction rules. However, the first person speaker usually tells them even though someone else may have experienced the actual story. In addition, personal narratives are constructed on realities that are culturally and personally relevant, but they are meant to challenge cultural beliefs and innovation (Langellier, 1989; McAdams, 2008). Makinen (2016) adds that personal narratives create equality between the speaker and audience as they validate the humanity of the speaker and remove the possible distance. This is in accordance with invitational rhetoric, which holds that a rhetor has the same value as the audience members and that she/he is not superior to the participants. This study aims at finding

the dialogic communication that promotes offering of perspectives that promote the same value of the rhetor and participants, in the selected novels.

2.13.2 External conditions

The environment in which the interaction is taking place is of the utmost importance in invitational rhetoric. According to Craig and Muller (2008), if invitational rhetoric is to result in mutual understanding, there must be a creation of atmosphere in which audience members' perspectives can also be offered. To have a positive environment there are three external conditions that must pertain in the interaction between rhetors and audience members namely, safety, value and freedom. Craig and Muller (2008) explain that the condition of safety involves the creation of a feeling of security from danger for the audience. The audience members feel safe when their ideas and feelings are received with respect and care. Mihalcea (2014) explains that value is present when the rhetor recognises the views of other people, although different from his/hers, have inherent value and that he/she undertakes to understand other people's perspectives. Value is created through the principles of moral respect.

The audience in invitational rhetoric must be made aware of their freedom to express themselves. The participants have to understand that they have the power to choose to agree or disagree with the rhetor. According to Mihalcea (2014) when freedom is present, rhetors do not place restrictions on an interaction; they do not choose for the participants how to think. All opinions and views can be expressed as long as there is no violation of external conditions. Makinen (2016) demonstrates that external condition of value of the interlocutors may be visible in the interaction through the content and style of the speech.

2.14 The connection between invitational rhetoric and Aristotelian rhetoric

Feminist scholars sought to create a rhetorical theory that includes women in the rhetorical realm. Invitational rhetoric does not suggest that Aristotelian rhetoric has to be done away with; the two dimensions of rhetoric have commonalities that make them a tool to promote good will. Lunsford (as cited in Park, n.d) thinks that Aristotle stresses the importance of understanding an audience; that the speaker must put the given audience in the right frame of mind and he can do that by showing good character to his audience. In terms of audience analysis, Aristotle's rhetoric starts out with the opinions of the audience, establish areas of agreement and value different positions. From this analysis, Park (n.d.) concludes that invitational rhetoric is not new and not an alternative; it is rooted in traditional rhetoric and is developed as supplementary to the classical approach. Park (n.d.) further says that invitational rhetoric is a rhetoric that emphasises the ethics of the speaker, values the audience and its participation, creates consensus among the speakers and creates an encouraging environment for communication. Therefore, invitational rhetoric is still persuasion, a persuasion that does not seek violence, coercion and manipulation, but creates mutual understanding between the rhetor and audience.

In addition, Milotta (2008) also realises the relationship between Aristotelian and invitational rhetoric. Aristotle's rhetoric is associated with dialectics (an interactive session wherein the speaker tries to convince the listeners to accept his logical argument through a series of questions and answer). More importantly, Milotta (2008, p. 11) equates invitational rhetoric to dialectics and this suggests "wholeness between two different positions or those two oppositional realities can maintain distinct identities and also work together to transcend those materialities to create a new reality at a greater level of abstraction". Without involvement from the participants, the two cannot achieve their goals. Invitational rhetoric can be seen as in a dialectical position to

Aristotelian rhetoric, just that in the former the involvement of the audience members and the need of mutual cooperation are of the most importance.

However, Milotta (2008) confirms that there were rhetors that developed tactics to deceive and manipulate their audience in ancient times. But that does not mean that the school of rhetoric did not emphasise the moral responsibility of the rhetor. Ethos was important to them just as it is important in invitational rhetoric. Milotta (2008) also states that as compared to fighting against the audience, classical rhetoricians actually sought to work with the audience. Persuasion was not the only the goal of classical rhetoric, rather, rhetors often sought to establish a relationship with their audience in order to gain understanding and trust between audience and rhetor.

One can conclude that relationships do exist between these apparently oppositional theories. The compatibility of these theories is not the aim of this study though; hence, it is not discussed in the analysis of this study.

2.15 Theoretical frameworks of the study

2.15.1 Aristotelian rhetorical theory

This study uses Aristotelian rhetorical theory to show how these novels employ feminist persuasive arguments. The study of rhetoric was derived from ancient Greece and Rome to train students in legal oratory, thus from its very beginning rhetoric has been associated with political discourse (Colleran, 1988). The fictional works under study are politically, economically and socially orientated; therefore it is well suited to rhetorical analysis. Rhetorical analysis assumes that literary texts like any other cultural discourses seek to persuade us of something; it is up to the readers to see what the literary text is persuading them of, why and how (Ullen, 2016).

Murthy and Ghosal (2014) indicated that, according to Aristotle, effective persuasion is possible with three appeals. According to Collieran (1988), when persuading an audience, the writer/speaker has to be concerned about the logical proof, emotional responses of the audience and his/her credibility. Thus, this study employed the three proofs of persuasion. Collieran (1988) state that Aristotle divides the proofs into three modes of appeal: the appeal to reason (logical), the appeal of speakers (ethical) and the appeal to audience emotions (pathos). Borg (2004) points out that the choice of words and use of anecdote, quotations and facts are important in moving the audience over to one's point of view. Logos relies on the audience's ability to perceive information in a logical way to arrive at some conclusions. These conclusions come from assumptions derived from solid fact. Although the study analyses fictitious works, these are derived from real situations and are answers to questions posed by situations in which they arose. In addition, Borg (2004) indicates that ethos relate to the speaker and his/her character as revealed through communication. The speaker or writer should consider how the language and development of the message reflect good taste, common sense and sincerity. For the message to be believable, there had to be 'source credibility' in the minds of the listeners. Pathos is defined by Murthy and Ghosal (2014) as the speaker's appeal to his audience's sense of emotions and their interests. With the help of pathos the speaker can get emotionally connected with his audience.

In Mariama Ba's novel *So Long a Letter*, Ba stirs the emotions of the readers by appealing to their imagination. She captures the emotions by word-pointing that uses sensory and specific details (Mafiadoc.com, n.d.). Aristotle as quoted in Murthy and Ghosal (2014) says "a man is by nature a political animal not simply because he possesses reason but also because he experiences emotions". Emotions of individuals influence their thinking and they are also powerful

motivators to stimulate the hearts and minds of the listeners to accept the claims of the speaker. Emotions may help the affected readers of the novels to think deeply about their situations in order to effect changes. These researchers concur that the study of rhetoric has to do with persuasion and can be applied to literary works.

Few studies have been conducted on feministic rhetoric. To be precise, as confirmed by Ullen (2016), rhetoric and fiction have come to be seen as contrasting rather than complimentary because they have been studied separately. Aristotle's modes of appeal are applicable to literary works with Colleran (1988, p. 21) stating that:

In the first instance a work may be scrutinised for the logical arguments contained within the narrative or for particular character's ethical appeal to other characters, second it may be evaluated in terms of how the work logically, ethically or emotionally affects the reader or spectator.

Even though rhetoric is the study of persuasion, the message sent must carry the truth and values of the society. Murthy and Ghosal (2014) as well as Colleran (1988) emphasise that rhetoric is the art of mere persuasion, but according to Aristotle, it is an effective tool to establish what is true and just. Sometimes the speaker convinces his audience of the values of his arguments in spite of his full knowledge of the subject. The speaker cannot leave the audience in doubt and in such cases, it is important that he/she establishes his credibility in the minds of the listeners by establishing the truth. Although the works analysed in this study are based on fiction, there must be truth in them based on the societies where the novels are set so that the readers can connect them to their experiences and knowledge.

2.15.2 Invitational rhetorical theory

This study also makes use of the concept of invitational rhetoric which was developed by Foss and Griffin (1995). Foss and Griffin (1995) among others scholars questioned and challenged the classical rhetorical theories claiming that they contain patriarchal bias; they embody the experiences and concerns of males, while distorting and omitting the experiences and concerns of women (Foss & Griffin, 1992). Invitational rhetoric is an alternative theory that acknowledges experiences and perspectives of women. According to Foss and Griffin (1995):

Invitational rhetoric is an invitation to understanding as a means to create relationship rooted in feminist principles of equality, immanent value, and self-determination. Equality is a commitment to replace dominance that characterises most human relationships with intimacy, mutuality and camaraderie. Invitational rhetoric eschews a hierarchical ranking of individuals according to external criteria, instead recognising the immanent value of all living beings. They see every human being as a unique and necessary part of the pattern of the universe and thus valuable. Self-determination, then, allows individuals to make their own decisions about how they wish to live their lives, accord respect to others' capacity and right to constitute their world. (p. 5)

Invitational rhetoric sees that every human being is special and deserves to be recognised, thus it is rooted in feminist principles that acknowledge the value of all human beings. This means that a patriarchal society may be eschewed if invitational rhetoric is employed since domination cannot be applied; rather, it promotes equality in all spheres of life.

Moreover, according to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), invitational rhetoric that is grounded on feminist principles is an alternative to the traditional rhetorical theory that reflects a patriarchal

nature of changing and influencing others. Invitational rhetoric is a tool for everyday living and it opens the door for a participatory democracy; the qualities women writers want the societies to possess. Bone et al. (2008) indicate that the proposal of invitational rhetoric suggests that invitational rhetoric can be viewed as a communication where participants create a conducive environment where growth and change occur, but change is not its ultimate goal. In contrast to attempting to change another person, when the rhetor uses invitational rhetoric their aim is to enter in a conversation where they can share their perspectives and positions, discuss an issue where no party agrees and increase understanding. This relationship is rooted in respect and reciprocity; this kind of relationship may be present in other forms of rhetoric, what makes it unique in invitational rhetoric is a willingness of the rhetor to converse with the audience rather than debating with them and forgo efforts to change others (Bone et al., 2008). Griffin (2006) agrees that an invitational speaking is the type of speaking where the speaker enters into conversation with the audience to explore issues and ideas, or talk about their beliefs and values. Griffin suggests that the rhetor exchanges ideas with the audience members to engage in dialogue with them and listen to their inputs. In invitational rhetoric, the rhetor needs an open-minded attitude while sticking to the main reason for the conversation. In this way, the audience is not informed or persuaded, but invited to hear about the new issue with the hope that it will stimulate their interest. "This articulation occurs not through persuasive argument, but through offering the giving of expression to a perspective without advocating its support or seeking its acceptance" (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 7). Transformation will then be achieved when all perspectives offered are understood by participants. Transformation is an optional process in invitational rhetoric because participants are free to decide if they are willing to change after being exposed to other's ideas and experiences (Mihalcea, 2014).

In addition, Littlejohn and Foss (2009) discuss the external conditions that encourage and allow participants to offer their perspectives freely in a manner that allows everyone to contribute without being intimidated. The condition of value aims at showing that the audience has intrinsic or immanent worth. The rhetor acknowledges the contributions of others and sees the individuality of all participants. Safety creates a feeling that the audience's contribution is taken with caution and respect. The rhetor does not need to undermine the belief of the participants so that they can be assured that the rhetor is working with them not against them. Freedom is the ability to choose whether audience members are willing to contribute without restrictions. All the participants are allowed to speak out and choose from various options they have contributed, including the one of the rhetor (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

In invitational rhetoric, the rhetor needs to provide safe haven for all in the interaction to partake. The participants need to be assured that their contributions to the issue are not under siege of judgement. Kindred (2007) indicates the need for respect for the personhood of all members of the gathering and respect of their contributions. There must be freedom also in the context for the participants to have meaningful dialogue and select from different options they have helped to create. Individuals have to choose whether they want to engage in the dialogue or not. For example in Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, the North's central sense of respect, and sharing, are emulated through actions and through their speech acts; when they meet together to make a decision everyone is represented, but participants have the choice to participate individually (Lozano, 2013). Foss and Griffin (1995) declare that instead of providing options from which the individuals can choose, the rhetor who wishes to facilitate freedom allows audience members to develop options that well suit them and allows them to explore their experiences. There is a

dearth of literature on invitational rhetoric analyses in fictional works by African women writers; hence the study focuses mostly on fiction outside the African context for the literature review.

Finally, this study used the Aristotelian rhetorical theory to find out how the characters in the novels bring out feministic perspectives by employing Aristotle's three modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos and logos for them to make their arguments in order to arouse the readers. Invitational rhetoric is used to find out how the writers advocate for the realisation of feminist principles: equality, immanent value and self-determination that are made possible if the three external conditions of safety, value and freedom are created for conducive environment to communicate.

2.16 Criticisms of invitational rhetoric

Even though invitational rhetoric has contributed to rhetoric as a field, it has received various criticisms. Condit (as cited in Edwards, 2001) classifies Foss and Griffins' works as part of dichotomy feminism. Condit (1997) accepts the biological differences between men and women without realising people can go beyond these gender disparities if they are able to break the social construction of gender roles. Condit claims that invitational rhetoric tends to downgrade rhetoric as the realm of male, which seems to devalue women's participation in rhetorical discourse. "If our qualities are predetermined by gender, then rhetoric is unnecessary and may be problematic" (Edwards, 2001, p. 34). Bone et al. (2008) comment that those that say invitational rhetoric is gender specific are missing the point of the original article because Foss and Griffin (1995) indicate that:

Although invitational rhetoric is constructed largely from feminist theory; the literature in which its principles and various dimensions have been theorised most thoroughly, we are

not suggesting that only feminists have dealt with and developed its various components or only feminist adhere to the principles on which it is based. (p. 5)

The above quotation stipulates that invitational rhetoric is compounded in various principles that can also be used by non-feminists. It is not restricted to feminists but can be applied in any situation that is adhering to feminist principles. Foss and Griffin (1995) also explain that it is not the use of invitational rhetoric by a particular population that makes it feminist, but rather the grounding of its assumptions in feminist principles and theories. The use of invitational rhetoric is not determined by the people who use it, but by the use of its feminist principles.

Furthermore, Dow (1995) claims that by supporting invitational rhetoric, one indirectly supports that persuasion is violent. Moreover, Gearhart (1979) pays attention to violence in communication and argues that the fact that communication is done with language and mental language, with refined functions of the mind, instead of with whips or rifles, does not excuse it from the act of violence. Gearhart (1979) clarifies that if there is an intention to change others, it is already the act of violence. "To change other people or entities is not itself violation. It is a fact of existence that we do. The act of violence is in the intention to change" (Gearhart, 1979, p. 196). Dow (1995) would not agree with Gearhart because he/she is not convinced that inviting someone to share your perspective is different from persuading another. Therefore, finding invitational rhetoric unrealistic because it concludes that all attempts to persuade someone are violent and dominant.

It seems that there is a misunderstanding of what Foss and Griffin (1995) have actually meant in their proposal. Its proposition of going 'beyond persuasion' does not mean denial of persuasion, but rather adding another communicative approach to rhetoric. Following the criticisms of

invitational rhetoric, most of which came two years after Foss and Griffin's article, invitational rhetoric has not made a significant impact on creating a new rhetorical theory (Milotta, 2011). For this reason, there has been very little work done with invitational rhetoric since the 1990s (Milotta, 2011). Makinen (2016) emphasises that invitational rhetoric is a theory among other rhetorical theories that needs further exploration; despite criticisms actual applied research has been low. The researcher of this study is supporting the claim made by Milotta (2011) and Makinen (2016). There has not been much done with invitational rhetoric especially in African women's fictional works, which this study is focused on.

2.17 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the literature related to the topic of the study and reveals gaps in the reviewed literature. The term feminism is defined and its shortcomings in the African context are highlighted. There are alternative terms that may better describe the conditions of African women in an African context: Womanism, STIWANISM, motherism, nego-feminism. Patriarchy and oppression of women may be contextual, so it is not wise to relate a certain issue to the whole continent. In some cases, women are oppressed due to a total dependence on men due to culture, or economic reasons. On the other hand, not all women are dependent on men; some strive to be independent in public and private spheres, contradicting their cultures. Education is believed to be the special key that allows women to be professionals, participate in politics and improve their literacy to read and understand issues that oppress them. The biblical teaching that man is created to rule a woman contributes to the subjugation of women. Some men believe that they are fulfilling their biblical duties by controlling their wives. In addition, in male literary writing, women are depicted differently; either as dependent or strong and independent. The African man is seen differently in women's eyes; there are some good men that give women

freedom to live their lives the way they like and there are those that choose how women should live. Therefore, African feminism faces challenges as there are misconceptions surrounding the term 'feminism'. Some women do not want to be associated with the term feminism because of the fear of what is implied by the term. Feminist rhetoric has been ignored because women were believed to lack the qualities that are believed to constitute good rhetors. However, there were women rhetors but there are few records of their contributions to rhetoric. Rhetoric as persuasion does not only need to be persuasive, but truth that connects to the readers' experiences must be portrayed in the writers' arguments to enhance their characters. Rhetorical style is important because the rhetor needs to know how to say something to contribute to the impression of the message. In invitational rhetoric, the rhetor seeks to establish mutual understanding and relationships with the audience. Therefore, the environment must be made conducive by acknowledging the value, freedom and safety of all participants in order to enhance the feminist principle of self-determination, equality and immanent value. Invitational rhetoric has not made contributions as expected because of misunderstanding of its aim. However, some critics see the interconnection between Aristotelian and invitational rhetoric and others see them as oppositional theories. The study uses Aristotelian proof persuasion and invitational theories as the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 3

SELF-FULFILMENT AND RESILIENCE AS ROUTES TO FREEDOM IN *THE OFFICIAL WIFE* BY MARY KAROORO OKURUT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how educated women view polygamous marriage and its contribution to women's oppression. Polygamy is patriarchal in nature as it offers an opportunity for a man to acquire another wife without permission from the one/ones already married. Women have a choice to stay or leave the marriage, but in some instances, women do not have a choice due to cultural prohibitions and dependence on men for economic support. It has been a cultural practice, belief and also an individual choice that people make to commit to polygamy (Thobejane & Flora, 2014, p. 1058). This chapter however examines the practice of polygamy in a township context where wives are living separately: how they relate to each other; how the husband balances the marriage and the impact it has on children. The chapter assesses how education and economic independence influence the decision of women in polygamous marriage. Liz, the central character in the novel *The Official Wife*, takes it upon herself to expose and defy the polygamous marriage. The agency and resilience Liz demonstrates is worth noting as she battles to get her voice heard. She determines the importance of being true to what you want to achieve and that the personal failures are acceptable in the journey to success.

The chapter examines how Liz perceives Christianity in Africa in the context of polygamous marriage. Liz questions the authenticity of the double life of men whose one leg is in Christianity and the other leg is in traditional beliefs. Christianity rejects polygamy, instead preferring monogamy, and also rejects women subjugation (Mikell, 1997). Furthermore, the process of

attaining freedom from patriarchy needs women and men to understand that women are not against men but against oppression. The strong friendship between Liz and Fina is noted as it impacts on how Liz handles the process of acting against patriarchy. The chapter presents how the characters build their credibility and emotions evoked towards and against some characters through their actions and arguments. It is argued in this chapter that immanent value, equality and self-determination can be acquired after some rough experiences people go through as in the case of Ishaka.

3.2 Transcending the norms: Challenges of the polygamous marriage

The novel *The Official Wife* has many voices: some heard and some silent. The novel begins with Liz's monologue setting the scene by telling of her polygamous marriage miseries. What the research wants to problematise in this section is to determine the extent to which Liz suffers as the official wife and her personal agency to shatter polygamous marriage. From the beginning of the novel, the readers are introduced to the way Liz envisions to construct a new female identity of liberation. Even though she does not mention the status of her marriage directly at the beginning of the novel, the imagery of the 'double bed' introduces her predicaments to the readers. Liz is lying on the double bed alone while the husband is with the second wife. The double bed signifies double problems one can experience in this type of marriage. The double bed imagery is the tactic Liz uses to build trust from the readers as 'self-disclosure'. According to Campbell et al. (2015) a trusting relationship requires a willingness to engage in trusting act of self-disclosure. Therefore, the rhetor is trusted to the degree that the audience knows about him/her; details that he/she is a unique individual. The readers may begin to notice Liz's credibility; with her experiences she is the right person to voice the cruelty of polygamous marriage, than anyone who hears or sees what other people are going through.

Polygamous marriage leads to hatred, jealousy and torment for Liz as she cannot accept being the other wife while the husband, Ishaka, spends more time with the second wife, Manga, as Liz calls her. Ishaka neglects the needs of the official wife who from the onset has been against Ishaka taking that girl as his wife. Liz suffocates in the pool of loneliness because Ishaka is never at home. “My bedroom is more like it. Because I can count on my fingers how many nights you have spent in it this year. And I can assure you; I do not count to more than four” (Okurut, 2003, p. 60). Liz’s confident gesture to confront Ishaka and tell him the truth is a sign that she does not want to succumb to the fate of silence. Liz honestly states her case in front of Ishaka to show the long awaited freedom of women voices. Mkhize and Singh (2015) find out that women are aware of their oppression, but they are silenced by patriarchal societies where the man has all the power. Liz does not have the power to choose for Ishaka, but she has the power to state her dissatisfactions of the polygamous marriages.

Furthermore, Liz’s jealousy towards the co-wife is shown when she strategises to stop using the beautiful name ‘Malaika’, which means ‘angel’, and names her Manga, which signifies something ugly. She believes that the ugly name will reflect the bearer. “It will sound so ugly: like something mangled. Untidy. Like mud, dirty mud” (Okurut, 2003, p. 67). The hatred grows intensively to the extent that Liz is always thinking about how dearly Ishaka loves Manga. The gossips around town also aggravate her stance because the more she learns of events in Manga’s life, the more the pain and jealousy. “Ah! Look at that gorgeous mansion. Ishaka built for his second wife” (Okurut, 2003, p. 131). “I am told that he even went with Manga to the labour ward, something that has not been happening around here” (Okurut, 2003, p. 80). This means Liz’s jealousy is cemented by the special treatment Ishaka offers Manga, things that have never been offered to her, relegating her to the position of the inferior and disrespected official wife.

Liz gives reasons to support the hatred and jealousy claims. The writer of the novel makes sure that the supporting materials are vividly clear and presents the rhetor as reliable and skilful in the claims she is making. Evidence from these arguments may arouse the emotions of disgust in the readers in their perceptions of polygamous marriage. Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992) emphasise that how the audience feels about an issue relates to their understanding, so, conveying emotions can present difficulties when interacting with people whose ideas are different from the rhetors'. Therefore, these claims can only appeal to those who are negatively affected by the state of polygamous marriage and want it shattered.

In addition, jealousy has led to verbal fighting between Liz and Manga. Mkhize and Singh (2015, p. 163) find out that “there is constant fighting, bickering, jealousy and incessant accusations in polygamous marriages”. Liz confirms this when she gets into an emotional state when her friend, Fina, tips her off about the whereabouts of Ishaka and Manga. It seems clear that Liz acts to Fina’s command without thinking of the later implications it would have on her emotions and reputation. “Go and give her a hiding. She shouldn’t walk in and snatch your man without a fight” (Okurut, 2003, p. 94). Fina prompts her friend into a self-scourge by providing the hotel name and room number. When Liz comes to the hotel she is tormented by the words ‘honey’, ‘darling’ and ‘honeymoon’ that Manga and Ishaka are saying to each other. These words easily take her into a snap state that she cannot control and starts to scream and kick the hotel door:

You lousy sonofbitch, stinking bastard! I will give you a honeymoon you will never forget. Cat, dog, hyena, despicable rat. And that common whore. Cheapest harlot ever on the market. Open the door and I will show you where you come from, lousy bitch. (Okurut, 2003, p. 98)

These utterances suggest that Liz is against sharing her man with another woman and that it has been paining her for long. Liz has internalised the pain causing the outburst to be embarrassing especially seeing that they are from the wife of a prominent politician in the country. The researcher is aware of Liz's plight and transformative perspective of patriarchy, but does not agree with the path she chooses to solve her marital problems. The words chosen to shout at Ishaka and Manga are uncalled for and no one would be recommended to use offensive words in demolishing patriarchal settings. It is crucial that Liz's conducts are of reputable stance in public and private spheres because the process of acquiring freedom is of the great importance for the audience to perceive her as credible. Murthy and Ghosal (2014) agree that the personal character is a critical element, without it, rhetoric would not be functional. Liz's bad conduct may somehow affect how the readers look at her character especially when the whole hotel staff hears of the scuffle. She cannot hold the embarrassment the scene has caused her because Manga refuses to be verbally abused in silence; she defends her position as part of Ishaka's life too. The result of Liz's action may convince the readers to think through their actions and not to act towards others as Liz does in this case. The responses from Manga, like "After all he spends three quarters of his time with me. He is with you a few hours in a month" (Okurut, 2003, p. 103), are difficult to be handled in public. This incident concurs with Thobejane and Floras' (2014, p. 1061) statement that in polygamous marriage "relations in the family are very complicated because of the husband's perceived favouritism for one wife". Even though Ishaka does not verbally tell them who the favourite is, his actions point to the answer.

Moreover, polygamous marriage negatively affects the relationship of children and their parents. It arouses pity from the readers to learn the adverse effects polygamy has on children, especially Eva, the youngest. Even though the presence of the challenges gives Liz an agency to get her

voice heard, it affects how she relates to her children because of the distress she stomachs. It is even worse with their father, the bone of contention, who behaves as if Eva and Kirabo do not exist. It is so surprising that Ishaka used to mend things in the house with Kirabo and swing Eva up and down; this is now history while he treats Manga's daughter favourably. "Really it is so unfair on my children. As far as he is concerned, they do not exist" (Okurut, 2003, p. 80). This is in line with Thobejane and Floras' (2014) observation that polygamous marriages may experience problems because of a man favouring children of some wives rather than of all. Eva goes on a screaming rampage asking for her father who is hardly at home and if he comes, he does not give her attention anymore. In the case of Kirabo, asking for his father's usual presence at the basketball game becomes a crazy thing. "Are you crazy? I have far better things to do than watch that stupid game of yours" (Okurut, 2003, p. 143). Liz provides the support of her claim that Ishaka rejects the children by giving them scornful responses. In attempting to persuade the audience with a reasonable claim, the speaker must offer a proof in support to his/her statement (Murthy & Ghosal, 2014).

When Liz decides to leave the marriage, the readers may know that Liz has good reasons to take the children out of such environment, which is not conducive to them. As a mother, she cares for the well being of the children. Therefore, it is unnatural for Liz to abandon the children like Ishaka has done. Liz then resorts to packing her bags and moving out of their marital home to take care of her children alone. The same can be seen in Dow's novel *Parched Earth*. When Sebastian refuses to see his son, Godbless, Foibe resolves to be both the mother and father to her son. This is one of the blemishes that Okurut wants to question; for men and women to equally support the children as parents because the father's rejection negatively affects the children. The researcher argues that Ishaka's rejection of his children gives Liz more urge to leave the house

which is an action of self-determination. This rejection is empowerment in disguise as it gives women an agency to move out of patriarchal milieu.

The greater the rejection Ishaka imposes on his first wife, the greater the psychological impact. Liz honestly tells the readers how the challenges of polygamous marriage dramatically affect her psychologically in private and social life. In sharing the extent of the damages it causes in her life, she personalises them by using 'I' to show her personal experiences or point of view. "Anyways, I go to the office with the right shoe on the left, and the left shoe on the right foot" (Okurut, 2003, p. 56). The personal experiences become the fact that proves that she is affected mentally, when she cannot even feel her shoes are on the wrong feet. Fahnestock and Secor (1990, p. 137) point out that personal experiences are facts; things that happened to the person in authority. Therefore, when the topic of an argument grows out of personal experiences, one can regard experiences as facts to support arguments. One can imagine how Liz handles that scene at work as her colleagues make fun of her. In another instance, Liz undergoes panic attacks imagining that she leaves an iron on and fire has erupted in the room. She goes ahead to call the fire brigade to come to their house and extinguish the fire immediately, while in reality she is hallucinating. "My house is on fire. Do you hear? FIRE!" (Okurut, 2003, p. 50). The impact of patriarchal setting puts Liz into psychological difficulty in a manner that can evoke pity in the readers.

The novel presents how polygamous marriage affects intimacy. Liz refuses to have sex with Ishaka for she is mentally disconnected from him and she fears he will mention Manga's name when he goes on top of the mountain. "It is also true that ever since Ishaka got Manga, I have put on an embargo on sex with him. It happened mentally. Whenever he approaches me for sex, I literally freeze" (Okurut, 2003, p. 127). This evidently indicates that Liz cannot stand the

polygamous marriage as her mind is already made up that she cannot share a man. Kahinga (2007) states:

If marriage entails that a man gives himself to a woman and a woman gives herself to a man, what then is left to give to another (third person) woman? The man will not be available unless as a fake man, an illusion, a mere physical and not mental, spiritual presence to the other. In this case the woman will be taken as an object but not as an equal subject, a means but not an end in herself. Therefore polygamy is a lie and intellectual dishonesty. (pp. 127-128)

Liz believes in Kahinga's statement that if Ishaka is in love with Manga, then he will be with her physically but spiritually with Manga. Polygamy has made it difficult for intimacy as she thinks that she is taken as an object, which she refuses to accept. Liz has a voice that desires to be heard. This is the era where she cannot be ruled to do something that will only benefit the deemed dominant party; she has the right to choose. Considering these challenges, Liz loses the sense of marriage and moves out to be alone with the children. Liz acts differently from Ramatoulaye in Ba's novel *So Long a Letter*. Kwatsa (2015) realises that Ramatoulaye remains oppressed by the cultural ideology as she cannot divorce the husband even though he abandoned her for another woman. Liz does not care of social legitimisations that seem to support oppression of women; she refuses to be one of the women but strive for uniqueness. It is worth noting that polygamy is not always oppressive, it depends on the wife the husband spends more time with. It is natural that the husband cannot love both wives equally. In this case, Manga is the beneficiary of Ishaka's love, hence she does not complain of polygamous marriage.

In Nwapa's novel *One is Enough*, Amaka packs her belongings and leaves her husband, Obiora, when he marries the second wife (Kwatsa, 2015, p. 60). Like Amaka, Liz takes the same route,

and she honestly says “Believe you me, it does take a lot of courage for an African woman to call it quits when the whole thing has lost meaning” (Okurut, 2003, p. 10). Though Liz has cowardly stayed in that empty relationship, she refuses to accept polygamy because she cannot stand sharing a man. She decides to move out of their marital house to give herself a chance to live again. The marital home is equated to a prison cell due to the lack of freedom. Liz rediscovers herself by acting towards emancipation in order to exercise her right to decision-making. Justus, Liz’s brother, acknowledges Liz’s determination: “Girl am I happy you bullshitted that idiot! You are a woman after my heart” (Okurut, 2003, p. 151). Justus embraces the social transformation of breaking patriarchal traditions that determine the fate of women.

On the other hand, Liz’s father is not impressed by his daughter’s decision to leave their marital home. Traditionally, it is perceived as a disgrace to move out of the marital home because of challenges:

The African woman, he says, is like the mighty oak tree: unyielding to breakage even when battered by the fiercest storms of life and the hurricanes that are inevitable wherever a marriage occurs. She may sway dangerously with the force of the raging winds; bowing in the direction she is blown, yet never breaking. (Okurut, 2003, p. 150-151)

It can be seen that Liz’s father is made up of traditional material that accepts patriarchy to rule a woman without questioning it. He demonstrates that suffering is inevitable to an African woman and she has to endure for the sake of her children. Despite her father’s counsel, Liz stands her ground that she can be an oak tree only if Ishaka is ready to have one wife. Liz keeps on making her standpoint clear that she wants to break the presence of polygamous marriage in her society. This indicates that Liz is not ignoring the emotional oppression; believing that Ishaka is just an

African man and she cannot remedy the situation. Okurut stresses the presence of two men in society: men like Justus and men like Liz's father and Ishaka. The same is emphasised in Chimamanda's novel *Purple Hibiscus* where Father Amadi accepts fair treatment of all genders whereas Eugene is patriarchal. Therefore, men in societies cannot be treated the same because they hold different views towards patriarchy.

Furthermore, Okurut condemns Christianity's silence on the presence of polygamous marriages in societies. The protagonist, Liz keeps on questioning African Christianity because of the double life her society represents. It seems it does not embrace Christian values as "they have one leg in Christianity and another in tradition" (Okurut, 2003, p. 133). This contrasts with Christianity doctrine, which Liz condemns, as it contributes to patriarchy. Bergman (2016) supports Liz's claim that religion is also to blame as a cause of patriarchy, because it never questions its tradition. Liz questions Manga's parents' procession of giving their daughter to Ishaka who is married in church. They exactly know that Ishaka is not divorced, nor separated from his wife, but they hold a ceremony anyway. Another issue is a man who weds in church, and later falls in love and acquires a second wife through customary marriage. It is Liz's reasoning and understanding of the arguments she makes that carry her uniqueness as she always shouts out 'I am not some other women'.

Christianity is elevated as a way to give oppressed women in polygamous marriage hope for a better future. Liz's faithfulness and confidence in God gives her hope that her prayer for monogamous marriage is going to be answered:

I truly believe in God and know that everything else is sinking sand. He has performed many miracles in my life. And as I despair over my shattered marriage, I know that it is only a question of time before He sorts it out. (Okurut, 2003, p. 122)

Significantly, this mirrors the person who puts all her trust in the Creator. Empowerment can also come from the faith bestowed in God as Liz is entirely dependent on the Creator to solve the marital problems. Liz is encouraging other women to commit to God and also testify to what he did for them in the past. One remarkable thing about Liz's faithful nature is that even after the great disappointment of finding Ishaka having sex with the house helper; she manages to put herself together and goes to church the following morning. She shows her willingness to rise above the challenges through faith. In gaining her monogamous marriage, she thanks Jesus for restoration and commitment to her family. "I close my eyes and offer a prayer of thanks to Jesus" (Okurut, 2003, p. 170). This is to illustrate that the commitment to God is to praise him in good and bad times. The writer wants to show how true Christianity must be depicted; both legs must be in it. The point made here is that women need to get rid of the cultural beliefs that hurt them, but they need determination and commitment in making their dreams a reality.

Liz identifies with her audience through personal confessions. Throughout the novel, she shares her problems that emanate from patriarchal settings. She identifies with those in polygamous marriages and those who can understand the kind of frustrations she refers to. She faces discouragements and has learned to overcome them. This kind of attitude is what Fredrick (2009) mentions builds rapport and empowers the audience too work their way out of their difficulties and overcome them.

The novel shows the ability of women to mobilise themselves for self-definition and priorities. This is manifested through social transformation, patience, perseverance and agency to change one's disposition to be able to break male domination and claim equal treatment in society. Throughout the novel, the narrator, Liz, presents her argument with consistent use of examples to show that domination and empowering of women are pervasive. For example she uses the

scenario of the Vice-President who quits her marriage when she cannot endure the beatings from her husband. Like any African man, the husband expects the wife to keep privacy in the bedroom; the Vice-President is not of the same state of mind:

But the wife had certainly never appreciated this particular sense of privacy and belted out the truth to the entire nation. Those women who regard themselves as progressive cheered her honesty and courage, saying that it was a crucial step towards emancipation of women in oppressive marriages. (Okurut, 2003, p. 10-11)

The Vice-President shows other women that the door to escape from patriarchy is open by moving out of oppressive marriages. She becomes the symbol of freedom as she is of much influence because of her political position. Her voice to change is heard and her presence as an influencer is felt unlike other women in the women's movement who preach to others to move out of abusive homes and yet themselves are victims of domestic violence but they refuse to act. This indicates that women are aware of domestic violence but the problem is the fear to free themselves due to social norms of keeping privacy in the bedroom. So the narrator uses these kind of examples to arouse disgust, love, hate in the readers towards the claims made. According to Fahnestock and Secor (1990, p. 361) examples are an effective way of drawing from the audience various emotions, eliciting sympathetic responses and bringing them around to your argument, because people respond to something in their immediacy.

3.3 Embracing sisterhood

Okurut uses the characters of Fina and Liz to indicate how some women embrace the new culture of women's empowerment. Liz and Fina see that men do not in any way need to be seen as superior, dominant or more important than women. They have built their authority through

solidarity; they have supported each other notwithstanding differences in lifestyles and views. Izgarjan and Markov (2012) see this as in support of Alice Walker's womanism as it "emphasises the need for strong community of women who would help each other and provide the support needed to resist oppression and patriarchal dominance so that women can have more possibilities to express themselves". As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Fina has been supportive of Liz in confronting and battling with polygamous marriage and she wants to see positivity in her life:

And that is the mistake women in your situation make. When a man gets another woman you give up on yourself. What you ought to do instead is try and look your best: go to the gym, dress well, be smart... (Okurut, 2003, p. 120)

This is an honest expression to a friend that needs to improve on her life. The truth can help Liz to realise that her outer look is equally affected as her inside. Fina has generalised this issue to all women in Liz's situation as a way of stressing her argument that this is the usual thing to women. Campbell et al. (2015) indicate that Aristotle recognises that the truth can be discovered through cultural values, the situation or immediate context and the nature of issues. Fina helps Liz to understand this as the culture of women in her situation using her situation as a way to persuade her to improve. This kind of solidarity is displayed in Chiziane's novel *Niketche* when Rami helps other women to achieve their economic freedom which is an approach to create ways to overcome patriarchal power and women's subjugation (Da Silva, 2013).

Furthermore, Fina seems to live a double life when in her advice to Liz she confesses to support polygamy. She advises Liz to befriend Manga to alleviate the tensions surrounding their marriage is supporting an approval of further oppression. "Don't be silly. It has worked for some women. I mean, when they befriend their co-wife" (Okurut, 2003, p. 121). Fina still generalises

her claim to 'some women' instead of specifying it to Liz, but Liz is determined to battle patriarchy head on as an individual and refuses such references. "Well I am not some *other* women" (Okurut, 2003, p. 121). Liz is ready to accommodate the newly found African woman that wants self-fulfillment rather than social fulfillment. Again, Liz identifies with the readers that want patriarchal settings demolished. This in turn builds the relationship of trust because we learn to trust in mutual exchanges. Okurut underscores the need of readiness in women, if they really want to destroy patriarchal settings. They have to harness their confidence without wavering if they are to acquire desired results.

Liz and Fina embrace education as a way that may lead to women emancipation. Thus, Liz cannot fathom why Ishaka decides to take another wife if she is well educated; having attained her masters. Having this level of education seems to be an attainment of freedom from polygamous marriage, but Ishaka seems not to notice this status. He still obeys the set norms to maintain superiority. Fina makes fun of Liz that staying in an abusive marriage is a waste of her education. "You are just an educated illiterate" (Okurut, 2003, p. 163). This signifies that being educated, one needs to question the oppressive traditional settings and obtain visibilities beyond traditional boundaries. Literate women are encouraged to speak out with Tripp (1999) claiming that educated women are equipped with knowledge and communication skills that empower them to voice their dissatisfactions.

Moreover, Liz questions why an educated person like Manga allows the culture to enslave her. She agrees to be the second wife when she is aware of her rights and independence. "I sincerely would want to know why she would want to suffer this exploitation" (Okurut, 2003, p. 131). Fina manages to get information as to why Manga enslaves herself. "I needed love and I found a man to give it to me. So what the heck even if he is married" (Okurut, 2003, p. 132). The novel

depicts two educated women: one that believes that culture is not static and the other one is deeply rooted in her culture. Education cannot be generalised as freedom from patriarchy because Manga displays a different perspective on this claim, yet she is educated. It is difficult for the whole society to embrace education as freedom if educated women deemed to be role models support patriarchy. Liz takes a commendable stance in opposing patriarchy because women have to stand up themselves if they want fair treatment for all in their societies.

Although Liz is educated and economically independent, she does not say no to men. Liz is still interested in her marriage, but only when Ishaka chooses to leave the second wife. Even though Fina commands Liz that she must not forgive Ishaka, Liz is determined to stand confidently for her right to choose what is right for her. “Fina, with all due respect to you, you will not become the destiny to my body, soul, and spirit!” (Okurut, 2003, p. 166). Liz refuses to satisfy the social mirror of a friend who thinks she should retaliate. She advocates for women’s self-empowerment. “I need intimate communication and I will not feed the social mirror satisfaction like Fina wants me to. And anyway, aren’t all families dysfunctional since the beginning of sin?” (Okurut, 2003, p. 167). Liz is forgiving and in Ishaka’s hardest moment of sickness, she takes him back in her arms. Sadek (2014) is not surprised by this phenomenon since most African women are committed to their families and do not want to do without their men; however, they do not want to be maltreated, thus they want to get rid of misconceptions against them. Liz’s personal character is embracing Ogundipe-Leslie’s STIWANISM and the readers may be impressed by her act of forgiving and how she handles the process of their marriage restoration. The speaker should have been viewed in a proper perspective and should reveal respect for commonly acknowledged virtues (Mafiadoc.com n.d., p. 3). It seems that Liz takes empowerment as an individual thing; she does not want to neglect her family happiness on

expense of other people. Liz conveys her ethos as connected by Fahnestock and Secor (1990, p. 332) that Aristotle says the audience must not only understand your argument, but perceive that you are a good person, someone who is honest, courageous, just and wise.

3.4 Women objectified: Women seen as sex objects

This novel occupies a unique space in its presentation of cultural influence on women's bodies to acknowledge the superiority of the man. Okurut brings out cultural nuances that further lower women positions and silence them socially. It is mentioned earlier in this chapter that Liz's strategy to identify with and persuade her audience is to use personal experiences. This ensures the audience that she might be the right person to present these claims as Fredrick (2009) mentions that feminine speakers rely on personal experiences to draw the audience into the situation allowing for identification to occur and to become more persuasive. Liz voices out the painful experiences that depict her as a sex object. She is not quite happy of the willpower of some cultural beliefs that make a man a supreme leader of a woman's body in consideration of the pain one has to withstand to please a man. "Brother, in some cultures, if you have not pulled, you are considered half a woman. In some cultures, a girl may even fail to get married if she hasn't pulled" (Okurut, 2003, p. 87). The procedure of labia pulling determines the destinies of girls in some cultures. The girls have to succumb to cultural demands to meet the needs of their husbands. So much focus is placed on the importance of man's sexual satisfaction than a woman's. The process of labia pulling is excruciating as narrated by Liz. She is persuaded by her cousin, Mara to pull. "When you get married, you will remember this evening and be eternally grateful to me" (Okurut, 2003, p. 91). It seems the pulling is done in respect of someone else but not the sufferer because the benefits will be seen after getting married. Liz vividly remembers when her cousin is pulling those two areas like she is milking a cow, which in return causes her

to have difficulty walking the following day. The researcher concurs with Selasi's (2015) statement that the negatives of culture have more effect on women than men. In this case women are placed in a subordinate position and they accept it as a cultural instruction.

Liz further astonishes the readers with the intense emphasis on how this thing of labia pulling is important to men. "Before Ishaka proposed to me, he asked: Incidentally, love, have you pulled?" (Okurut, 2003, p. 87). Ishaka places an importance on pulling as determined by their culture. Does it mean Ishaka might have changed his mind if Liz has not pulled? The possibility is there because he asks before he proposes for marriage to make sure he makes the right choice, but on the other hand, he might have proceeded with the marriage considering that his second wife has not pulled. Patriarchy has been harsh to women like Liz, thus she banishes this procedure of labia pulling is an acceptance of patriarchy that enslaves her. "That ultimately means that the woman has accepted the label inflicted on her by society: she is above all, just a sex object from the men's point of view" (Okurut, 2003, p. 89). Liz directly states the claim without ambiguity for the readers to understand its impact undoubtedly. The readers may be outraged by this experience but they salute the honesty of the voice that breaks the silence of women subjugated by culture. Women need to exercise their rights, but this can only be realised when silence imposed on them is destroyed (Asante, 2002). If women can stand up and condemn practices that hurt them, they will be stopped and fair treatment of all can be attained.

On the contrary, it seems that Liz is celebrating her culture when she excitedly mocks Manga that she has not pulled. This implies that she views her as half a woman. "...how can you ever think you are better than me when you never pulled? You are naked, not a woman because you didn't pull" (Okurut, 2003, p. 99). This claim contradicts her voice that is against the acceptance of cultural subjugation. In this instance, Liz is in support of patriarchy and this contradiction

dilutes her commitment and may lead the leaders to doubt her character. Campbell et al. (2015) point out that the audience trusts those whose behaviour demonstrates regular commitment to accepted values and is suspicious of those who make dramatic shifts in their positions.

Furthermore, women are objectified as they can be accepted by men when their breasts grow bigger to look like an orange. Again, Mera convinces Liz to get a wasp sting on her nipple, a painful experience as well. “If you do not apply wasp sting, your breast will sag in the nearest future and no man will want to marry you” (Okurut, 2003, p. 91). It seems that it is only Liz that has gone through painful experiences to please her husband, but Ishaka has done nothing for the sake of his wife’s sexual pleasure. In another instance, Ishaka is telling Liz that the beads that some women wear around their waist make a man happy when he is touching them. “I will never put those silly beads around my waist” (Okurut, 2003, p. 88). Liz exercises her right of freedom to refuse to wear the beads just because they make someone happy. This time she is conscious of her decisions unlike when Mera lured her to pull and apply wasp sting. Her denial helps the audience develop confidence they need to stand for what they desire and believe that they have the power to make a difference. Liz may influence the readers because she is dealing with the social truth that affects women.

3.5 Resilience as an act of freedom

The aim of this study was to find out circumstances that oppress women and how women react to such acts. Invitational rhetoric aims at promoting self-determination, equality and immanent value amongst men and women in dialogic contexts. This is not possible in conversations where the rhetor is striving to dominate and gain power over others. When Ishaka asks why Liz is not getting ready for the political function at Kololo, the environment appears to be tense with the value of another party not considered and it is not safe for mutual understanding to take place.

Ishaka's dominance is reflected in derogatory language used in questioning his wife. "Well, why the hell are you not ready?" (Okurut, 2003, p. 62). The use of this language is disrespectful to Liz's immanent value as a unique individual who can make her own choice. Ishaka thinks that he has the power to say what he wants, and however he wants, to Liz. Sharier (2015) finds this kind of mentality oppressive and demonising of others as less humans. Unlike Beatrice in Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus*, who cannot respond freely to Eugene due to fear, Liz refuses to fear Ishaka. Liz expresses herself freely although her perspectives are different from Ishaka's. "So my dear, why should I come with you for the function?" (Okurut, 2003, p. 62). This response demonstrates freedom from fear and that Liz celebrates self-determination because she wants to be accountable for the decisions to be made in her life. One can see the rationale behind Liz's question; why does he not choose his briefcase, Manga, to go with. If women break such silence of following instructions given by dominant husbands without question, then men will understand the need to listen and know why they have to allow their counterparts to make their own decisions.

Furthermore, Liz demonstrates resilience when Ishaka further disparages her "Well, when the hell will you get ready? We are getting late for heaven's sake!" (Okurut, 2003, p. 82). Liz knows that swearing is one of Ishaka's strong points, so she is not silenced; again she is determined not to give up her purpose of accomplishing equality. In invitational rhetoric, different perspectives deserve to be respected and honoured by all participants. Therefore, Ishaka needs to respect Liz's decision of refusal to go to Kololo, rather than keeping on insisting as a way of forceful imposing his decision on her because she is his 'official wife'. "I am not going with you to Kololo. I am not going there at all" (Okurut, 2003, p. 82). Liz is adamant for her decision to show that there is a need to break away from oppressive conversations. Kindred (2007) emphasises that in

invitational rhetoric, the aim is not to control others and the flow of information needs to flow smoothly. If it weren't for Liz's determination and assurance, the above conversation cannot lead to self-determination, equality and immanent value as Ishaka seems to be dominant and imposing his decision on Liz.

Liz's self-determination throughout the novel to negate the polygamous marriage turns out to be fruitful as Ishaka becomes respectful to her in the end. Okurut admits that to seek for social equality, one has to stand without wavering no matter how rough the situation might be. Towards the end of the novel, Ishaka's language choice in their conversation appears to be appropriate "May I borrow your phone?" (Okurut, 2003, p. 169). The use of the words 'may I' shows that he is seeking for an agreement to use the phone, inviting her politely to agree, not like before when he used forceful language. According to Foss and Griffin (1995), invitational rhetoric is a respectful dialogue between the rhetor and the audience where there is no room for negative emotions or disrespect. "The experience has evidently taught Ishaka some manners as well. Politeness just had never been his way of doing things" (Okurut, 2003, p. 169). Liz sees the differences in Ishaka's way of asking, therefore, it is up to her to approve or disapprove his opinion. Liz agrees that the severe sickness and Manga's rejection during the time of sickness have taught him acceptance of valuing others equality, self-determination and immanent value. This echoes with Ryan and Natalie's (2001) articulation of subjectivity as involving personal learning from experiences. It takes Ishaka that moment of sickness and rejection to learn politeness and acceptance. Though Liz is instilling positive values of Ishaka after he has changed, it is up to the readers to change their attitude towards him.

3.6 Chapter summary

In the analysis of *The Official Wife*, it is noted that self-disclosure plays a major role throughout the novel and it builds Liz's ethos to persuade the readers. This chapter demonstrates how polygamous marriage impacts Liz negatively and the confidence she portrays in getting her destined life. Ishaka fails to balance his marriage and turns to spend more time with Manga than Liz. This leads to jealousy and fighting as Liz feels it is unfair to her. Liz's children do not get enough attention from their father as it was the case in the past when Ishaka had not taken the second wife. It is argued in this chapter that polygamy is not always abusive; it is only abusive to the wife receiving less attention and being disrespected. Liz questions the silence of African Christianity on polygamous marriage because she believes that as Christians, they have to follow and adhere to Christianity doctrine. Liz has demonstrated that real faith is an intervention to women empowerment. Furthermore, the chapter embraces the importance of friendship in the process of attaining freedom. Women must build an honest tie to help each other in fighting patriarchy together. Education is considered a route to women empowerment as it helps women to acquire knowledge and necessary communication skills for women to speak out, but it cannot be generalised as some educated women like Manga still accept being in patriarchal settings. Liz confirms that forgiveness brings harmony in the marriage and it must be accepted that problems are inevitable, but people need to act to solve them just as she did. Cultural practices seem to oppress women in all instances as Liz has gone through the process of pulling to please her husband. Ishaka has been dominant in conserving with Liz and even uses derogatory language, but he has changed this attitude after the severe sickness and experience of rejection from Manga; he becomes polite and allowing for equality, self-determination and immanent value to prevail in their house.

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN CLAIMING THEIR FREEDOM IN *THE SCREAMING OF THE INNOCENT*

BY UNITY DOW

4.1 Introduction

One of the ways women show they are not happy with maltreatment in their societies is when they stand up for themselves to combat the system of patriarchy so that everybody can be treated equally. It is the aim of African womanist philosophy to move towards gender equality as Panirao (2014) emphasised that womanist philosophy promotes the elevation of both males and females. Women in the novel *The Screaming of the Innocent* act to fight against patriarchy because they know how unfair the patriarchal system is to them and they are in better positions to defend what is right for them. The fight against patriarchy does not mean women are going to fight against men or that women are going to work in isolation of men; it means women are going to fight against the set rules and norms that privilege men while subjugating women. This is corroborated by Sadek (2014, p. 172), who argues that African feminism does not work against men but rather accommodates men. Nnaemeka (2004) speaks of the feminism of compromise, striving to oppose the multiple aspects of patriarchy on the continent, in an African-specific negotiation. The positive changes can be reached if men are made to understand that women are not against them but that they are against the oppressive set of norms. The analysis of this chapter is optimistic about the status quo and future of African women. The novelist finds it possible that African women can be self-assertive in different circumstances, affecting their livelihood and dynamically question those in authority. The novel *The Screaming of the Innocent* aims to redefine an African woman to give her power and authority in the society that she is part

of and to see how she can contribute to the public sphere. The discussions highlight the importance of education to women as it brings an awareness that benefits the whole society. With the knowledge they have gained through education, the women in the novel are enabled to express sufficient agency to make sure that their viewpoints are heard.

The aim of this chapter is to contextualise the characters that are contesting the power of patriarchy in Dow's novel *The Screaming of the Innocent*. Dow's women characters are trustworthy in the sense that they are able to stand for their standpoints no matter the domination of men. The protagonist, Amantle, for example, successfully challenges the male dominated police profession, becoming acknowledged by villagers, police officers and even high ranked politicians as the woman who will be apt to question why the screaming of the innocent has not been heard (Biscaia, 2010, p. 11). Even though some are ridiculed in different circumstances, they have crossed the borderline of restricted spheres so that everyone can hear their voices. It is a pity that the will to transcend the normality comes with the pain caused by the reluctance of some men who refuse to accept the equal treatment of both genders. The evidence in the novel confirms that these women are able to break the chains of patriarchy within male dominated realms.

The chapter answers the question of how *The Screaming of the Innocent* contributes to self-determination, immanent value and equality of both genders. As a dialogic type of rhetoric, invitational rhetoric invites dialogue from the interlocutors with different perceptions towards a viewpoint. The transformative power of dialogue has the potential to serve as a rational alternative to increasingly violent and unproductive strategies for problem solving in many communication contexts (Ryan & Natalle, 2001). The saying is true in the context of Amantle, Daniel, Nancy, Boitumelo and Naledi who manage to meet and discuss the manner to handle the

government officials at the *kgotla* meeting without any provocation. The process to reach an outcome is attributed to all involved in the discussion because everyone stands an equal opportunity to contribute without being judged. So understanding becomes the ultimate goal for the process of communication and product of communication exchanges, engendering appreciation, value and a sense of equality (Foss & Griffin, 1995). It comes to the attention of this discussion that invitational rhetoric cannot take place in a dialogue where there are interlocutors that want to show authority or power over others. Mrs Molapo has struggled to have her queries answered in the meeting in Gabrone with male high ranked officials because she is a junior in terms of status to them and a woman. If the perspectives are judged, not respected and not validated, the dialogue ends up in a forceful exchange that does not reflect invitational rhetoric.

4.2 Women confronting patriarchy

Some African women writers aim to expose the status quo of women in African societies. It is understandable because women also want their voices to be heard and to live their life according to their wills. It is the desire of an African woman in the novel *The Screaming of the Innocent* to act and reach that recognition of herself because if she does not, things will remain as they are. Dow (2002) has realised this need when she depicts women in her novel *The Screaming of the Innocent* as the dynamic voice for other African women. Ama Ata Aidoo in *A Bit of Difference* has done the same through her protagonist, Deola, a woman who is not afraid to make her choices even during her vulnerable times; Deola's independence and strong character are exhibited even in the littlest things such as food (Njoku & Ezeano, 2016, p. 10). Dow (2002) has indicated that women have drawn self-confidence differently which is realistic to say people get empowered through different circumstances because of exposure and experiences.

In the case of Motlatsi Kakang, her confidence to question the law is drawn from the hard time she is going through of losing her daughter, Neo, who is believed to be murdered for *dipheko* (traditional strengthen medicines). Motlatsi Kakang is disappointed to learn that the police officers are clouded with confusion and perhaps fear of losing the only evidence in this case. When they announce that they are not able produce the clothes, Motlatsi Kakang has pleaded with the officers, “But we want to see for ourselves. That was my daughter. I have to see what was found; I can’t just hear it from others” (Dow, 2002, p. 63). Motlasi is not just pleading, but also demanding them (“we want”) that they have to see the clothes. Motlasi sees the urgency of questioning the police set-up that is protecting the murderer rather than the victims of *dipheko*. This woman character is used to question the law about the ongoing killing of the young girls by some men who want to obtain riches through harvesting body parts. The novelist believes that women’s involvement in finding out the truth will bring something positive from this dreadful act. Mrs Molapo has asked why many innocent girls are dying and no one responsible is brought to book yet. Even if men in authority do not accept their failure in combating this issue, women voices are loud to shout out their disapproval of the disappearance of young girls and question the silence of those in authority. The novelist might have used women to question this issue because of their love and cooperation that signify motherism. Acholonu (1995) likens the theory of motherism to a motherly love; the women have the ability to nurture a child into adulthood, and also believe that the person to care for the child is the mother who gave it life. The bond the woman builds with the child gives the woman an edge over the man and also fosters closeness between a mother and child. This bond creates the pain in women as mothers, and then they see the necessity to question the authority that seems to be silent on the disappearance of young girls. Given the evidence that challenges seem to be an empowerment to African women, it can be

underlined from Motlasi's hard time that African women's subjectivity to hardships contributes to women empowerment.

When Motlatsi Kakang is raped by the herbalist, she refuses either to discuss her ordeal with anyone or to recognise him as the father of her daughter, Neo. Like Foibe Seko in Lema's *Parched Earth*, who decides that her children will use her surname, Motlatsi Kakang chooses to give Neo her surname. Though the audience may blame her for being silent on the rape issue, one would see that she is done dealing with silence and accepting the normality of the society. We need to see her present expression as the one that is drawn from an experienced and tiresome individual who cannot handle suppression from men any longer. The response from the detective sergeant is breaking down rather than comforting the mourning mother but she refuses to keep quiet. "Listen: we'll get the clothes, and then we'll bring them to your village - is that better?" (Dow, 2002, p. 63). The police officer opts to use an authoritative tone to scare Motlatsi to keep quiet; despite this response Motlatsi stands on her two feet and asks them why they would not see the clothes that instant moment. The audience can build trust in her as the woman who is not scared to have her demands met. The detective sergeant sees that using authority is not enough to get rid of this family, thus he lies to them that the exhibit lockers where the clothes are kept is locked and one of the police officers has left with the key. Motlatsi has refused to be convinced by this lie and stubbornly replies "Then we'll wait" (Dow, 2002, p. 63). This scene is emotional because of the manner the case is handled and how the police officers are treating the mother of the deceased. The extreme emotion is justified by thinking of how her daughter suffered before death and the tears she shed in front of the police, a demonstration of pain and lost hope. Pathos is an important part of persuasion because people can judge what they read or hear according to their emotions. This means the hearers need to be emotionally engaged: pity, anger, fear to make

the judgement of the subject. In Mariama Ba's novel *So Long a Letter*, Ba stirs the emotions of the readers by appealing to their imagination by using word-painting that uses sensory and specific details at the view of Ramatoulaye's suffering (Mafiadoc.com n.d.).

Moreover, the readers would be pleased by the confidence portrayed by Neo's mother in search of the truth. When the family decides to go back to the village, the mourning mother sadly looks back to the detective sergeant to make her final comment. "Man of government, as you go about your job, just remember: I have not lost a goat, and my cow hasn't been hit by a car. My daughter was killed by people who expected you'd do nothing about it" (Dow, 2002, p. 65). The audience might be convinced that Motlatsi is serious in making a change that can have a positive effect on her society. Ramage and Bean (1998) observe that the character's credibility is enhanced by the respect he/she earns from the audience. This observation can be valid in Motlatsi's case because the statements she has made show self-confidence that an African woman should possess. She even rejects the lie of the police that Neo has been killed by wild animals. The police think that she lacks respect for they are not used to women who question them. This means Motlatsi has broken the women silence that has long shown their inferiority. Biscaia (2010, p. 16) notes that "women are expected not to talk or talk very little in the company of men, suggesting that their silence is gender-based and discursively limited women will also be unable to exhibit empowered responses". Making comments and asking questions show that Motlatsi deviates from the norm of gender-based silence and at the same time is encouraging other women to do the same.

Although the presence of patriarchy is visible, this society is comprised of men and women that work together to find out the truth. The men referred to here are the ones from Gaphala village. It is important to state that we cannot generalise the issue of African feminism as it manifests

differently in various contexts. This echoes with Nnaemeka's (2004) nego-feminism that emphasises African women's willingness to negotiate with and around men even in difficult times. There are men of good will, thus we cannot treat all of them monolithically. The men and women in Gaphala village assisted Motlatsi in searching for Neo soon after her disappearance. The search did not yield good results because the child is not found, but later on, Mr Shosho finds the clothes and takes them to the police station. The villagers accompany Motlatsi to the police station to enquire about Neo's clothes. They support Motlatsi to deal with the police officer who has come to the village to lie to them that Neo is killed by lions and that the investigations are closed. They have offered emotional support more especially the neighbour, Rra-Naso, who has been an epitome of strength to her. This society retrieves values that some of African traditions do not; values that benefit both women and men. In this instance, men and women are both placed at the same level of importance to designate the positive change of attitude in an African society. This is what Cham and Eldred (1987) advise African society; that any movement in society must have its feet firmly rooted in healthy cultural grounds if it is to be of any lasting and valuable welfare of individuals and society at large. A healthy culture is where equality prevails; free from all forms of exploitation and rooted in the true traditions of people. Cham and Eldred (1987) dishonor the cultural and religious beliefs that motivate men to think that they are superior to women. Such beliefs propagate hindrances African women face in fully living lives of their choice and contributing to the development of societies. Motlatsi has embraced the sense of camaraderie in her community when she commands the police officer to give them the clothes. "Motlatsi had ordered him: you're not leaving until you give us the clothes" (Dow, 2002, p. 69). Motlatsi has shown authority and that this case does not only affect her, but the community at large, which is illustrated by the use of 'us' to include everyone in

attendance. This argument can testify that not all men consider themselves superior in the presence of women, but some are willing to work as equal partners to find out the truth.

Another unusual behaviour is portrayed by Mrs Molapo, the Director of Tirelo Sechaba. Mrs Molapo defies the instruction from the station commander to move Amantle to another place as soon as possible. It is unusual that she is not moved by the man who thinks he is on top and can do whatever he likes. Mrs Molapo is a woman who does not allow corrupt practices to flourish in her department. She has built a good reputation already and by receiving a call from the station commander does not mean she would give in easily whatsoever. Mrs Molapo shows that she detests corruption; she is getting the trust from the readers because of her honesty. Like in Mda's novel *The Madonna Excelsior*, Popi was against corrupt practices that her male counterparts are involved in. She does not hide her resistance towards such acts even to her own brother who is favouring his personal interests rather than those of the people he is leading (Ibinga, 2007). Here, Mda wants to show that the male characters might be dishonest and that women honesty can bring about genuine social and economic development. A male dishonest character is portrayed in the station commander; he wants Amantle to be transferred as soon as possible in order to hide the truth about the ritual murder. The police commander has realised that Amantle is the person who cannot easily be dispelled. So the effective way to get rid of her is to use the corrupt way to move her. The researcher wants to clarify at this point that not every man is dishonest; the writer has used Daniel who has assisted to drive Amantle in the bush to meet Boitumelo and others to show that there are men who works towards attaining the truth in societies.

Furthermore, Dow (2002) has underscored the issue of relying on verifiable facts as a way of persuading the readers to believe Mrs Molapo's honesty intentions. Mrs Molapo suggests that "you put your urgent request in writing, sir" (Dow, 2002, p. 95). She wants to get the facts that

no one will be able to alter because the words of the mouth can easily be modified. We can see she wants to stand for what she believes is right, not what she is told to do, because it is informal to make such a decision after a telephone conversation. “Mrs Molapo wasn’t about to be tricked into organising a transfer just because some station commander thought the police ruled the world” (Dow, 2002, p. 95). For the police commander’s argument to be considered there must be facts relevant to his argument. If the station commander writes the letter, the facts will include why Amantle has to be moved to another place and she can consider the request according to that. Winkler and McCuen (1988) indicate that facts represent the reality and they must be accompanied by traceable sources. If necessary, the reader must be able to suspect the source of facts. So it is wise for Mrs Molapo not to make decisions after the telephone conversation because she is not sure of the source. The researcher notes Mrs Molapo’s courage to act honestly as a means to show the type of voice women can have and that they must be recognised as they are working for the benefits of all.

As a result of the villagers’ demands, a meeting is held to solve the problem at Gaphala village where the girl disappeared five years ago. The domination of men in attendance already shows that equality is far from being a reality. In many African countries like Liberia, gender equality is still a dream; Ndlovu and Mutale (2013) argue that there is still a gap in women’s representation in decision-making and leadership. For example, Liberia boasted the long-serving female president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf but has only 11 percent of women in the lower house and 13 percent in the upper house. This shows that there are some gaps that still need to be looked at. Even though it is a dream for women to be represented fairly in decision-making spheres, it is a pity that the progress is slow. This means that decisions to be made will be dominated by what men aspire to be done because of the inequality of gender representation. This is because “the

majority of African women are still tied down and burdened by cultural ignorance, selfish institutional patriarchy, prejudice and discrimination from a patently paternalistic cultural heritage that fails to give the average woman a pride of place” (Casmir, Immanuel & Okpara, 2013, p. 467). If women get liberated from all these chains, the majority can partake in the decision-making process. Thus, Dow (2002) is calling for women to strive for recognition to construct new paradigms of representations for the wellbeing of African societies.

Mrs Molapo has been thinking about why she generally mistrusts the police; she probably has good personal reasons:

Several years before, her nephew had died in a mysterious shooting incident. The young man had been a police officer, and the official story had been that some robbers who he and his fellow officers were pursuing shot him. However, how the robbers had shot him in the back as he was pursuing them was a mystery the police hadn't been able to explain. (Dow, 2002, p. 140)

Mrs Molapo is using her personal experience of such deceitfulness to back her argument as to why she detests the police. Appealing to logos, she is telling the readers that the police cannot be trusted with any case because their unfounded explanation raised concern about the death of her nephew. Because of her identification, Mrs Molapo can easily move the readers to her point of view for they know she represents morality. Mrs Molapo has raised concern in the readers because they are now losing trust in the people that are supposed to find out the truth and condemn brutality. Thus, Chen (2018) claims that to support an argument, the speaker usually narrates a past event happened in a similar context to prove to the audience that the similar occurrence may happen at the present or just to express his/her view about a certain topic.

In addition, Mrs Molapo shows a greater willingness to be part of the peace-building process, but her contributions are overlooked by men - something that needs to be improved. These men are scared to hand power to her to make decisions and ask relevant questions, and being the junior official in attendance, it is even easier to sweep her contributions under the carpet. Odiemo-Munara (2008) indicates that the women in *Weevil* contest power/authority not to superficially possess it, but to restructure it and impart it into institutions that are inclusively accessible to both men and women in Ugandan society. Mrs Molapo is not asking questions to overpower men; rather she thinks the truth is vital. Her voice attests the willingness of women to work as equal partners with men; an African womanistic approach which she is denied. “In your assessment of the evidence before you, what would you say happened to the child?” The Chief of Police’s response is “That, Director, is confidential police information” (Dow, 2002, p. 143). However, Mrs Molapo refuses to be quietened by this response; she wants full details of the case if she has to be involved in the drafting up of the solutions to resolve the problem at Gaphala village. “If you expect me to be involved in a resolution of anything, I believe I must know the full details - I’m not just a spanner boy” (Dow, 2002, p. 143). Mrs Molapo is breaking the stereotypes of just accepting patriarchal settings silently. Naledi has also done the same by refusing to formulate an opinion on Neo’s case within a limited time as set by her boss; Mount V. Naledi refuses the set time and asks for the due date extension, something that astonishes Mount V because it never happened in his department. Mount V is not used to women who question authority. Kabira and Burkeywo (2016) state that in the novel *the River and the Source* by Margaret Ogola, the protagonist, Akoko, articulates a woman’s personality that contrasts with what society expects of a woman. Akoko is a strong woman who challenges the institution of patriarchy by going against the stereotype that women are confined to the kitchen, bear children

and serve men. Therefore, the text highlights women's agency of resistance of the norms to affirm that to liberate an African woman, patriarchy has to be interrogated by women themselves.

Moreover, the novelist uses Mrs Molapo as a mouthpiece to voice why murder cases are not resolved as expected in societies. The government, mostly represented by males, is failing the nation as we see from their behaviour that condemns the quest of truth. "Children especially girls, disappear or die under very mysterious circumstances, and no one's to account. And when the villagers demand answers, we, the government, are the very ones who try to shut them up" (Dow, 2002, p. 146). Mrs Molapo again might win the trust from the readers by acknowledging STIWANISM as she blames the government which she is part of. She believes that they all need to be part of social transformation. Ogunidipe-Leslie (1994) declares that African women need to participate as equal partners in social transformation in Africa. It angers someone to know children go missing without trace or die in painful ways and the government is not doing anything about it. This is also a logical argument providing the fact that the Gaphala's case is not unique; the same happened in the past and the cases are not resolved. By giving this background as evidence, there is no hope that the Gaphala's case will be resolved. Even though Mrs Molapo has been an active member in the meeting, her suggestions and contributions are not considered for they are not made as part of the problem resolution. It is the majority's choice that is taken and being a junior to the other members affects how her contributions are taken. "...after all, she was a junior. It was beginning to irk him that she thought she could just interrupt when her superiors were talking" (Dow, 2002, p. 150). This set-up is made up of men who still believe that women must be deprived of power; they must remain silent because of their inferiority. Mrs Molapo is aware of this cultural belief and at the same time defies it to assert her voice.

In addition, Boitumelo Kukama has proven her credibility that she is able to deal with Neo's case. She owns a law firm and she is the one that has helped Amantle to win the case of unlawful arrest after they held a demonstration at high school. In addition, Boitumelo once helped a thirteen-year-old girl, who believed her father wanted to sell her for *dipheko*, to be transferred to the boarding school located far from her village. Boitumelo shows her enthusiasm to help in this girl's wellbeing for she has been contacting her to encourage her to stay in school. Declaring her experience in winning these cases supports that she is able to handle similar cases. Winkler and McCuen (1988) comment that appeal to experience must involve a general and shared experience that is recognisable to usual readers. So the readers can easily reflect with Boitumelo's experience because they are already exposed to the story of Neo's ritual murder plot. Boitumelo's reputation is enhanced because she is eager to partake in social affairs related to girls who are victims of ritual murders. Upon taking the microphone, Boitumelo, the villagers' lawyer, begins "I have a few questions for the minister, on behalf of my clients" (Dow, 2002, p. 200). Boitumelo identifies with them; they feel a sense of fulfilment because there is someone of this calibre representing them.

Even though Boitumelo is standing in front of older and predominantly male government officials, she has been assertive and by all means tries to find ground with her audience, the villagers. Boitumelo asks Minister Mading the questions that the villagers want to get answers for. "How do the police say the clothes ended up at the clinic? Where were the clothes before they ended up at the clinic?" (Dow, 2002, p. 200). These questions are aimed at establishing the truth of what happened to the clothes and the villagers are in agreement with Boitumelo in finding out the truth because when Minister Mading refuses to answer these questions, they shout with disapproval. Boitumelo has transgressed patriarchy whereby men dominate women in

a system, which Mutunda (2009) describes as one of categorisation based on sex, providing men with a power advantage while depriving women of this benefit. Conversely, Boitumelo display the power and assurance that women have been deprived by denouncing the answers of the man of high status in society. Like other women in the novel, Boitumelo aims at caring for the wellbeing of the masses unlike the male counterparts who care for individuality.

From the beginning of the novel up to the end, the protagonist, Amantle Bokaa, displays self-confidence in her position as an African young lady. Amantle has done marvelous things at a young age, so her focus reveals to be a motivating character to the young girls who want to propel for individuality in life. It does not mean that she has never had personal challenges to deter her achievements; she has, but she confronts them on the way to her achievements. The researcher is still to be convinced that what Amantle has done can manifest in reality judging by her age and where she grows up. It is astounding for a girl to escalate to such high level of confidence at a very young age. Amantle shows herself as a reliable person who has the wellbeing of other people at heart. Ramage and Bean (1998) argue that to be a credible character one must naturally have personal warmth, consideration of others and a good mind. Amantle's credibility is therefore based on such facts. From the beginning, she has been the mouthpiece of other girls:

As she considered her position, she came to the conclusion - not for the first time - that amazing things tended to happen to her. Most probably, the reality was that when amazing things happened, she didn't run away, as most people would: she became intrigued and involved. There'd been the time, for example, when she was twelve and had told her friends that the school principal wanted to talk to them in her office. When

they'd gotten there, she'd told the principal that notwithstanding their parents' orders to the contrary, they were continuing to swim in the river. (Dow, 2002, pp. 100-101)

The above account gives an assurance to the readers about Amantle's commonly acknowledged virtues. Therefore, her character might convince readers that she will be able to handle any case. Even at the tender age of twelve, she showed defiance towards the school principal and was outspoken among her peers. Giving an account of Amantle's childhood gives rise to a sense of trust in her that in future she can even do better things. This narration of the past event aims to identify the audience with the feeling that perseverance prevails (Chen, 2018). Amantle helps the audience to see that she can face the challenges she may encounter and if they get united with her they will succeed in finding the truth.

Furthermore, as Amantle starts to make the headlines when she finds the box of clothes at the clinic, she continues to illustrate the agency to change stereotypes against women. In the presence of police officers, Amantle has demonstrated that as a woman you can stand your ground by refusing to be shaken by threats of those in authority. She asks for an explanation as to why she is summoned to the police station. "First, tell me why I was ordered, like a criminal, to come here: am I under arrest?" (Dow, 2002, p. 88). She uses her pure ingenuity to know exactly what is required of her; she knows exactly how to cause discomfort to the police officer so that she can get information from him. "That box has disappeared from this very station five years ago!" (Dow, 2002, p. 9). Amantle's self-confidence has led the police officer to admit that he knows of the disappearance of the box five years ago and confirms that indeed the box came to the station, which they have been denying. Amantle knows that this admission would be good news to the villagers, because they were told a different story five years ago. Amantle's tactful ability to get information from the police officer is seen as female insubordination, rebelliousness

and non-cooperation (Biscaia, 2010). She is standing for what she thinks is right and her rebellion is seen as disrespectful.

Amantle breaks the stereotype that being young means silence. She attests that confidence has no age, even a young girl like her can challenge patriarchy. “How old are you? Aren’t you a TSP?” (Dow, 2002 p. 90). He wants to demotivate her by insinuating that at her age she must not act as such and also reminds her of her inferiority in status; a TSP may be whose voice needs to be silent. He is astonished by a young girl like her showing such confidence. “He was used to efficiently dealing with obedient villagers, regardless of their age” (Dow, 2002, p. 90). This indicates that when the villagers are silent, they are in fact approving their inferiority and give men hegemonic power to rule them. Asante (2002) claims that silence is a representation of the historical muting of women under the difficult institution known as patriarchy, that form of social organisation in which males assume power and create for females an inferior status. She further says that destroying the emptiness of silence is therefore an appropriate metaphor to describe the writing of women in Africa. Amantle is destroying this silence for an African woman to express her discomforts and fears and be able to question what is not right in her society. Amantle breaks the stereotype of villagers’ silence to make sure the voice of a woman is heard and is able to affect changes in order to reach gender equality in Africa.

Amantle’s position in society becomes more apparent when eventually the police officer surrenders his authority and allows Amantle to write her statement as she demands. She is able to show that it is doable for a woman to have a choice. Simon and Obeten (2013) point out that feminism means a rejection of inferiority and striving for recognition. The readers are not just astonished by her authority to fight against inferiority; they are emotionally moved into the

feeling of excitement and might want to emulate her deeds. When the police officer reads her statement, he is not happy with what is written:

Do you want me to add to the statement that Sergeant Monaana didn't like the information I gave him? That is your name, isn't it? Should I make an additional statement about how you want me to change my statement so I put down what you want, not what I know? Is that it? (Dow, 2002, p. 90)

The use of questioning aims at riling the police officer to make more confessions as the result of anger so that Amantle can use them against the police. In her questioning, she sarcastically makes sure that the power belongs to Sergeant Monaana by using tag questions and at the same time, she is indicating that Monaana wants to prohibit her freedom of expression by being unhappy with what she has written in the statement. For Amantle, it is not imperative to make the police officers happy. What is important to her is to do what she believes is right for her; to make her own choices. Aforementioned, the researcher doubts Amaantle's confidence and ability to act as such at her age; it might be that the novelist tries to motivate women empowerment to start at a very young age so that as they grow up both men and women are aware of everyone's need of self fulfilment.

From the above discussions, we can see that the novelist's women characters are women of credibility and the masses might want to identify with them because of their refusal to adhere to patriarchal settings. They are empowered individually; they are able to disobey the order of men in isolation with other women. According to Rowlands (as cited in Casmir et al., 2013, p. 469), personal empowerment means "developing a sense of self and individual confidence [*sic*] and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression". If women are empowered

personally they will understand the importance of freedom to participate in social, political and economic issues. Women characters in Dow's novel *The Screaming of the Innocent* understand their rights to freedom; hence they choose to take their standing in societies dominated by men who believe that women are inferior to them. Towards the end of the novel, the novelist makes sure that personal empowerment of these women is used in a collective manner to prove her point that women should start to free themselves individually before they work collectively. It is because of collective empowerment that Neladi, Boitumelo, Nancy and Amantle with the help of Daniel manage to draw up the petition that is going to be read at the *kgotla* meeting. Casmir et al. (2013) note that:

Personal empowerment supports collective empowerment in a cooperative sense since it helps women to individually and collectively understand their situation and to move from insight, education and mobilization action to change the situation. This enables women to work on their relationships and understand the power dynamics of the situation and seek to change the oppressive power dynamics that oppress them and infringe on their rights. (pp. 469-470)

When they are busy drawing up the petition, these women and Daniel put together their understanding of the case so everybody has their opinion heard. They have been cooperative in drawing up the clear petition that is going to speak for the villagers because their aim is to seek the truth that is hidden from the whole community. Including Daniel in their conversation supports the argument, discussed by Mekgwe (2008, p. 16), that if African feminism is to succeed as a humane information project, it cannot accept separatism from the opposite sex. Avoiding male exclusion becomes one defining features of African feminisms.

While the novel has empowered African women in the public sphere, it neglects the private sphere: husbands and children. Does it mean that those that are actively involved in public affairs are not supposed to be wives and mothers? African women need to be seen transgressing subjugation in both private and public spheres. Some women characters that have confronted patriarchy have done it publically but their private life, their families for example, is not presented in the novel. An African woman must be able to show that she can handle the family and other affairs outside the house, like Aunty Ifeoma in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, who is a family woman, lecturer and involved in political issues at her workplace. Ogun-dipe-Leslie (1994) states that "African feminism for me, therefore, must include the issue around the women's body, her person, her immediate family, her society, her nation, her continent and their locations within the international economic order which determine African politics and impacts on the women" (p. 228). This implies that African women must be conscious of their African customs, including family upbringing, so they aspire to act according to their own customs and beliefs.

4.3 Empowering women through education

In the novel, women want to have a career and that may be obtained through the process of education. Everyone needs to respect each woman's choice of herself and family. Thus, an African feminist view concerns itself with the liberty of all African people. Most of the women in *The Screaming of the Innocent* are empowered through education. Education becomes a necessary tool for them to transcend their gender stereotypes and social position in their societies. The researcher tends to agree with the African proverb that says 'if you educate a girl, you educate a community'. This proverb resonates well with how the novel presents female

characters. The female characters' primary focus is to find out the truth of the ritual murder that has affected the whole community. In the process of pursuing the truth, they keep on referring to ritual murder crimes that were committed in the past. They have shown that they do not only care for their personal wellbeing but for the whole society. This is not to deny that they don't have personal problems; to admit personal problems publicly may be deemed as weak. They do what they believe about their life instead of what tradition tells them to. This contrasts with their male counterparts who are depicted as selfish and are willing to conceal the truth for the sake of protecting the perpetrators.

The novel wants the audience to see how the improvement in the lives of women and girls will improve the livelihood of the whole society. This can be a reality when everyone is in support of the girls pursuing careers through education. To clarify this argument, the novelist has supported it with how Amantle Bokaa's family digresses from the African traditional norm that says education is beneficial to men not to women. The change in attitude is the focus of African feminist writers; they are fighting for equal treatment for both genders. Biscaia (2010) notes that in case of Amantle in Dow's *The Screaming of the Innocent*, her parents made an effort to get finance to support her education despite the impoverished living conditions they experience which had delayed her finishing school for some time. It is evident that all members of the family have contributed to Amantle's schooling with joy. Excitedly, everyone remembers how he or she participated in the youngest daughter's early education:

Her sisters had remembered proudly washing the baby of the family's school uniform, whereas her brothers had remembered sending money home to pay for her school shoes and school fees. Her mother had remembered leafing through her daughter's exercise books to look for ticks and then count and re-count them. Her father had remembered

how his daughter taught him to write his name so he did not have to use his thumb print on papers at the post office when his sons sent money from South Africa. (Dow, 2002, p. 27)

This argument states that the whole family supports Amantle because every member of the family has to yield to the deviation of cultural beliefs to convince the readers that it is beneficial. This scenario supports the African womanist approach because males are partners in the battle to liberate a girl child who in the past was denied education. The readers may then want to know the outcome of Amantle's education to see if they can support the argument or not. This is why Murthy and Ghosal (2014) claims that logos refers to intellectual reason, based on logical conclusions. The conclusions come from assumptions derived from the collection of solid facts. It is up to the readers' conclusions that the collective support of girls' education leads to the improvement in the welfare of the whole society and if it supported by everyone, yields fruitful results.

Furthermore, the novel has highlighted the importance of education in elevating women's positions. Ayiera (2010) asserts that access to power is based on a hierarchy where male is preferred over female and to other systems of domination. To this, the novel argues otherwise, in this novel both male and female are given the position of leadership. The writer persuades the readers by showing them that educated women can take up positions that are believed to be men's'. "From where she and her mother were sitting, she'd been able to see a large desk, behind it, a large woman" (Dow, 2002, p. 27). The use of the adjective "large" before the noun desk seems to give the importance of the position of the principal. Both men and women, now share the superiority that in the past was prearranged for men. The novel is calling for the society that sees the importance of fair treatment of its people.

In addition, Naledi Binang, a young lawyer, is faced with the challenge of being stereotyped because she is a woman. “People said that Mount V didn’t hold women in very high esteem: he considered they lacked the stamina he believed was required in order to practice law” (Dow, 2002, p. 125). Mount V believes that there are some areas that women cannot excel like their male counterparts. His attitude is reflected when he shouts at Marry that ladies’ femininity is emphasised by the use of mirrors and if Marry continues to use the mirror, she cannot do well at work. However, Naledi proves Mount V wrong that it was then when women were discriminated against. “Ms Binang, I want you to read this and tell me what you make of it. Give me a written opinion. I want it before the end of the day, Ms Binang” (Dow, 2002, p. 126). Albeit the instructions are full of commanding words Naledi is also able to make decisions and stand for them. She defies the instruction that Mount V gives of completing the work that needs more attention in a limited of time. It surprises Mount V to have a woman of such spirit under his headship. This indicates a transition in cultural beliefs that women cannot challenge patriarchal orders. The novelist has supported the evolution with women that are educated to convince the readers that education is a very important tool to assist women to prove their abilities. The evidence given assures the readers that the claim made is true and if they resort to education they may be able to break wrong beliefs held in patriarchal societies. Winkler and McCuen (1988) support that evidence provides justification for a belief or proposition by testifying that it is either true or false.

The writer highlights the importance of education in women setting up companies to be able to employ other women in order to make their social contributions and be economically independent. Boitumelo Kukama of Kukama, Badisa and Co, is able to represent the villagers with no fear because she is an independent lawyer. If she would be the one working for the

government, she won't be able to speak out for fear of losing her job. So Dow is underscoring the importance of independence and solidarity among women like in Paulina Chiziane's novel *Niketche*, where Rami fights for solidarity and helps other women achieve their economic independence. She uses solidarity among women to create ways to overcome patriarchal power and women's subjugation. When Neladi is afraid to go back to work because she acted against her work policy by sharing Neo's file with Boitumelo and others, Boitumelo offers her a job in their company. Boitumelo is helping Neladi to be able to exercise her freedom from people like Mount V who undermine women's abilities. The novelist has realised that Neladi will not be able to affect other women if she goes back to the government that is dominated by male authority which contradicts what Dow wants to emphasise. She has been emphasising that women must be able to reach the top of their desires even in the presence of male authority. Amantle has been doing a five-month stint at Kukam, Badisa and Co to keep herself busy after leaving high school. Boitumelo's attitude of empowering other women is a sign that women can do better when they are cooperating.

The novelist's stress on education of young girls shows the transition of societies from patriarchy to a fair representation of both genders in society. Kalua (2007) stresses that the knowledge acquired from schooling by Amantle and other youngsters is not used to form power to control the villagers, but against those, mostly men, who have misused the power they have. By finding the balance they are able to rise above the societal limitations. The youngsters, Amantle and Boitumelo, join in the VIPs tent. "She and Amantle looked very out of place among the older and predominantly male government officials" (Dow, 2002, p. 200). This has given the villagers hope that their leaders will be able to engage with them. Biscaia (2010) notes that unlike the meeting held in Gabrone, women are less outnumbered by men, suggesting that power has

shifted a little. This change might be seen as a sign of transition where women empowered through education are able to take positions that are believed to be male dominated. The emotions of the readers can be impacted by their imagination because they have to imagine Amantle and Boitumelo sitting amid their leaders, which was not possible before, and they might be willing to emulate their example. The issue to be raised in this section and in fact the whole chapter is that the novel emphasises women's empowerment through education. This may discourage uneducated women that they have no chances of airing their dissatisfactions in patriarchal societies as other methods of empowerment seem to be not considered valuable.

4.4 Standing strong in the midst of subjugation: Oppressive dialogue

Invitational rhetoric provides opportunity for participants in conversations to engage with ideas without being forced to accept others perspectives. It ensures that understanding of perspectives is made to all participants before making the conclusions and equality is maintained throughout the process of communication. Berger (2016) acknowledges that the use of invitational rhetoric presumes conditions of economic, political, and social equality between and among interlocutors; but such conditions are rare, and some critics have asked whether invitational rhetoric could ever find a productive setting. These critics point out that invitational rhetoric assumes that the oppressors and oppressed have shared interests, and they criticise the followers for being little concerned that invitations from those in power too often carry terms and conditions (Berger, 2016). Dialogues that encompass equality among all interlocutors are rare especially if they are dominated by those in senior positions. This is true when Amantle is summoned to the police station; the police officers have neither greeted nor introduced themselves to Amantle or even explained why she has been called to the police station. All these are essentials to an opening of the dialogue that is aimed at achieving equality of all participants.

Instead of creating the conducive milieu where freedom, value and safety prevail, they impose their questions on Amantle to show that authority belongs to them. “Tell us what you know. There was authority in his voice” (Dow, 2002, p. 88). Such an authoritative attitude does not encourage all the participants to partake in offering perspective fully and freely. According to Craig and Muller (2007), if invitational rhetoric is to result in mutual understanding of perspectives, there must be a creation of atmosphere in which audience members’ perspectives can also be offered.

Even though Amantle is not terrified by the authority in the voices of police officers, because of her character and past encounters, the dialogues do not embrace the feminist principles of invitational rhetoric. The police officer goes on to say “don’t play games young woman: you know why you are here” (Dow, 2002, p. 88). Stereotyping is one thing that can hinder equality in communication. Suggesting that all young women will yield to your authority may be wrong because one of them like Amantle can be different. The officer is implying that because Amantle is a young woman, she must do what he is demanding. The police officer is not promoting the environment of open-mindedness, but rather promotes criticism that may hamper the smooth flow of information between them. To show that Amantle is not one of those young women who yield to the authority’s demands, she demands the police officer to open up and explain things to her. She wants to remove the sense of authority in him because they cannot have a good communication relationship if there is a prevalence of dominance. “No, actually I don’t know why I’m here. I was ordered to get into a police vehicle; I was told I’d be told why when I got here” (Dow, 2002, p. 88). Even though she knows why she is at the police station, she decides not to say anything until she is accorded the feminist principles of equality, immanent value and self-determination. Craig and Muller (2007) do not accept communication that tends to oppress

and dominate others. There are better humane and enriching ways to live. So these efforts to dominate and gain power over others cannot be used to build relationships of equality. Therefore, it is better if feminists decide to do away with alienation, competition and dehumanisation instead guarantee equal relationships with attitudes of intimacy, mutuality and camaraderie (Hooks, 1984). This can be achieved if the subjugated groups like women stand up to confront those that engage them in authoritative dialogues. It is the oppressed who need to act against patriarchal settings, because the oppressors think it is acceptable to engage in forceful dialogues as per set orders of patriarchal societies.

Moreover, it is understandable that the police need information from Amantle in order to lodge the urgent investigation on the matter but Amantle condemns the manner they are engaging with her. Amantle sees the importance of speaking against forceful conversations where women are controlled and forced to speak as demanded by those in authority. Bone et al. (2008, p. 445) state that Griffin and Foss believe that persuasion is necessary, but they also believe that an alternative exists that may be used in instances when changing and controlling others is not the goal of the rhetor. Amantle is threatened to cooperate and yield to the officer's demands but she refuses to talk and requests that he explain why she is taken to the police station:

First, tell me why I was ordered, like a criminal, to come here: am I under arrest? She enquired. No, you're not under arrest - but you might end up being under arrest if you obstruct us in our investigations. He was snappy. Oh, I'd be happy to leave now so you're not obstructed in your investigations - and what investigations might they be? She was cocky and assertive. Listen, young lady, the police officer warned her, I have no time to waste: I need your statement. (Dow, 2002, pp. 88-89)

From the above account one can tell that Amantle is promoting invitational rhetoric by refusing to let the police officer mistreat her until the police officer gives a lead-in of what they want to know. “Okay. There’s a near-riot in that village: we want to know what set things off and who’s leading the disturbances” (Dow, 2002, p. 89). Some critics of invitational rhetoric charge that it lacks agency because there is no effort to change others; they believe that when the goal is to achieve understanding, agency is absent because no pre-determined change occurs (Bone et.al, 2008). Agency exists in invitational rhetoric as an act of understanding and it is supposed to start right at the beginning of the conversation when the police officer receives Amantle in his office. Aforesaid, to establish an invitational environment, the external environment build on the principles of safety, value and freedom have be considered to foster understanding in the conversation. Amantle and the police officers’ dialogue has resulted in tension and lack of agreement because of the failure of the police officer to consider external conditions of invitational rhetoric that nurture understanding. Ryan and Natalle (2001, p. 79) explain agency in invitational rhetoric as follows:

Therefore, both participants must recognise that in trying to reach understanding, they have to consider what they bring to the interpretive moment and yield assumptions and misunderstandings to better understand the other person’s perspective. In this hermeneutic exchange, to understand is to act.

The agency here is the act of understanding one another’s perspectives, however different. If the police officer has to suspend his pride, authoritative nature and tries to listen to what Amantle has to say agency will be an understanding they create in their conversation. One thing that Amantle wants to instill in women is the power of freedom; freedom to choose what works for you, to express yourself and to choose determination over fear. Amantle chooses to express

herself freely despite the threats from the police officer; one would yield to the commands because of fear, but she remains firm because she wants to understand others and be understood too. Amantle's personality enables her to oppose stereotypes against her age and gender and allows her to support invitational rhetoric. Amantle's pursuit for feminist rhetorical principles suggests that being a woman and young means active participation in society to change patriarchal settings.

Furthermore, the police officer has confirmed that all police officers at that station have the same authority because when he speaks he uses 'us' pronoun to include all members of the police. "Tell us what you know?" (Dow, 2002, p. 88), "... if you obstruct us in our investigations" (Dow, 2002, p. 89). By using 'us' he is identifying with the colleagues and one can deduce that the police station, which is male dominated, is comprised of people who do not value feminist principles of equality, immanent value and self-determination. It is again attested when Amantle goes to the office of the station commander because she is demanding to make a copy of her statement which is not allowed at that police station. To prove that the 'us' used by Sergeant Monaana is indeed inclusive, the station commander commands Amantle to shut up, "I said shut up, young girl!" (Dow, 2002, p. 92), reminding Amantle that at her age her contribution is not valued by being intolerant to her. It can be attested from the conversations Amantle is involved in with the police officers that it may be difficult to employ feminist principles of equality, self determination and immanent value in conversations where there are dominant parties.

Another example of repressive dialogue takes place during the meeting that is held to discuss how the issues at Gaphala village can be solved. When the meeting starts, the chairperson, Mr Selepe explains the reason for the short notice meeting and also the role of everyone invited. He also asks the members to brief him before he fields questions. Each attendee is made aware of

what the meeting is about; building the positive relationship amongst the participants. Mr Selepe invites questions from the audience to indicate that no one is dominant and everybody's contribution is respected and valued. This corresponds to invitational rhetoric as defined by Park (n.d., p. 14) who emphasises that in invitational rhetoric:

An environment is created in which the audience is encouraged to choose and freely decide (freedom). Also the audience is respected for the intrinsic or inherent worth of each individual. The invitation changes and decides among the diversity of perspectives (openness), without risk and threat to their diversity.

Even though the rhetor has created an external environment at the beginning of the meeting for everyone to participate, in reality it is not the case. Mr Selepe does not want to accept what Mrs Molapo has offered because it contrasts with his perspective. His approach shows that he is not engaging invitational rhetoric where other people's perspectives are treated with respect and explored to understand their positions. His response to Mrs Molapo's question contravenes the principles of invitational rhetoric because it limits freedom of expression and only expects what he favours:

That, director is confidential police information. This isn't a trial; it's a briefing to enable the police to resolve a potentially volatile situation peacefully. What I need from you is information to assist in that resolution. I hope I'm making myself clear. He looked away from her to invite a comment from someone else. (Dow, 2002, p. 143)

This response implies that Mr Selepe is dominating the meeting by avoiding Mrs Molapo freedom to choose what she wants to ask. Mr Selepe's response is one that shuts off someone's contribution because it does not motivate Mrs Molapo to continue contributing to the discussion

and the body language 'he looked away' is also not inviting. According to Sharier (2015), as humans, we must first realise that we exist with the sphere of equality, that we share the same image. When we create the mentality of opposition, we oppress the object of oppression and demonise others' traditional beliefs and this type of inequality is a problem as it views others as less important. This inequality in the conversation can be a problem but Mrs Malopo is still bold enough to show that she has an important issue to contribute and that being part of the meeting she has the right to be valued. If she has to be part of the resolution, her question has to be answered; she cannot contribute to something she does not understand. So, she gives him a condition to deal with. "If you expect me to be involved in a resolution of anything, I believe I must know the full details. I'm not just a spanner boy" (Dow, 2002, p. 143). Mrs Molapo's response is influenced by her emotions because she has been angered by Mr Selepe's dominance. Without the identification of the feminist principles in Mr Selepe and Mrs Molapo's dialogue, there is an opportunity of miscommunication and emotions to intervene. However, Mrs Molapo shows self-determination when she declines to be quietened by Mr Selepe's violations of feminist principles. She cannot allow someone to threaten her to keep quiet; she believes in her freedom to choose.

Additionally, another way in which women in the novel promote self-determination, equality and immanent value is the technique of questioning. Women do not want to just sit in the presence of men and wait for them to direct them on everything they are doing, they want to contribute to the decision-making process and seek further understanding about matters pertaining to their societies. Amantle has kept on questioning Sergeant Monaana to eliminate the state of authority in him so that they can have a conversation based on equality where both of them are free to make their contributions based on the understanding of the matter at hand. "First, tell me why I

was ordered like a criminal, to come here: am I under arrest? Shouldn't you guide me about what you're interested in?" (Dow, 2002, pp. 88-89). The questions show that Amantle is interested in a dialogue that promotes freedom with Sergeant Monaana not putting restrictions on her. Mihalcea (2014) notes that when freedom is present, rhetors do not place restrictions on an interaction; they do not choose how participants think. Amantle also asks the questions to get more information about how the clothes have disappeared from the police station so that Sergeant Monaana can provide her with explanation and clarification for better understating. "How does it disappear from the station five years ago? Does your file say how it happened?" (Dow, 2002, p. 89). Amantle understands the predicament of an African woman who is always under threat of male dominated authority.

Similarly, Mrs Molapo has used the same technique of questioning at the male dominated meeting in Gabrone that is aimed at solving the riot in Gaphala village. She is constantly asking questions to foster participation and have insight of the case. "And, how, and why, did they come up with such a ridiculous conclusion? (Dow, 2002, p. 146), "And since you mention suspects, were there no suspects in this case?" (Dow, 2002, p. 147), "After you've had everything to hide for five years, why do you think they'll believe you this time? (Dow, 2002, p. 148). Even though she has been answered, the environment does not yet conform to the feminist principles because some of the men in the meeting still have the judgmental attitude to refer to her actions as feminine or those of a junior official. She is still finding it very difficult to be a team player because it is not in her nature to find common ground with dishonest people. This is in contrast with Kindred's (2007) understanding that dialogues force participants to reconcile their views with their values, it obliges them to confront their own thinking, and they see different ways of seeing an issue. This is a way of liberating the participants from division and prepares them to

find a way to mutual understanding and transformation. Kindred admits that invitational rhetoric seeks for social equality which is absent in the conversation at the Gabrone meeting.

The question that Stolley (2017, p. 245) asks is; “Can invitational rhetoric be a meaningful rhetorical strategy when interlocutors hold unequal positions of power or influence, particularly when the rhetor attempting to create understanding is less powerful than her audience?” This question can be applied to Mrs Molapo and Amantles’ situations in which they were trying to create an environment where understanding can be adopted by all members, this cannot be reached because of their positions in society and they are sidelined as women. “What happened to good-mannered girls?” (Dow, 2002, p. 93). “He wasn’t about to be corrected by a director - after all, she was a junior” (Dow, 2002, p. 150). With this attitude, those in authority are not allowing Mrs Molapo and Amantle’s perspectives to be understood because of the pride they are subjected to as being officially superior. It is easy to determine the state of subjugation of women in this society. One can see that women are striving to let men know their weaknesses of dominating and belittling women but men in authority are reluctant to let go of the authority that is limiting equality, self determination and immanent value.

4.5 Towards inclusivity: Cooperative dialogue

Invitational rhetoric has not been embraced by a large number of rhetorical scholars; some doubt its effectiveness in public engagements (Ryan & Natalle, 2001). Ryan and Natalle (2001) question why invitational rhetoric fails to win over a large number of communication scholars and students if it is a non-violent perspective and its dialogic structures are appealing. Ryan and Natalle (2001, p. 69) believe that “invitational rhetoric suffers from a misinterpretation of its epistemological grounding, and, as a result of this error, falls short as a theoretically useful

model of either dialogic communication or alternative rhetoric”. One of those who misinterpret the theory is Condit (as cited in Bone et al., 2008, p. 441) who claims that invitational rhetoric “portrays male and female activities and ways of being as radically separate from one another and assigns rhetoric to the realm of male”. Amantle contradicts Condit’s idea when she goes to the clinic on her first day, she finds at least about fifteen patients waiting to be attended to. They are mainly pregnant women, women with children and a few men. Amantle has created the external conditions of safety, freedom and value by greeting the elders respectfully, “Good morning, my older people. The clinic will open soon: another five minutes and you’ll be able to see the nurse” (Dow, 2002, p. 44). She has also introduced herself to assure them that in any case they decide to share their perspectives; they are going to be valued. Amantle knows that if the relationship of trust is not built, invitational rhetoric may not take place and she does not want to engage in authorising them to talk. She asks the audience how many clinics they have in their area and eventually, one of the men asks her “How many clinics do you have in your village?” (Dow, 2002, p. 45). Asking questions is one way of knowing that the audience wants to be engaged in the conversation and that there is freedom of participation. The fact that Amantle invites both men and women to partake in the conversation, equally, supports Foss and Griffins’ (1995) contention that:

Although invitational rhetoric is constructed largely from feminist theory, the literature in which its principles and various dimensions have been theorised most thoroughly, we are not suggesting that only feminists have dealt with and developed its various components or that only feminists adhere to the principles on which it is based. (p. 5)

Foss and Griffin (1995) emphasise that invitational rhetoric can be used by both men and women, what make it feministic is not the use but the grounding of its principles. Furthermore, the man continues to converse with Amantle:

We only have this one clinic and these two nurses, and it is for all five villages in this area: Gaphala, Moruti, Seretseng. Serube and Mpaleng! All of us, we rely on this one clinic and its two nurses! And the nurses won't be here at 7.30 as you say - they'll come when they feel like. They hardly ever feel like coming on time. And when they do come today, they'll abuse us with their sharp tongues. (Dow, 2002, p. 45)

The man has offered this information because of the relationship of equality created in their conversation. Amantle shows the patients that they are at the same level; no one is dominating the other hence they are sharing information. Amantle and the patients respect each others immanent value when they ask and respond to each others' questions. Meyer (2007, p. 5) states that rhetors who utilise invitational rhetoric recognise the inherent value in the ideas of others, so they intend to make the audience feel adequate by acknowledging their perspectives. Their self-determination is also respected because Amantle does not pose a specific question to any particular person but to anybody who is willing to answer. The audience members can choose to contribute to the conversation or not. The same analysis is made by Lozano (2013) who points out that in Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, when the Northern people meet together to make a decision everybody is represented, but people have a choice to participate individually if they wish. This can be said as a representation of the feminist principle of self-determination since everyone in the group has the freedom to engage in the conversation.

Another cooperative dialogue takes place when Amantle and Daniel drive in the bush to meet her lawyer friend Boitumelo. Amantle is surprised to learn that Boitumelo is accompanied by Naledi Binang, a lawyer in the Attorney-General's Chambers and a white woman, Nancy Madison. Amantle is perplexed, thinking she has gotten herself in trouble because at this point in time she does not know why Naledi and Nancy are in attendance which means the external conditions are not yet created. Before the rendezvous starts Amantle tries to create external conditions of value, freedom and safety by asking "can we talk in front of this state counsel here?" (Dow, 2002, p. 156). Naledi assures her that nobody at the office knows her whereabouts. Amantle then asks Nancy, "and you Nancy: why are you here?" (Dow, 2002, p. 156). In addition to these women is Daniel who has driven with Amantle. Amantle knows that these individuals are motivated by valuing them and her rhetoric is an invitation to an understanding of the presence of Nancy and Naledi. Amantle is trying to know why these ladies are there and also to build trust; to know whether the discussions can go on in their presence. She is simply creating external conditions of value, safety and freedom. This representation echoes well with Alice Walker's womanism of the late 90s and the first decade of 21st century. Izgarjan and Markov (2012) indicate that during the late 90s and in the first decade of 21st century, womanism changed its standpoint "to allow for the possibility of including all women, colored or white within the span of womanism, including men who respect women and their rights". This is exactly what is happening in this meeting, even though the black women are in majority, a white woman and man are accepted in this milieu to be part of the discussion. It can be seen that womanism, unlike feminism, celebrates inclusivity of all the people in society despite their race, gender or colour.

Amantle further builds mutual understanding by giving the background of the case, “Amantle then presented to the group what happened the past few days” (Dow, 2002, p. 156). This helps them to be on the same page so they decide what they will do tomorrow at *kgotla* meeting. And when the discussion starts Amantle involves everyone. “I’ve told you the problem; it’s up to you to propose a solution - a plan” (Dow, 2002, p. 159). Everyone is at liberty to offer the plan suitable for what the villagers want. Bone et al. (2008) mention that the agency in invitational rhetoric lies in the means of creating external conditions of value, freedom and safety which make it easier for interlocutors to understand one another. So agency is present when a rhetor tries to understand other rhetors, even if they do not agree with their views. Ratcliff (as cited in Bone et al., 2008) clarifies that if the agency is grounded in understanding, the interlocutors listen attentively, with the intent of seeing how a discourse affects not only them but others as well. Amantle and others are liable to understand each others’ perspectives and negotiate how they will benefit the villagers that they will represent at the *kgotla* meeting.

Amantle offers to tell them she has the items of clothing, which the police want so much. Naledi offers to tell others “I have a copy of the case file” (Dow, 2002, p. 160). After they have gone through the file, they shared their understanding of what they have. Boitumelo does not understand “why the cover up?” (Dow, 2002, p. 162) for the past five years. Naledi says “I think the lion story was created out of fear; there’s nothing to really suggest collusion between the killers and the police” (Dow, 2002, p. 163). Daniel also takes a turn to suggest that lawyers must help the villagers to meet their demands. Nancy suggests that they prepare a statement that Boitumelo can read at the *kgotla* meeting on behalf of the villagers. Kindred (2007) emphasises that in invitational rhetoric the aim is not to control others, but something that can be employed by all members of interaction so that everyone can learn from the interaction. This interaction

creates knowledge and the decision made is shared between the initiator of rhetoric and the audience. The initiator of rhetoric acts as the facilitator in the exchange of information which should flow freely in the communication process. During the meeting everybody has a fair chance of participating in the conversation. A mantle who has called for the meeting has not dominated the meeting by deciding what is to be done but she rather facilitates the conversation. This is the representation of self-determination since everyone is free to partake in the discussion. They are cooperative because they listen to each other despite different perspectives. Immanent value is displayed because everyone has contributed to the discussion and contributions are valued by follow-up questions and noting down the suggestions. The inclusion of all the interlocutors shows that they are not subjects to be acted upon, but that they are equally part of the problem solving process and the final decision too.

There is an issue of questioning to engage the listeners to reflect on the view offered, to suggest possible answers and to show that the speaker is not trying to persuade the listeners into her perspective. “May I suggest we use the next two hours to read the materials we have?” (Dow, 2002, p. 161). “...but what is it we want to pass on to the public? What is it we want to accomplish?” (Dow, 2002, p. 164). “It’d be irresponsible of us to lead the villagers to think that this murder will be solved; it most probably won’t - or am I wrong?” (Dow, 2002, p. 166). “Can we talk a bit about the nurses?” (Dow, 2002, p. 167). These questions depict a sense of inclusivity of all interlocutors because they are not directed to a specific person but rather to everyone. This means the rhetor is ready to be heard and is responsible for hearing the viewpoints of others as a means of acknowledging their immanent value and equality. When the interlocutors are encouraged to articulate their views like this, they are given the freedom to decide for themselves what suits them best in reflecting their self-determination. The researcher

notices that a conversation in which understanding is an agency motivates the contribution from all participants, despite their genders and positions in society, which recognises feminist principles of equality, self-determination and immanent value.

4.6 Chapter summary

In short, this chapter has explored how the novelist uses inspirational women who break the usual perception of women in an African context. These women have endured tribulations in a male dominated society without cracking and they continue to show their willingness to work with men. Women gain confidence differently; Motlatsi Kakang gains her defiance from the mishap of losing a daughter who is believed to be murdered for *dipheko*. Others have gained their strength from education and various experiences of life. The analysis has seen the deviation of African families from the belief that it is more beneficial to educate boys than girls. Now that women are educated they are able to take up positions that were formerly believed to be the domain of men exclusively, like school principal and lawyer. Education is seen as the gateway to women's economic and social independence in this novel. Boitumelo has the company that offers opportunities to other women; helping women to define themselves and become economically independent.

In addition, Dow's women characters captured the readers' attention because they contest the authority that in the past was deemed uncontestable. This earns them respect for their credibility and it is worth noting that the evidence of their works is visible to the readers. The story itself is full of emotional contexts where men in authority are seen as dishonest by trying to obscure the truth of Neo's murder case. In this novel, male's dishonesty is generalised to all men in authority. The chapter has acknowledged the benefits of personal empowerment of women in

order to attain collective empowerment. If women are personally empowered, they will be able to partake in the public deliberations of their societies.

Education has enabled women's voices to be heard even in the midst of the subjugating set norms that characterise an African society. Even though it is difficult to penetrate a male dominated domain, women characters in *The Screaming of the Innocent* have strived to surpass the cultural norm of silence. It is challenging for Mrs Molapo to maintain invitational rhetoric in the male dominated domain as dialogues that encompass equality among the interlocutors are rare, especially in this case. Some men still refuse to accept the sense of equality for all genders, but when the agency in the conversation is understanding; equality amongst women and men is effortlessly realised.

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN'S SUBJUGATION AND ACTION TO FREEDOM IN *PURPLE HIBISCUS* BY CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents how hegemonic patriarchy can be seen as a moral yardstick for controlling women's life in and outside the house. In Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* an African woman has experienced the misery of being under the oppression of her husband due to socio-economic dependence. Chukwuma (2007) states that most of the women sufferers have neither education nor viable means of livelihood, hence they are left with no choice but to depend on their husbands. It is discussed in this chapter that in the novel there are some women characters who abjectly suffer subjugation when they lack the sense of independence and the willingness to free themselves from the chains of patriarchal norms that subjugate them. Parsons (1996) finds inequality in marriages, which gives economic independence to men but not to women which encourages miserly marriages. Since it is difficult or impossible to get a job, these women are tied to their houses to do domestic chores and wait for their husbands to make decisions on their behalf either domestic or outside the houses. If in any case the woman is not conducting herself accordingly, she has to be disciplined through whipping or other forms of violence. The chapter also discusses what silence does to Beatrice and the advice one should consider to free from subjugation. Yet, it is also discussed that in the same society, there is a woman who can make her own choices on how to live her life. Auntie Ifeoma is that woman that seeks to impact the change wherever she is socially, economically and politically.

It seems that it is difficult to change one's cultural beliefs. Otieno (2013) argues that it is important to understand how it is difficult to change one's culture. Otieno (2013) further posits that culture has existed before us and directed our forefathers; therefore, it is often argued that if it worked for our forefathers, then it will work for us as well. Otieno's statement gives hegemonic position to the forefathers to show that the importance is placed on a man than a woman. Why didn't culture work for the foremothers? Due to this sentiment, Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* argues that some cultural beliefs tend to put down girls and women and give boys and men an upper hand to show how important and strong they are. This chapter also argues how Christianity is used as a reason to violate a woman. The rules of Christianity are used in the way that Beatrice and the children are victimised by the admonishment of fierce punishments for the wrong they have done. However, Victor (2013) declares that the Genesis account of creation in the Bible says that Almighty God Himself solemnised the first marriage in human history that is why a man will leave his father and mother, says Genesis 2:24, and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh (Victor, 2013, p. 53). This account shows that marriage is from God, and it is mutual love that holds the institution of marriage. Eugene in *Purple Hibiscus* has contradicted the oneness that the Lord has commanded in his words.

In bringing out all the above issues, the characters are evaluated in accordance to their ethos; how well they can earn or lose trust from their audience. The aim of the novel is not just to amuse the readers, but to send a message that can impact the positive change on them. This is done through the characters whom the readers want to identify with; those that they view as agents of change. There are also the characters that the readers may not want to associate with because of their weakness or harsh behaviours. Through these characters the chapter discusses the evidence to show how they have suffered under patriarchy and how some have deviated from the

cultural norms to defy patriarchal structures. The evidence provided provokes emotions in the readers to which Capps et al. (1926) posit that persuasion may come through hearers, when the speech can stir their emotion. The readers' judgement is different when they are happy and friendly from when they are hostile and pained.

In Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* society is represented by two men. Eugene oppresses his wife, Beatrice, in and outside the house. Beatrice is not allowed to contribute to her society even if she is able to, not even to express herself freely in the conversation because of the conditioned belief of society. In the same novel, Father Amadi allows the participants to be free in the conversation and to choose how to live their life by creating the external conditions that motivate the interlocutor to offer their perspectives freely in order to promote self-determination, equality and immanent value.

5.2 Subjugating women: Obedience through violence

From the beginning of the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie demonstrates Eugene's family's lack of freedom and that things are about to fall apart to break the suffocation in the house. The family does not show any sign of dynamism; they live in the static environment where everything is set and controlled by the paternal authority. Kivai (2010) suggests that the center, portrayed by the paternal authority, cannot hold anymore, therefore, several centers of authority are needed in Eugene's family. The family lives in an organised environment: time to eat, time to study, time for church programmes, and time for Jaja and Kambili to wash their school uniforms. Beatrice is confined to the private space of the house which she does not even have any authority over. Such environments with strict routines seem to be uncondusive to live in, thus the change to a comfortable setting is needed. They follow their routines as Eugene desires; if one of them

fails to follow the routines as required, Eugene deals with them so that repetition is avoided in future. After the Sunday church services they usually pass by Father Benedicts' house to greet him. Beatrice is not feeling well and resolves to remain in the car which angers Eugene:

Let me stay in the car and wait, *biko*, Mama said leaning on the Mercedes. I feel vomit in my throat. Papa turned to stare at her. Are you sure you want to stay in the car? Papa asked. My body does not feel right, she mumbled. I asked if you were sure you wanted to stay in the car. Mama looked up. I will come with you. It's really not bad. (Adichie, 2003, p. 29)

The above quotation shows the readers that the authority belongs to Eugene when he questions his wife if she is 'sure' that she wants to stay in the car. The questioning is a command in disguise to ensure that his desire is fulfilled no matter the circumstance. Mama has no other choice but to change her mind to go with them in Father Benedicts' house even though she has given specific details of how she feels. This is an appeal to the emotions of the readers for empathy for Mama who cannot make choices. One would think of Mama's sickness as a good reason for her to be excused which Papa is failing to notice. The readers can be angered by Papa because his authority does not have boundaries. Mama has a good reason to remain in the car and that can be used to illustrate sound reasoning. Instead of defending her reasoning, she concedes to her husband's demands despite her sickness. This account exemplifies that Eugene's authority is the symbol of the society where women are subjugated to established societal norms that avoid them expressing themselves instead accepting what the husbands command them to do, which is a manifestation of patriarchy.

Adichie's novel indicates the physical suffering of a woman as a way of disciplining her to comply with patriarchal settings. Submissiveness and passivity of this woman to the ideology of patriarchy is not going to change the way she is treated. The change may come when she starts to rebel. Beatrice's submissiveness to the husband leads to more beatings because Eugene thinks that it is acceptable to beat his wife in accordance with the societal norms of his society. In some African societies, when a woman tolerates the victimisation and brutality from her husband she is considered a good wife, so this shows that Eugene is bonded to his cultural beliefs that if he is not acting in accordance with his roots, something is amiss (Ann, 2015). The narrator, Kambili, makes use of emotive and evident words when she narrates the beatings her mother has to endure. "Swift, heavy thuds on my parents' hand-carved bedroom door. I imagined the door had gotten stuck and Papa was trying to open it" (Adichie, 2003, p. 32). Kambili's narration contains descriptive words 'swift', 'heavy', 'thuds', 'stuck' that are evoking sympathetic feelings. These words tell how intense the beating is, compared to the stuck door. One can imagine when a person is struggling with a stuck door by applying full force to open it, and instead imagines that full force being applied on Beatrice. It seems apparent that the beatings can have negative effects on Beatrice's body. As a result of the beatings "Mama was slung over his shoulder like the jute sacks of rice his factory workers brought in bulk at the Seme Border" (Adichie, 2003, p. 33). Kambili is logically supporting the descriptions of the beating by comparing Mama to the 'jute sacks of rice' because she does not have strength to hold herself; the beating has taken that from her.

The readers may be pained by the fact that Papa quietens Mama's freedom with violence. Kambili again appeals to the readers by giving the evidence of blood that dripped on the floor. "There is blood on the floor" (Adichie, 2003, p. 33). The audience is made aware of the intense

acts of violence that are going on in this family. This logical proof serves to move an audience from one belief to another by walking the audience through reasonable steps (Keith & Lundberg, 2006, p. 36). Blood signifies the heavy beating that this violence has caused. The woman is portrayed as helpless and not able to defend herself from it. The novel advocates for women to break from patriarchal circumstances like this one by all means. Kwatsha (2015, p. 8) indicates that the feminist argument suggests that women should be at the forefront of the demand for their freedom. The researcher sees that it must be an ultimate goal for every woman to break free from societal orders that hurt them or else they will remain the same. Beatrice needs to act against the subjugation she is enduring to claim her social freedom or else Eugene will continue to dominate her life.

As mentioned, changes can be effected in patriarchal society when a woman stands up herself and challenges patriarchy. Beatrice shows no intention of freeing herself from the chains of patriarchy. She informs the readers that she is a good woman who keeps what happens in their bedroom a secret. When she comes back from the hospital, she tells Kambili what had happened to her pregnancy, “There was an accident, the baby is gone” (Adichie, 2003, p. 34). It creates the feeling of pity to hear she has lost her baby because of the beatings she got from Papa. She deserves blame for letting all this to happen and she is still being protective of her husband. This affects Mama’s trust since she lacks self-expression and conviction to stand up for what is right. The readers may not have trust in her as the one to become the symbol of liberation and democracy of oppressed African women. For the readers to trust Beatrice, the choices and changes she makes in society must be the ones that solve the problem of patriarchy.

Meanwhile, Adichie portrays Auntie Ifeoma as a woman who holds the future of an African woman. Auntie Ifeoma is aware of the societal biases against women and calls for an end to this

violence. Aunty Ifeoma encourages other women to make changes in their lives, even those that appear to be risky. Aunty Ifeoma's persona shows the qualities that the audience may appreciate. Aunty Ifeoma convinces the readers to be aware that there is an alternative way of living; to stretch to equality. Her character is an embodiment of what Murthy and Ghosals (2014) state; that the speaker's authority and credibility are reviewed according to how well the speech convinces the audience. Aunty Ifeoma possesses the authority that the readers may identify with. She convinces that a change is needed when she gives an analogy to Mama. "This cannot go on, *nwunye m*. When a house is on fire, you run out before the roof collapses on your head" (Adichie, p. 213). Aunty Ifeoma illustrates the seriousness of the situation by comparing it to the fire. Aunty Ifeoma tells Mama to leave the burning house, but Mama seems not to realise the intensity of the fire. The novelist uses Aunty Ifeoma to reject the confinement of women to subjugation in society; that they need freedom from suffocating settings. Beatrice is always defending her husband's deeds, acting according to cultural norms; she is conditioned to Papa's authority. Aunty Ifeoma stands for her argument thinking that acting out of the norms is the only way to liberate this family. "Do you not hear what I have said, *gbo?* Aunty Ifeoma said, raising her voice" (Adichie, 2003, p. 214). Aunty Ifeoma raised her voice to get Beatrice's attention and to emphasise the seriousness of the subject. The tone of her voice is in fact the persuasive way of showing how confident and determined Aunty Ifeoma is to speak against women subjugation. What seems clear is that Aunty Ifeoma persuades women in such conditions to be confident and reject cultural perspectives that have a serious negative impact on them.

Moreover, breaking out of the silence is the road to liberate oneself. According to Larner (2009), self-disclosure is useful as some people consider the rhetor as more genuine and reliable when

they feel that they know him/her. Beatrice has endured her husband's physical and emotional abuse; finally she speaks out:

You know that small table where we keep the family Bible, *nne*? Your father broke it on my belly. My blood finished on that floor even before he took me to St. Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it. (Adichie, 2003, p. 248)

Beatrice has been quiet about her husband's oppressive acts; she does not speak out of her suffering even though people around her can see that she is in a domineering marriage. She decides to speak out of her painful experiences in order to let the readers know that she feels annoyed by the husband's beatings. Being honest may raise empathy from the reader who imagines Mama's situation. The readers pity Mama for losing yet another baby through beating. Mama starts to change her character from one who suffers in silence to the one that wants her voice to be heard. She has gone through challenging situations and that has taught her to be determined. Beatrice is tired of abuse and decides to overcome her accumulated silence. For the first time Mama pours out her emotions:

She cried for a long time. She cried until my hand, clasped in hers, felt stiff. She cried until Aunty Ifeoma finished cooking the rotting meat in spicy stew. She cried until she fell asleep, her head against the seat of the chair. (Adichie, 2003, p. 249)

This is not just any cry, but a cry of long accumulated intense pain. Beatrice's frustration has amassed inside her and finally she is letting it out. She has never poured out her emotions like this; she is used to stomaching her feelings in silence. Silence in this context can be interpreted differently, Glenn (1995, p. 45) points out that "silence has been gendered a lamentable essence of femininity; of weakness, passivity, stupidity, obedience". Beatrice has been silent because she

wants to be seen as an obedient wife to her husband and this silence has led the situation to be worse in her house; should she have reacted against violence earlier, things would have been different. Sympathy from the audience ensues because they may assume that it has not been an easy time for Beatrice to bear pain and it is acceptable for her to cry. The repetition of the word 'cried' has an impact on the message; it emphasises that Beatrice has cried for a long time and the pain penetrates in her that she cannot bear it any longer.

The novel also shows that marriage is an institution that leads to some women being totally dependent on their husbands for happiness. Adichie (2003) condemns such credence through the outspoken Auntie Ifeoma who stands against what her brother, Eugene, is doing to his family. More importantly, Auntie Ifeoma appears to be an honest person by not taking the side of her brother. This shows that she cares for other women's social welfare more than the abusive brother. Adichie has used this skillful move of using the credible character of Auntie Ifeoma to gain the audience's trust. As if Beatrice has not cried for such a long time because of the indignity of Papa's abuse, when Papa calls that evening she insists to talk to him. Beatrice has forgotten the beating that has led her to lose another pregnancy and that the reason she is at Auntie Ifeoma's house is to run away from Eugene. After having the conversation with the husband, her face lights up and she decides to go back home. She gets happy knowing that she is assured of having a place in Eugene's house. Beatrice does not build her trust well when she keeps on accepting to be abused; the audience may view her as a weak character that does not assertively stand up for what is right. It seems that Beatrice does not have an issue with dependence; she is happy when her husband is happy and with all decisions that he makes for her. This is contrary to the social, political and economic equality that African feminists advocate for. The founder of STIWANISM, Ogunjide-Leslie (1994) highlights that African women need

to participate as equal partners in social transformation in Africa and they need to be conscious not only of the fact that they are a woman but that they are both Africans and a third world people. Only if Beatrice emancipates herself from the abusive husband, will she be able to contribute to the positive social transformation of an African society.

Furthermore, Beatrice persuades the audience through logos by providing explanations as to why she remains in an abusive marriage through questioning:

Where would I go if I leave Eugene's house? Tell me, where would I go? Do you know how many mothers pushed their daughters at him? Do you know how many asked him to impregnate them, even, and not to bother paying bride price? (Adichie, 2003, p. 250)

Now the readers are informed as to why Beatrice decides to suffer the beatings and remains obedient to her husband. Beatrice notifies the audience to be aware of the truth. In other words, she is convincing the audience to believe that she suffers for certain reasons. Infidelity also contributes to Beatrice's dependence. She tolerates violence because if she leaves, her husband might get another woman. Eugene's being in demand from other women gives him hegemonic power to control his wife because he knows that she is threatened by the willingness of the mothers who are pushing their daughters at him. However, Aunty Ifeoma does not see this as reason enough for women to suffer. She attempts to impart some positive changes in Beatrice's reasoning, but to no avail. It is argued that Aunty Ifeoma transcends patriarchal outlooks by being empowered with the spirit to assume agency.

Aunty Ifeoma decides to persuade Beatrice with her personal experiences in marriage to see if she can change her attitude. She uses the personal anecdote to support her claim that no matter what happens in marriages, a husband does not have an obligation to beat the wife. "When

Ifediora was alive, there were times, *nwunye m*, when the university did not pay our salaries for months, Ifediora and I had nothing, eh, yet he never raised a hand on me” (Adichie, 2003, p. 250). Aunty Ifeoma uses her personal experience as evidence that it is possible to overcome challenges in marriages without beating and to emphasise her point which is easier for Beatrice to relate to. Fredrick (2009) explains that women value stories and narratives as equally important in proving any argument. Because women were dismissed from the public sphere, they relied on their personal experiences to help them understand their realities. Again, Fahnestock and Secor (1990) underline that personal experiences are facts that can be used in arguments to support the claims that are made by the rhetor. Therefore, in this novel, Beatrice can discern the value of this personal experience that is based on the home environment because that is the place she can relate to.

It is important to note that fighting against subjugation is not for weak women. They have to be strong and even get prepared to get rid of what they are dependent on in order to get the desired freedom. Some women may even come to the point of killing their husbands to free themselves from oppression. Chukwuma (2007) points out that Nawal Saadawi’s protagonists scored female victories by the outright killing of their oppressors, and the same thing happens in Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, as the wife slowly and methodically poisoned her husband. Beatrice illustrates that the agency of freeing oneself from hegemony and subjugation is there, one just needs to act. Though it is the difficult option to take, Beatrice does not mind how her action will affect her, her children and the society at large. The action she takes is illustrative of a radical feminist perspective that persuades women suffering from servitude to act against abuse in order to gain freedom and liberation. This act contradicts African womanist philosophy that African women

are to work hand in hand with their male counterparts to acquire equality, but Beatrice wants to gain freedom by getting rid of the husband.

Similarly, Kambili is exposed to subjugation by her father. Eugene does not tolerate any kind of disrespect from members of his family. He uses violence to act against those who trespass Catholic doctrine. The readers can perceive the type of character Eugene is and the kind of emotions he can evoke from them. Trust is a crucial part of ethos, but the audience cannot accord it to Eugene because he subjugates his family members. This is Aristotle's position when he stresses that the speaker must get the audience in a comfortable state of mind, and that he can do so only by exhibiting a proper character (Park, n.d., p. 16). The subjugation is again shown when Kambili takes solid food before Mass, "You are eating ten minutes before Mass? Ten minutes before Mass?" (Adichie, 2003, p. 101). Papa uses rhetorical questions whose answers he knows to let Kambili know that he is saddened by her action. According to Fahnestock and Secor (1990) rhetorical questions are an excellent device to engage readers in a dialogue, when they find themselves mentally answering the questions, they are in effect talking to you. The Eucharist fast requires that the faithful do not eat solid food an hour before Mass. Knowing her father, Kambili knows that she is going to suffer the consequences of her action. Eugene's flogging of his family shows that he owns them and they cannot do anything out of his rules. Hewett (as cited in Kivai, 2010, p. 29) describes Eugene's personality as "a strict Catholic who lives within the Manichean dictates of unforgiving faith." Eugene judges and punishes the family members for disobeying Christian beliefs. The novel condemns Eugene's punishment using Christian's beliefs that it is patriarchal and must be reconsidered in society.

The audience pities Beatrice and her children because of the painful and vicious environment they are in. One may blame Beatrice for her silence in regard to Eugene's strict rules and

violence to them; she has been passive and obedient even in instances where she needs to act against violence. The novelist wants to show the readers what happens when silence becomes a norm and is not reaching a positive goal:

He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers, leather covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back. (Adichie, 2003, p. 102)

It seems outrageous that Papa goes on rampage of beating members of his family. Papa lacks sensitivity and respect for his wife; she is beaten together with the children, with the same belt, at the same time and in the same room. Mama, therefore, raises her hands to show her passivity and obedience to her husband. It is from this standpoint that the researcher argues that this contributes to Beatrice's invisibility by placing her parallel with their children.

When Beatrice decides to speak against violence, she does it in way to show deference to her husband. Beatrice has no voice of authority to condemn what the husband does. When Eugene is beating Kambili for possessing Papa Nnukwu's painting, Beatrice comes into the room pleading, "Please, *biko*, please" (Adichie, 2003, p. 211). Her voice indicates weakness and the repetition of the word 'please' does not indicate the urgency of the situation. Instead of commanding the husband to stop, she is pleading with him 'please'. It seems that in the patriarchal society as presented in the novel, parenting becomes one-sided since it is Eugene who has more power to control the children in all areas of their life. This implies that there is no mutual communication on how to bring up their kids. Beatrice's failure to transcend the norms is the rhetorical act of

persuading the audience that some women are still tied to dehumanising homes and these women are required to change and realise their rights and authority over their children as mothers.

The novelist uses the character of Kambili to give evidence of what exactly happens in their house. The audience is then left to assess whether Eugene's acts are right or wrong. According to Fosmire (2015, pp. 179-180), "the audience must be convinced of what the orator is trying to argue for, and that depends on the shared values which necessarily determine what is accepted as true or false, good and evil". This means that the shared arguments must be based on the shared values of the society. Kambili has narrated how she is subjected to violence:

I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow motion in an arc to my feet. The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding; I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed. I did not know the sobbing voice - I'm sorry! I'm sorry! - was mine until the water stopped and I realized my mouth was moving and the words were still coming out. Papa put the kettle down, wiped at his eyes. I stood in the scalding tub; I was too scared to move - the skin of my feet would peel off if I tried to step out of the tub. (Adichie, 2003, pp. 194-195)

It can be proven from the above account that there is lack of freedom in Eugene's house. The manner in which Kambili is punished is inhuman and this is not in accordance with societal values of the feminist framework that is being discussed in this study. "Feminism is for the self-actualisation of women so that they will believe in themselves, actualise their dreams; live fulfilled lives and generally not live in fear of men" (Ifechelobi, 2014, p. 19). Kambili will not easily reach her full potential because she is not allowed to make her own choices. This can also affect her perceptions towards men as she may generalise her father's behaviours to all men in

society. This may be apparent when she is surprised by Father Amadi's open communication with all the people around him, something that she has never experienced in their house. Kambili's personal anecdote invites the audience to experience what she goes through at the hand of her father. That way, she is also calling mothers to take action against abusive fathers in society.

It is crucial to look at how Jaja reacts towards their father's violence. Jaja is a living testimony of the men who rejects violence. Jaja is young and grows up in a home that is suffocated with strictness, but he is a contrast of his father's belief. He does not follow his father's claim that to be a man you have to have control over everyone in the house. The novel highlights that Jaja is a different version of his father that may indicate that there is change of belief in their society. Now that Jaja appreciates the importance of women's freedom and equality, he treats them differently. He has been supportive of his sister in assisting her to do what is not authorised by their father. Jaja tries to speak for Kambili when Eugene finds Kambili eating ten minutes before Mass, "I told her to eat cornflakes before she took Panadol, Papa. I made it for her" (Adichie, 2003, p. 101). Towards the end of the novel Jaja is blaming himself for not protecting Mama from their father's abuse. He believes that if he had cared for her, several misfortunes would have been averted. "I should have taken care of Mama. Look at how Abiora balances Aunty Ifeoma's family on his head, and I am older than he is" (Adichie, 2003, p. 289). Jaja is praising Obiora for doing the right thing by complementing his family in the absence of their father while blaming himself for failing Mama. On the other hand, Jaja's viewpoint contrasts with the African womanist ideology of freedom. African feminists advocate for women to act against and to challenge the patriarchal system by ensuring that men are aware of aspects of women's

subjugation. Taking the blame on behalf of a woman, like what Jaja does when he goes to prison on behalf of Mama, will not empower Mama to take a lead in her own affairs.

5.3 Action of freedom: Transcending the norms

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Beatrice is compelled to change after experiencing mishaps in her life. She has gotten tired of being an object of patriarchal settings and started to defy it by breaking the silence. It starts after Papa throws the missal towards Jaja and it hits the glass étagère. The missal “cracked the top shelf, swept the beige, finger-sized ceramic figurines of ballet dancers in various contorted postures to the hard floor and then landed after them” (Adichie, 2003, p. 7). The figurines of ballet dancers symbolise the silence of Mama, Kambili and Jaja in the family; they are always subdued and muted, and they follow and accept what Eugene articulates without question. When Kambili asks if Mama is going to replace the figurines, Mama says “I will not replace them” (Adichie, 2003, p. 15). This means Mama is fed up of being the subject of patriarchy, so when the missal was thrown to Jaja, it is not just the figurines that break, but the silence is also broken in the house. Now they can deploy their resistance towards Eugene’s subjugation and such resistance is what Glenn (2002, p. 281) refers to; one that can be used to confront, resist, and transform even the discipline of rhetoric. If Beatrice speaks out, she shows her power in society, with Glenn (2002) stating that in the past it was maintained by males who deemed that women were not fit to make decisions. Beatrice persuades other women in the same situation to see the importance of social reform by ending the traditional voice of silence.

The change in Beatrice’s attitude also changes her credibility because at this point in time her argument is based on what the feminists can identify with. Feminists reject patriarchy and

celebrate the freedom of women in societies (McFadden, 2011). Beatrice can now be acknowledged by the readers if she starts to speak out because Fosmire (2015) has emphasised that Aristotle makes it clear that the audience's perception of the speaker as being fair minded must not come from the speaker's prior reputation; rather it must come from the speech itself, at the time it is delivered. In this case, it is not worth judging Beatrice according to her past weaknesses, instead we must look at what she is able to do in the present.

The novelist uses Beatrice as an example of a woman who has learned confidence through ruthless experience. Mama is slowly changing from being silent and wants her voice heard, albeit, not assertive; she is learning to be confident. The audience might be astonished by her move because it is the first time that she is making a decision. Mama's voice is still indicative of submissiveness; and she uses 'may be' indicating that she has no freedom to make the final decision:

Ifeoma mentioned that gas cylinders were scarce in Nsukka. She said she uses her old kerosene stove now. You remember the story of adulterated kerosene that was blowing up stoves and killing people? I thought maybe you might send one or two cylinders to her from the factory. (Adichie, 2003, p. 107)

Mama has made a logical appeal to Papa mentioning that Ifeoma needs a gas cylinder. She has given a reason why it is beneficial to use the gas cylinder than the kerosene stove. By using a story as evidence she reminds Papa of the adulterated kerosene that was blowing up stoves and killing people. Mama uses the story to influence Papa to accept her claim when he sees the danger of using kerosene stoves. Even though she starts to break the silence, she still holds no authority to make the final decision, "Is that what you and Ifeoma planned? *Kpa*, I am just

making a suggestion. It is up to you to decide” (Adichie, 2003, p. 108). The power of decision-making rests with Papa, Mama is just ‘making a suggestion’ which signifies that the chains of patriarchy are not yet broken. Hooks (1984) explains that patriarchy insists that males are superior and dominate women in various forms of psychological terrorism. Papa shows superiority and domination when he does not allow Mama to make a final decision about the gas cylinders.

Amouzou (2006) indicates that in Flora Nwapa’s novels, for example in *One is Enough*, women characters are remarkable, strong, competent, courageous and successful. They are economically independent, self-reliant, rejecting all subjugation and male oppression, and protesting against the second position of their gender. Adichie does the same by confronting patriarchy through the character of Aunty Ifeoma as an agent of social change. While Beatrice shows that she cannot handle independence; being a single parent to her two children, “a woman with children and no husband, what is that?” (Adichie, 2003, p. 75). Aunty Ifeoma believes in challenging the norms that are oppressive and put women in inferior status. Ifeoma’s view resonates with Davies’ (as cited in Da Silva, 2013, p. 14) observation that African feminism needs to overcome gender disparities brought by indigenous traditions. Davies does not emphasise the removal of African cultural traditions, but that women must be able to choose the aspects of these traditions that remain relevant while refusing practices that they consider oppressive to them. This alerts readers that marriage being an important tradition in societies cannot be used as an excuse to stay in oppressive marriages. Beatrice must be able to have a choice to stay or leave the marriage by her own choice but not of her culture. So she cannot be kept hostage in the marriage at the expense of her culture. Aunty Ifeoma persuades Beatrice that “*nwunye m*, sometimes life starts when marriage ends” (Adichie, 2003, p. 75). Aunty Ifeoma is bold enough to change the attitude

of dependence on husbands irrespective of the suffering one has to tolerate after leaving the marriage. This is true of, as discussed by Kwatsha (2015), Ramatoulaye in Ba's *So Long a Letter*, who has realised that no obstacle need stand in her way on the path to success and she can do things that she could not do while married to her husband. The researcher reiterates that Aunty Ifeoma is a selfless person who aims to campaign for freedom of fellow African women.

Through her outspoken nature, Aunty Ifeoma is persuading the audience that liberty can come from education. Aunty Ifeoma encourages women who want to be liberal to consider education as a tool to exercise diversity of understanding. Beatrice, who is deeply rooted in homogenous cultural beliefs, cannot acknowledge that education can bring awareness that may lead to different perspectives of understanding but sees it as just a mere talk and says, "you and your university talk. Is that what you tell your students?" (Adichie, 2003, p. 75). But Aunty Ifeoma is using every chance to speak against the inferiority that Beatrice is subjected to. On the other hand, Aunty Ifeoma contradicts her standpoint when she says that some women do not have a choice but to be dependent on their husbands because of political situations. Some female students ask Aunty Ifeoma, "What is the use of degrees, they ask me, when we cannot find jobs after graduation? At least somebody will take care of them when they marry" (Adichie, 2003, p. 75). In the case of unstable political situations, educated women are not guaranteed to reach their full potential as some of them may end up without jobs to secure them income. In such cases, Aunty Ifeoma states that it is understandable if these women are dependent on their husbands.

Furthermore, according to Alo (2012):

Persuasion is an interactive communicative process in which a message sender aims to influence the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of the message receiver though the

receiver's role is passive, if persuasion is to be successful; the message needs to comply with their wants and needs, their desires and imagination. (p. 90)

Rhetoric is not devoid of intention; Adichie's (2003) intention is to highlight the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of women who are under the subjugation of set orders in societies. The aim is to let them know that there is a way out to freedom if they are oppressed, they just need be confident in their choices and let their voices be heard. Through *Aunty Ifeoma*, women are persuaded to refuse changing their perspective in life when they do not have economic means to sustain their lives. Aunty Ifeoma has done it and she still stands strong and proud. She has turned down Eugene's offers that come with conditions to change some of her behaviours:

Have you forgotten that Eugene offered to buy me a car, even before Ifediora died? But first he wanted us to join the Knights of St. John. He wanted us to send Amaka to convent school. He even wanted me to stop wearing makeup! I want a new car, *nwunye m*, and I want to use my gas cooker again and I want a new freezer and I want money so that I will not unravel the seams of Chima's trousers when he outgrows them. But I will not ask my brother to bend over so I can lick his buttocks to get these things. (Adichie, 2003, p. 95)

Aunty Ifeoma stands up for what she thinks is right no matter the consequences. For her, she cannot worship Eugene like a god because of his money. It was easy for her to yield to her brother's demands but the kind of woman in her cannot allow her to be controlled by Eugene. She acknowledges the need of finances in her family: she needs a new freezer, a new car. Aunty Ifeoma has added humour by using the imagery that she will not ask her brother 'to bend over to lick his buttocks'. This imagery appeals both to logos and pathos. It helps to visualise how disgusting it is for some women to lick men's buttocks to get financial support. Even when

Aunty Ifeoma is told by the colleague that she is in the list of those who are disloyal to the university and they might be fired, she replies, “I am not paid to be loyal. When I speak the truth, it becomes disloyalty” (Adichie, 2003, p. 222). She refuses to be part of the masses of those who are not speaking out to secure their employment in the university. Aunty Ifeoma is that kind of woman referred to by Stegeman (as cited in Ann, 2015) as a new woman who promotes a theory of personhood where the individual exists as an independent entity rather than a group member; where she is defined by her experiences rather than her kinship relations, where she is responsible to realise her own happiness. The individuality of Aunty Ifeoma can be compared to what Okurut’s novel *The Official Wife* portrays through the character of Liz. Liz refuses to be defined with the masses and sees individuality as a door to personal happiness and freedom. It can be seen from this argument that the novelist shows the visibility of Aunty Ifeoma by being involved in social and political matters.

Amaka and Aunty Ifeoma are used as the mouthpiece of an African woman to realise that there are possibilities of defying the traditional ways that oppress them and forbid them to make their own decisions. Aunty Ifeoma publicly opposes how the administration of the university is handled and she eventually gets fired. Instead of sitting and succumbing to her situation, she has made a plan to go to America with her children and to work there. It is part of tradition that when a Catholic is confirmed, an English name has to be used for confirmation. Amaka does not agree with this tradition and she refuses to take an English name. Father Amadi has handed Amaka a piece of paper with the list of English names to choose from, but Amaka refuses to follow the habit:

I told you I am not taking an English name, Father, she said.

And have I asked you why?

Why do I have to?

Because it is the way it's done. Let's forget if it's right or wrong for now, Father Amadi said, and I have noticed the shadows under his eyes. (Adichie, 2003, pp. 271-272)

The conversation above shows that Amaka is confident and free to make her own choices which are not based on Catholic norms. Instead of just accepting the name, Amaka is being critical of what missionaries decided to put in place and she argues that English and Igbo names both glorify God. She wants to be an agent of change not just the one who accepts things without questioning. Amaka and Auntie Ifeoma inspire other women in society to condemn patriarchy because it is through defiance they can achieve equality.

In addition, even though Auntie Ifeoma enjoys freedom from patriarchy, she does not neglect her responsibility of being a mother to her three children: Amaka, Obiora and Chima. She controls and speaks with authority just like any head of the house can do. The writer notifies the African women that fighting for fair treatment of women does not signify the end of motherhood. They should balance their life as Auntie Ifeoma does; she works to earn a living, she partakes in politics, she advocates for social equality for all genders and she heads her family. African feminists are backing for motherism (that is equated to reproduction and child care) with Acholonu (1995) pointing out that the theory of motherism is the ability of women to nurture a child into adulthood, and also believes that the person to care for the child is the mother who gave it life, while Chodorow (as cited in Kivai, 2010) blames sexual inequality in society on the division of labour that allocates the primary infant and child care to women at home while men take valued occupations outside the home. Significantly, the novelist calls African women not to

neglect motherhood in their quest for self-determination and equality because African feminists do not say no to families.

The sharing of responsibilities in Aunty Ifeoma's house also demonstrates that all genders are equally appreciated. They share the house chores amongst themselves equally:

The flat always sparkled - Amaka scrubbed the floors with a stiff brush, Obiora did the sweeping, Chima plumped up the cushions on the chairs. Everybody took turns washing the plates. Aunty Ifeoma included Jaja and me in the plate-washing schedule, and after I washed the garri-encrusted lunch plates, Amaka picked them off the tray where I had placed them to dry and soak them in water. (Adichie, 2003, p. 140)

This shows the family that is cooperative to attain some goals. They each perform their functions in the family; they are grounded in the principles of equality and immanent value. Despite their genders, they take part in the same household chores, for example, they take turns in washing the plates. Work is not assigned according to their gender per se; they contribute equally. This in fact shows that everyone's contribution is valued and respected in the family. Aunty Ifeoma is bringing up children who are gender-sensitive by seeing no boundaries of doing house chores. Chesaina (2015) advises African mothers to strive to bring up children who are gender-sensitive; we want the society where our boys or young men appreciate the opposite sex and do not repeat the mistakes of their fathers. Chesaina (2015) continues to say we want a culture whereby our girls grow up knowing who they are, knowing their potential, refusing the negative images about themselves and to grow up as confident women with clear and positive identity. If the whole society let this happen boys and girls will grow into adults who don't see gender differences, but equality.

Due to changes in cultural beliefs, some women are seeking for economic freedom through doing businesses in open markets. The researcher mentioned earlier that education may lead to economic freedom; unfortunately not everyone in society is able to be educated due to various reasons. Therefore, it encourages women who are not educated through evidence of women selling items and plaiting in the open market to illustrate that there are other means of attaining economic freedom. Mama Joe, where Father Amadi takes Kambili to be plaited, is one of the active women in the market. She plaits Kambili and at the same time calls customers to come and buy snails. Other “women and children worked in the neighbouring sheds, twisting hair, weaving hair, plaiting hair with thread” (Adichie, 2003, p. 236). These women are working hard to support themselves and their children. Children are also empowered in doing business from a young age for them to be independent and this is a positive way of eliminating patriarchy. This scenario can be compared to Ashanti women in Ghana who go to the market with their daughters. “We work hard for our children, to feed them and educate them and when I die my daughter will take my place” (Amadiume, 2001, p. 52).

Honesty is a quality linked to ethos in the rhetorical tradition (Keith & Lundberg, 2006). The audience knows the hard truth of imaginable pain that Mama has stomached for the sake of traditional beliefs. The truth why Eugene is poisoned is to attain freedom socially, politically and economically. The method Mama has used to free herself from the chains of patriarchy is not the commendable one though. The researcher is not in agreement with the step Mama has taken because no matter what Eugene has committed, it cannot justify death. This method has been chosen so that she can get the inheritance of a rich husband. She knows that if she divorces him, she has nowhere to go and she is not economically independent. If all subjugated women resolve to killing their husbands, how many men are we going to retain within our societies?

Nevertheless, Ann (2015, p. 435) argues that this is a deliberate attempt by Adichie to prove that those who choose a radical way to achieve their happiness can resort to anything to achieve it. But this contrasts African womanist and nego-feminism philosophies that support complementarity with men. If we have undermined Beatrice from the beginning, that she cannot act, we are proven wrong by the harsh action she takes to reach her freedom. Having reached the long awaited liberty, they can manage the family finances, and Mama can talk without being spoken to first; which is a symbol of a new beginning and she has fired Kevin, their long time chauffeur, and hired Celestine; a sign of new authority. Economic independence is important for women empowerment, noting the change in Mama's attitude shows that economic stability leads her to make decisions pertaining to family life unlike before when the authority over finances was Papa's.

5.4 Suppression through religion and culture

Christians believe in adhering to the word of God and what God expects of them. They base their belief in scriptural interpretation, and live in accordance with the will of God. Eugene seems to contrast the biblical authority, where, for example, in the Good News Bible (2001), Mathew 22:39 states: "love your neighbour as you love yourself". Eugene does not emulate the love that the Bible is stating, the same Bible used in Catholic churches. He reforms the biblical view to fit his selfish desire of meeting the cultural belief that the woman has to be under the rule of the man. Eugene has hit his wife for refusing to pass by Father Benedict's house after Mass; in fact she has not refused, she simply has not been feeling well, "I feel vomit in my throat" (Adichie, 2003, p. 29). Instead of exercising the love that Christians preach and understanding what the wife is going through, he resolves to discipline her with his fists. Ann (2015) also observes the same argument that from the opening of the novel, Eugene does not reflect the life of

Christianity at home. Ann (2015) assumes that he should have a forgiving heart for the sake of the word of God he hears from church. To understand a woman, is to accept her as a person of God and hurting her is considered a sin. Other African writers have condemned the insincerity of the religious set-up that turns a blind eye to the violation of women. This is what Victor (2013) alludes to when in Andreas' *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* reference is made to a religious set-up as hypocritical if it is blind to all the sins that a man may commit provided he fulfils his financial obligations to church:

When Papa started the prayer, his voice quavered more than usual. He prayed for the food first, then he asked God to forgive those who had tried to thwart His will, who had put selfish desire first, and had not wanted to visit His servant after Mass. (Adichie, 2003, p. 32)

Eugene shows his authority through the prayer, and the audience may feel the stiffness of emotions going on at the dinner table. In the prayer, 'his voice quavered' more than normal in order to show resentment and to attract the attention of the audience. Eugene wants to emphasise submissiveness from the members of the family, he is the one to pray to God to forgive Mama's sins forgetting that he may equally needs forgiveness. He does not see his wrongdoing because that is how he sees things in his society. These set orders lead some men to misuse their power, creating abhorrence towards Christianity as a belief.

The novel calls on African men and women to rework those practices that elevate men and lower the standard of women. Bergman (2016) points out that this might be difficult to achieve because many women are content with the practices that subordinate them in their local communities. They follow and repeat their customs and habits because they want to be identified with the

group. Some cultural practices put boys and men at special positions and at the same time cement the sense of inequality. Papa Nnukwu brings out these cultural practices. Papa Nnukwu in conversation with Aunty Ifeoma tells her that women do not count, “But you are a woman. You do not count” (Adichie, 2003, p. 83). Papa Nnukwu believes that with the son his wealth will grow as the child grows, forgetting that it is the woman who takes care of him which Aunty Ifeoma reminds him. “Eh? So I don’t count? Has Eugene ever asked about your aching leg? If I do not count, then I will stop asking if you rose well in the morning” (Adichie, 2003, p. 83). Aunty Ifeoma stands confidently to speak against the culture that embraces the contribution of the son but not that of the daughter. Aunty Ifeoma reminds Papa Nnukwu that she does a lot for him, just as the son that he attaches importance to, does. It can be argued from this standpoint that Aunty Ifeoma’s logical persuasive technique can appeal other women to show their own visibility if their traditions are refusing to acknowledge them.

Furthermore, Papa Nnukwu seems to persuade the audience by providing the evidence of how a woman spirit behaves. Pointing at the woman spirit shows that he has the knowledge of what he is talking about and providing the facts convinces the audience that he is telling the truth. “This is the woman spirit, and the women *mmuo* are harmless. They do not even go near the big ones at the festival” (Adichie, 2003, p. 85). The woman spirit is considered harmless and its weakness is underscored by the fact that they don’t even go near the big ones. This belittles girls and women thinking that they are weaker than boys. *Mmuo* are followed by boys and men:

Little boys - the followers of *mmuo* who were playing music with metal ogenes and wooden *ichakas* - picked up the crumpled naira notes. The *mmuo* making its way down the road was surrounded by a few elderly men who rang a shrill bell as the *mmuo* walked. (Adichie, 2003, p. 86).

This shows inequality as women are not involved in entertaining and following *mmuo*. Girls do not go through the initiation process and they are not allowed to look at some *mmuo*, but boys go through the *ima mmuo* initiation process to manhood. “I knew very little about it; women were not supposed to know anything at all, since it was the first step toward the initiation into manhood” (Adichie, 2003, p. 87). Some African traditions and culture segregate women, putting them in the position where they are belittled in the society. If women accept that it is natural to be inferior because of cultural beliefs, they will limit their personal choices at the expense of their culture. When they act against the norms they think are harmful to their freedom, their presence in society will not only be seen, but their voices will also be heard. Customs are part and parcel for any society, but when people use them wrongly they become a problem. As shown above, in patriarchal societies, there are behavioral patterns expected of a man which ensure that a woman is not considered as an equal (Mutunda, 2009). So, it is advisable to eliminate cultural beliefs that discredit the equality of women and men.

5.5 Invitational rhetoric: Detrimental dialogue

One aspect of invitational rhetoric is that the rhetor does not claim his or her opinion to be the absolute truth but rather offers an alternative idea or way of thinking for the audience (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 5). The audience is supposed to be at liberty to agree or disagree with the opinion of the rhetor. Eugene has never accorded any chance to the family members to make such choices. The family has only one choice to make; to agree with what Eugene is saying in order to make him happy. The environment in Eugene’s house is patriarchal and it suppresses the value, freedom and safety of Kambili, Jaja and Beatrice. When they are at the dining table they eat silently; everyone is experiencing tense emotions. The silence stretches longer because they

are scared to say something that does not please Papa. Papa controls what they say; he wants them to say what satisfies him instead of what they choose to say.

When Sis is called to the dining room, Kambili wishes she can keep on asking Mama more questions, “what bottles, Madam? Or where are they, Madam? Just to keep her and Mama talking, to veil the nervous movements of Jaja molding *fufu*” (Adichie, 2003 p. 12). The nervousness of Jaja is caused by the threatening environment around the house. They are mandated to complement Papa’s new products every time they use them for the first time. So, when Sis brings in the two bottles of cashew juice they are expected to say something. Mama is nervous when she compliments the new product, “it tastes like fresh cashew, just like white wine” (Adichie, 2003, p. 13). Kambili can see that Mama is nervous, not only that fresh cashew tastes nothing like white wine, but her voice is lower than normal. Mama is not free to express the truth because she is under the threat of suffocating environment. We have learnt from the narrator, Kambili, that the truth is the juice tastes watery. However, she just has to compliment it to content her father:

Papa’s sister, Aunty Ifeoma, said once that Papa was too much of a colonial product. She had said this in a mild, forgiving way, as if it were not Papa’s fault, as one would talk about a person who was shouting gibberish from a severe case of malaria. (Adichie, 2003, p. 13)

From the anecdote above, Eugene is presented as the one who creates unsafe environment as he is referred to the ‘colonial product’ in which dictatorship prevails. The anecdote is provided to understand fully who Eugene is through the knowledge of his sister, Aunty Ifeoma. Langellier (1989, p. 243) however states that personal narratives summarise or describe in entirety one or

multiple experiences. Even though personal narratives are by the narrator, the actual described occurrence may have been experienced by someone else. Kambili shares what Aunty Ifeoma knows about her brother. To overwhelm the audience is never a means through which to gain compliance, yet Eugene scares Jaja until Jaja gets frustrated and deviates from the norm of pleasing his father by answering him otherwise. “Have you nothing to say, *gbo*, Jaja? Papa asked again. *Mba*, there are no words in my mouth, Jaja replied” (Adichie, 2003, p. 13). Jaja has not been communicated with appropriately in order to maintain freedom in the conversation, thus, this hostile communication has resulted in breach of safety.

Papa is attempting to fit the whole family into his own character and neglecting the issue of individuality. They are surprised by Jaja’s deviation, “this has never happened before; in my entire life, never” (Adichie, 2003, p. 14). They are not used to express their uniqueness and they have no freedom of even critiquing the products for improvement because what they have to say is centred on Eugene’s contentment. The writer is urging people like Eugene to value alternate opinions and perspectives; not to force everyone into their perspectives. From this analysis, the researcher has noted that there is no sense of equality, self-determination and immanent value prevailing in Eugene’s family for they live under threats and their choices are made based on the head of the house. They appear to be victims of Eugene's dominance under which Kambili and Beatrice are not yet willing to free themselves.

5.6 Cooperative dialogues

5.6.1 Creating external conditions

The writer has used the technique of dialogues as a method of applying invitational rhetoric. In invitational rhetoric, the environment where communication is taking place must be safe and free

for the interlocutors to partake in the conversation freely. Makinen (2016, p. 8) has urged that “the participants should be able to communicate without any fear of mental or physical abuse and maintain their integrity”. During the Christmas lunch at Abba, one can see that there is a difference in behaviours between Aunty Ifeoma and Eugenes’ children. Amaka is free and breaks the silence by asking Kambili “do you always eat rice with a fork and knife and napkins?” (Adichie, 2003, p. 97). Kambili is not used to this kind of conversations at the table, so she wishes Amaka to keep her voice low. Amaka shows external conditions of freedom to express her opinion and gets information of what she wants. According to Foss and Griffin (1995) the objective of invitational rhetoric is the mutual understanding between the participants, and it can be reached when all of them know that there are no restrictions to communication as long as they are going to do it without violating anyone’s value, freedom and safety. Amaka has the freedom of bringing any subject to the table without fear. She comments on the juice that Eugene’s factory makes. “It’s a little too sweet. It would be nicer if you reduced the sugar in it. Amaka’s tone was as polite and normal as everyday conversation with an older person” (Adichie, 2003, p. 98). Amaka’s comments are according to how she feels about the juice, but not to please people around her, therefore, illustrating self-determination. Amaka also demonstrates the sense of safety around her because the tone of her voice does not show any kind of intimidation. The environment she is in is safe for her to be polite and to have a normal expression. Aunty Ifeoma offers a suggestion that Kambili and Jaja visit Nsukka. Aunty Ifeoma accords them safety of expression by inviting Kambili and Jaja into their home space. “I’m sure they will like to see Nsukka. Jaja and Kambili, won’t you?” (Adichie, 2003, p. 97). Aunty Ifeoma wants to ensure that she does not impose her decisions on them, but have their opinions and freedom of choice.

The external conditions of value are demonstrated when Amaka poses the question to Eugene. “Did you hear about Aokpe, Uncle Eugene? It is a tiny village in Benue. The Blessed Virgin is appearing there” (Adichie, 2003, p. 99). Amaka speaks to Eugene without fear not minding that he is the most feared person in his family. She displays her immanent value that she can have her contribution heard and minimises the distance between her and Eugene. Eugene is respectful to Amaka’s contribution by affirming, “Yes, I heard about it” (Adichie, 2003, p. 99). By affirming Eugene shows that he values Amaka’s question. Bone et al. (2008) agree that value is manifested by appreciating the audience by listening to them and assuring them that their opinions and ideas are valued. When you value the participants in the conversation it invites more perspectives to be offered because people are at ease. Aunty Ifeoma suggests that Kambili and Jaja join them on the pilgrimage to Aokpe where she is supposed to take her children:

Well, the church has not verified the authenticity of the apparitions, Papa said.

You know we will all be dead before the church officially speaks about Aokpe, Aunty Ifeoma said.

Even if the church says it is not authentic, what matters is why we go, and it is from faith.

When do you plan to go?

Sometimes in January, before the children resume school.

Okay, I will call you when we get back to Enugu to arrange for Jaja and Kambili to go for a day or two. (Adichie, 2003, p. 99)

This illustrates that Papa and Aunty Ifeoma share the same value in understanding the authenticity of the appearance of the Blessed Virgin. They all know that the church does not

verify the authenticity of the appearance. Despite Eugene's negative view of that, Aunty Ifeoma emphasises the issue of which Papa is pleased with. Papa has shown the same value with Aunty Ifeoma by affirming with her on the issue of faith. Safety, value and freedom can enable other interlocutors to say something further for better understanding. They are engaging in invitational rhetoric because Eugene appears to have an understanding of what Amaka and Aunty Ifeoma say. Amaka and Aunty Ifeoma are used to discourage dominated conversations that Eugene is used to when conversing with his family members. It is however important in invitational rhetoric to understand the perspectives of other interlocutors even if they are different from yours. Everybody in the conversation needs to be valued by appreciating and acknowledging their views. In the presence of Aunty Ifeoma and Amaka there is no intimidation or forceful acceptance because they choose to do away with the credence that men have the authority to decide, rather they do what is comfortable for them as women.

5.6.2 Embracing feminist principles

In invitational rhetoric, conversers offer their views when they are at ease, in other words when their external conditions of freedom, value and safety are created. If the audience is at ease, they are at liberty to be involved in the conversation and to offer their own perspectives. It is important to note that the rhetor is not intending to change the audience but to offer or give his/her standpoint. The audience will change willingly and if they do not choose to adopt the rhetor's standpoint, it is up to them, which is supported by Lozano's (2013) argument that the suggested goal of invitational rhetoric is not to persuade - that change can only occur in the individual involved in the dialogue. Therefore, it is creditable that invitational rhetoric embraces the feminist principles of equality, immanent value and self-determination. The character of Father Amadi is used to show the readers that there are rhetors who treat the participants the

same way, even those deemed inferior in the past. When Kambili and Jaja are meeting Father Amadi for the first time, Kambili's cousins are free at responding to what Father Amadi asks them. Father Amadi has tried to include them in the conversation by asking them questions. The questions are directed to both Kambili and Jaja because they are in plural 'you' '*unu*' rather than singular '*gi*'. "He asked where we went to school, what subjects we liked, if we played any sports" (Adichie, 2003, p. 136). Father Amadi is putting Kambili and Jaja at ease so that they are in a safe and free environment to be able to participate in the conversation and also recognising their immanent value that they are important part of the conversation. Father Amadi believes in equality for all, he refuses to be dominant in the dialogue because everybody around him has something valuable to contribute. Lozano (2013) remarks:

The function of alternative rhetoric was to open conversation by equalising the value of those participating in the dialogue, which in turn alleviated any bias toward a dominant viewpoint. Domination was only successful when there was a submissive counterpart; therefore, equalising the situation compromised this power-over approach. (p. 34)

The above quotation concurs with Father Amadi's approach of engaging everyone around him in the interaction. "When he asked which church we went to in Enugu, Jaja told him" (Adichie, 2003, p. 136). This question propels Kambili to offer a perspective through a personal narrative where she describes what she remembers what Papa said about Father Amadi during his visit in Enugu:

I remembered then, the young visiting priest who had broken into song in the middle of his sermon, whom Papa had said we had to pray for because people like him were trouble

for the church. There had been many other visiting priests through the months, I just knew. And I remembered the song he had sung. (Adichie, 2003, p. 136)

The presentation of Kambili has offered an outside perspective to the readers to know that it is not the first time she is seeing him. The readers are also learning more about Father Amadi and how Papa feels about his way of preaching. Kambili is here showing her father's hateful thinking of referring to Father Amadi as some trouble to the church, indicating that Eugene thinks that he is better than other Christians.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier, if the external conditions of value, safety and freedom are created, it is more like a motivation for more perspectives to be offered from the participants. The mention of the name of the church by Jaja brings in Aunty Ifeoma into the conversation to tell the audience that her brother, Eugene, finances the church almost alone. "My brother, Eugene, almost single-handedly finances that church" (Adichie, 2003, p. 136). She is giving hegemonic power to her brother and at the same time letting the audience know who her brother is. Father Amadi continues the conversation; "I was reading somewhere that Amnesty World is giving your brother an award" (Adichie, 2003, p. 137). Father Amadi shares what he knows about Eugene; extending their knowledge because they (Amaka and Aunty Ifeoma) confess that they do not know about the award. Amaka shows an expression of surprise, "An award?" (Adichie, 2003, p. 137). This interaction discounts Condit's (1997) criticism of invitational rhetoric that it is causing gender division (dichotomy feminism). In the above account, both genders interacted without any sign of provocation. The environment is made conducive for everyone to participate in the conversation and each perspective is acknowledged for everybody to feel valued.

Father Amadi's conversations display the presence of feminist perspectives. Father Amadi passes by Auntie Ifeoma's house after playing football at the stadium and Obiora asks him, "Why didn't you tell me you would be playing today?" (Adichie, 2003, p. 148). Obiora shows self-determination because he can choose to play; it is his own decision to be part of the team. "I am sorry I forgot to, but I will pick you up and Jaja next weekend so we can play. Perhaps Kambili will play with us also" (Adichie, 2003, p. 148). Father Amadi does not discriminate boys and girls according to the sport codes; he invites Kambili for the football game too. He trusts everybody can play soccer, which is the sign of equality. Father Amadi chooses not to impose his decision on Kambili thus he uses the word 'perhaps' to display lack of certainty. Kambili can make her own decision whether she wants to join them or not. Father Amadi includes Amaka in football playing too, "Amaka used to play with us when I first came here, but now she spends her time listening to African music and dreaming unrealistic dreams" (Adichie, 2003, p. 148). Father Amadi respects what Amaka has chosen to do with her life. Amaka demonstrates self-determination as she has chosen how she wants to spend her time. From this observation, the novelist glorifies Father Amadi by appreciating the people who are marginalised like Kambili and Jaja. Kambili and Jaja are not used to these kinds of conversations, but in this case Father Amadi puts them into the context they are able to share their views. Therefore, if the rhetor accords the participants the freedom, value and safety they need, the conversation entails the importance of valuing others' self-determination, immanent value and equality.

5.7 Chapter summary

In the analysis of the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, it has been noted that the novel uses women and men characters to represent how dependence and independence affects the wellbeing of women in our societies. With logical proofs, Adichie (2003) demonstrates how some women learn

obedience through violence. The act of insensitive subjugation of women has elicited emotions of pity, sympathy and also blame for the lack of agency to act on Beatrice's part. Beatrice and Kambili have lived in an authoritarian environment where freedom of choice and expression is limited by Eugene. The subjugation they have endured improved their courage because they have dramatically changed towards the end of the novel. Adichie (2003) has informed the audience not to undermine the power of the good woman like Beatrice; when she acts, she does it fiercely. The researcher has argued that being a Christian should be shown in someone's action. Eugene, a devoted Christian, subjugates his family members, not reflecting what he professes to believe. Some cultural practices promote inequality by enhancing the importance of men and boys while regarding women and girls as weak.

Ifeoma is the woman that sees the need for a deviation from the normality to eliminate the patriarchal society. She is a widow and educated; though she is not financially stable she is able to bring up her children without depending on men for support. The readers have seen those instances she defies the brother's offers to finance her needs because the offers are attached to conditions to alter her life and deem her as inferior. She speaks against the set-up of the university that she works for while other women are scared to be involved in activism for the sake of their job. Aunty Ifeoma shows that to act out of the norms requires courage, determination and someone that does not consider what other people say. The analysis has shown that we have different men in societies; Father Amadi promotes self-determination, equality and immanent value for his inclusivity in activities and conversations while the same cannot be said of Eugene. The conversations that illustrate the rhetor as a dominating and center of threat do not yield freedom of participants. Adichie (2003) has reiterated that men cannot indeed be treated as monolithic in an African context because they behave differently.

CHAPTER 6

THE INFLUENCE OF HEGEMONIC PATRIARCHY IN LOVE AFFAIRS IN ELIESHI LEMA'S NOVEL *PARCHED EARTH*

6.1 Introduction

It is noteworthy to say African feminism is reactionary in nature because of the way women react towards oppressive ways that are put in place to control them. This chapter discusses the limitations that cultural beliefs can have in love relationships. In Elieshi Lema's (2001) *Parched Earth* Foibe becomes both the mother and father to her children because the father, Sebastian, is married and their culture does not allow him to acknowledge children that are born out of wedlock. She manages to raise them into adulthood and encourage them to be independent by teaching them to work hard and sending them to school. Lema (2001) rebukes the belief that women cannot do better without depending on men for support by using a single woman character that as a matter of urgency has to develop inner resilience to defy the system of patriarchy. Foibe becomes a symbol of hope for women's empowerment because she resists the set norms that oppress her and does not succumb to negative perceptions society has of her. The women characters discussed are equipped to persuade the readers of the many possibilities African women can pursue to gain their total liberation from the cultural norms that seem to be hurtful and limit them reaching their full potential.

Foibe has not rejected her culture completely, she supports the cultural norms that are beneficial to her children and she is striving to pass these norms to them. She sees the importance of bringing up a girl who can be equipped to be a mother and be able to nurture her kids. Through logical appeal, characters persuade readers not to deny their children their culture as not all

norms subjugate them. Doreen presents that marriage is one of the norms that need to be maintained but that there ought to be a change in how couples prepare the union for couples to find love and emotional attachment in order to marry. Doreen illustrates that marriage is an important institution and should be maintained despite the challenges encountered, as it is a symbol of culture maintenance. The discussion will show how women have developed different strategies to keep their marriages in the midst of obstructions.

This chapter highlights that patriarchy does not only torment women. Men are also victims of the system that seems to be engineered to oppress women. In the process of dominating women, men end up being trapped in the pain caused by their behaviours. Society also punishes the women with the set norms ignoring how this will negatively affect the boy child. This argument might be of importance for the society and individuals to change attitude towards the maltreatment of women.

Lema (2001) notes the importance of training an African girl to defy patriarchy at a young age and when she grows up to have developed inner resilience to be who she is and wants to be. Foibe insistently trains Doreen to believe in what she can do for herself to be happy rather than wait for other people to bring happiness to her life. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the importance of mother's supporting their girl child in education. Education is indicated to be one of the tools that empowers women to be independent and pursue their individuality in both private and public spheres. Education is also beneficial to remove the chains of poverty in Africa, as one can tend to be economically independent, assist parents financially once employed and be a motivation to other women to attend school. As Kabira and Burkeywo (2016) note, what is essential in African women's literature are the concerns of overcoming patriarchy, searching for better lives, the importance of education, and liberation from poverty as the key

consideration to womanhood, motherhood and challenges in marriage. The African woman does not want the status quo to remain as it is; she wants to partake in issues affecting her life: to listen, to be listened to, advise, be advised.

The chapter also discusses the importance of freedom, value and safety of participants in conversations. These three external conditions are prerequisite in assisting to achieve the feminist principles of self-determination, immanent value and equality among the interlocutors, which are the goals of invitational rhetoric. Once these principles are achieved in an African context, women will be able to make their own decisions pertaining to their lives, and all genders will be treated the same. This can be realised when both men and women understand the value of treating both genders as equal in all spheres of life.

6.2 Denied love as a means to determination

Exploitation of women can sometimes become their agency to empowerment. If we look at the situation of Foibe, Doreen's mother, the challenges she has encountered empower her to be courageous. The cultural orders have determined her life and the lives of her children. The cultural orders that threatened her happiness have opened different avenues to do better and she has shown that yielding to your situation is not a good solution. One has to think of the ways to push through the situation to survive and for the benefits of the children. Foibe becomes a pillar of strength to her daughter, Doreen, who in her own trials draws strengths from her mother's courage and experiences. Doreen has seen "that the struggle with this burden conditions her life, shapes it" (Lema, 2001, p. 168). The African woman is informed that one may be able to endure because of the determination one got from prior trials. Foibe's ability to change defines who she is in her society. Kabira and Burkeywo (2016) state that even if Foibe is held down by the

system of patriarchy, she rebels against it and is adamant to pursue her own course. It is stressed here that Foibe is attempting to be an African woman who is making an impact in her society by putting on a cando face in order to change the state of patriarchy because as the victim, she is the one that feels the pain and sees the need for intervention.

The story opens with the imagery of how patriarchy is complicated, and Doreen fails to comprehend it:

The image of the spider comes to mind, the way it spins its web from the very inside of its stomach, for itself, and for trapping others into its power and into death, which is life for itself. Death for one, life for another. (Lema, 2001, p. 4)

Doreen appeals to the readers' senses with the use of imagery by creating a visual representation of ideas in their minds. Doreen is waking the readers' consciousness to understand how patriarchy is complicated and difficult to fathom. Her society tends to make rules to suppress some women and benefit men, and in some instances men are also trapped by the same rules and regulations that initially benefited them. Kennedy (2007) explains that there are certain elements in the imagery designed to capture the attention and seduce the ear of the audience thereby making them engaged with what is said and creating more of a feeling of continuity and unity. The image of the spider web used by Doreen gives the colour and clarity to the audience at the same time attracts them to scrutinise it as well as for further understanding.

It is unfortunate that Foibe is expecting a child of a married man, ten years older than she is. Being in the prime of her teenage years, she has to endure the hardships caused by this loving, and at the same time ignoring man:

Sebastian, being older and more experienced already knew she was pregnant. He did not tell her. He could not risk stemming out the life sustaining tenderness that seemed to rise from the very pores of the young girl's soft body to meet his want. (Lema, 2001, p. 109)

One can see that Sebastian is a self-regarding man who does not care about Foibe's well-being and social dignity. Sebastian does not want to inform her that she is pregnant because he still wants to fulfil his sexual desire. If Foibe finds out that she is pregnant, she might make it public, and once it is public the benefits will cease. Again, to show that Sebastian is taking advantage of her age, Foibe complains of being tired, but Sebastian relates it to "[Y]ou work too hard, my love. You wake up too early." (Lema, 2001, p. 109). He knows the cause of the tiredness, but yet he has not told her that she is pregnant. Another argument that supports that Foibe is too young to understand what is happening around her, she does not understand the scandal that their love relationship is causing in the village. Sebastian's father has the knowledge of their love affair and the villagers are concerned too. "Sebastian knew that his lover was too young to understand the margins of wrong and right in loving and being loved, so he did not tell her about the encounter with his father for some time" (Lema, 2001, p. 111). Through the evidence given, one can be convinced that Foibe is indeed young and inexperienced to understand what is happening around her. Capps et al. (1926) have said to persuade the audience there must be logical means to prove your arguments, so when offering an argument begin with making an assertion that requires logical leaps based on the available evidence. From the evidence given, it shows that there are some men in society whose concern is to get sexual pleasure from innocent and young girls who might not know the consequences of their actions. This symbolises that there is a need to change such attitude in order to respect one's body and social standing in the society. The story of Foibe may be similar to those girls who become victims of teenage pregnancies that may have

prohibited them to further their careers because they have to be rejected by their families and take care of their babies.

Moreover, Foibe stands in the middle of the crisis as the result of the pregnancy from her short love affair with Sebastian. It evokes pity from the audience that Foibe becomes the talk of the village since she has broken the social norms. As stated earlier, she is too young to understand what is going on around her but once her mother finds out that she is indeed pregnant, she could understand the changes, pain and rejections she has to endure. “Everything changed when her mother found out that she was pregnant. Her world turned over so quickly she was dizzied by events” (Lema, 2001, p. 115). These are the outcomes of the realisation of her pregnancy. Firstly, she is heavied by how things are turning out to be around her; secondly, she has moved out of her home, thirdly, she cannot meet her lover any more. All these are social orders meant to punish the girl who falls pregnant out of wedlock. “Even if my grandfather had taken a sword and cut my mother’s throat, social ethic would have attributed it to hot anger, caused by extreme shame and would have found forgiveness for that action” (Lema, 2001, p. 120). Again, as with Foibe’s situation, social ethic would have justified this act as a result of anger, protecting the perpetrator rather than the victim. They punish, disgrace and brand girls as outcast. Such social orders are one sided, because they do not act against those men who might be the initiators of love affairs. Can a woman make a baby by herself? The writer through pathos is advocating for a change of the social orders that dishonour girls while men are left to live their normal lives. Changes, however, can be achieved through the process of how rhetoric works as described by Campbell et al. (2015):

Rhetoric is the process by which people influence each other through symbols, regardless of the intent of the source. A rhetorical act is an intentional polished attempt to overcome

the challenge in a given situation with a specific audience on a given issue to achieve a particular end. A rhetorical act creates a message whose shape and form, beginning and end are stamped on it by one or more human authors with goals for an audience. (pp. 8-9)

The writer is attempting to show how Foibe is affected by social norms that are one sided, and that there is a need to change these hurtful beliefs. Through persuasion, the challenge may be overcome so that in future women and men can be treated the same. It can be stressed from this argument that the novelist sees a need for remedial action to combat this kind of attitude. Everybody must be responsible for her/his action, hence the need for fair treatment for both genders.

Foibe's rejection by the social code is a means of developing resilience for more future challenges and a way that leads to independence. As young as she is, she resolves to face abandonment with courage; she does not want to return to her father's house after giving birth to face ridicule. Foibe has turned out to be the strong character through the process of pain. This option might not be the easy one, but it is worth it to save her happiness. She maintains to act out of the norms by breaking the rules that are set for the society. The courage she has taken is the one that promotes equality among women and men. She recognises that as a woman she can break that chain and live out of that line. This means she has to be independent economically and socially. She can learn to make decisions on her own, as a way to break social codes that are meant to sideline her. If this way is adopted, we will have the society where rules and regulations are favouring both men and women. This kind of assertiveness is seen in Nwapa's *Efuru*, where Efuru refuses the traditional beliefs that stand between her and her love; by marrying without a bride price, she allows assertiveness of the female voice and launched the woman's economic

independence (Akung, 2013). It must be noted that women need to take this kind of agency against oppressive norms for their emancipation.

In the same vein, Foibe's character (ethos) seems to be dependable; something that the readers can appreciate. When Sebastian tells her that he desires to see his son, Foibe responds, "you will have to come to Aunt Mai's house to hold him" (Lema, 2001, p. 117). Foibe is courageous to tell Sebastian to come to Aunt Mai's rather than opting to take the son at their meeting place, the river. She even explains what he can say when he comes to Aunt Mai's house. "You will say *hodi*" (Lema, 2001, p. 117). By using '*hodi*', Foibe wants Sebastian to identify with people he will find in the house. This means Sebastian will create association with those he might find in the house and they will know that he is one of them. According to Burke (1950), you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, idea, identifying your ways with his. Therefore, if Sebastian wants to be accepted by those in Aunt Mai's house, he must identify with them to some extent. Something that can be noted is the use of the tag question "then you will enter and say that you have come to see your child, that is accepted, isn't it?" (Lema, 2001, p. 117). Foibe uses the tag question to confirm whether what she said is acceptable or not in a respectful polite manner. Larner (2009) establishes that feminine language is a rhetorical tool that can be used to establish unity and respect between speakers and audience. For women to fulfil their traditional roles, they use nurturing and inclusive linguistic behaviour. Sociolinguists have characterised female language as emotional, pleasing and supportive. For example women tend to use hedges (I wonder, you know), tag questions (isn't it?), inclusive pronouns (we, us) to invite addressees into conversation. Foibe, however, uses the tag question to show Sebastian that as a woman she adheres to the traditional role of not authorising a man to do something, hence Sebastian has a chance to opt to visit his son or not.

Although Sebastian loves Foibe and his son very much, he does not have the nerve to break their cultural norm of not acknowledging the son born out of wedlock and visits his son at Aunt Mai's house. "No no. I cannot do that. Your uncle will certainly kill me or call the elders on me, then what will happen to you?" (Lema, 2001, p. 117). Foibe has thought that her son has the father, but from this response, it shows otherwise. Deep inside her, she knows that traditional beliefs have defeated their love; they have no freedom at all. She cannot count on him as the father of her son. Foibe concludes from the above response that she has to be honest to herself and son that they cannot depend on Sebastian because he is not willing to be the father, thus she resolves then, in her mind, to be both father and mother to her child, and to all her children. Foibe resolves to be both mother and father to her son which is rare in some societies; in some cases if a father refuses to acknowledge his son/daughter the mother takes measures for her child to be acknowledged by the paternal family. In rare cases, however, deviation from the pattern becomes an asset because when a person deviates, it becomes a very important message that makes informed criticism (Campbell et al., 2015). Foibe has had the right to get her son recognised and benefit from the love of the father just like any other child, but she decides not to force Sebastian to father her son and the new era in her life starts here. This courageous move has earned her a special kind of credibility, inconsistency that is feared by many women because they fear to be judged negatively by societies. They are consistently following the norms set to guide them even if they hurt them.

On the other hand, Foibe negates the issue that African feminism is accommodative of men. Nnaemeka (2004, p. 378) indicates that "each gender constitutes the critical half that makes the human whole. Neither sex is totally complete in itself. Each needs a compliment of the other, despite the possession of unique features of its own." Foibe seems to ignore these statements.

Giving her children her surname indicates that she has nothing to do with the fathers of her children. She refuses to talk about their fathers contented that she is able to raise her children on her own. Her decision is radical supporting Western feminist philosophy; therefore, this action is not recommendable to an African feminist point of view. As Nnaemeka (2004) highlights, complementarily, Foibe might need these fathers' assistance to raise their children. It seems that Foibe is a self-interested being who does not think of the interest of the children.

On the contrary, patriarchy does not only affect women alone. Men can also be victims of patriarchy; for example Godbless wants to be recognised as the rightful son by his father but his father denies him this status. Godbless wants to belong somewhere in society where other men belong, somewhere where he can get privileges from his father as a son. "Both wanted to belong to a world, a friendly world. Hers, the one she had created, and the son's, the social order that defined a definite place for a man, but in which he felt excluded" (Lema, 2001, p. 121). Foibe and Godbless are denied the world they passionately dream to have. For Godbless the society has created a place for him where he feels sad. The pronoun 'hers' and 'she' are used to draw the emotions of the readers that Foibe has decided it herself. These pronouns exhibit the consistency in her decision to create the world that may be detested and cannot be taken by many. It surprises Doreen later when she learns from Joseph that patriarchy traps both men and women - "all these victims! Mother, Godbless, Martin..." (Lema, 2001, p. 183). It is this system that causes people to behave the way they do and at the same time it restrains them. The researcher concurs with this argument that patriarchy affects both women and men because when Sebastian abandons Foibe, Godbless is also negatively affected because he feels something is amiss in his life due to the denial of paternity.

However, Foibe turns out to be the unusual one, the strong one to break the cultural beliefs. Not only that she has not been married; she also gives her children her own surname 'Seko'. Odiemo-Munara (2008, p. 14) observes that, "it is in this defiance that Foibe disrupts authority, and redefines the power and its enactments within the society. Within this freedom, she negotiates her life in both the private and public domains on her own terms". Giving children the mother's surname in some cultures is considered incongruous because the child is supposed to take the father's surname. The children may not be respected in the society since they are considered as rejected by the father or fatherless. On the other hand, some cultures allows the child to take the mother's surname e.g the Damara culture in Namibia a child may take the mother's surname whether the mother is married to the father of the child or not. This is what Ugwanyi (2017) refers to when stating that, "African feminism also seeks to give the woman a sense of self as a worthy, effectual and contributing being, while it rejects stereotypes of women that deny her positive identity" (p. 49). The researcher wishes to agree with Ugwanyi's view of African feminism. This study seeks to demonstrate how some African women transcend the norms that bind their fellow women to cultural beliefs and define their identities as women. This is what is seen in Foibe's character in her acts of self-worthiness and the contributor to the sense of equality in her community.

The protagonist, Doreen, is married, unlike her mother, Foibe, but due to cultural norms, she experiences the pain of love relationship just like her mother. Things are acceptable at the beginning of their marriage, but love runs out of the house because of the urge of a boy child. According to Kivai (2010), the societal desire for children happens to be an opportunity through which women are exploited. Due to the high value attached to a boy child, girls occupy second position and that leads to their degradation. Martin, her husband, is not the only one causing this

implication but the society in general is also involved. It is the belief that a male child will bless their marriage. Doreen does not see it as reason enough for Martin to neglect their marriage because of the boy child. Doreen gets emotional when she thinks about it. Being emotional is the persuasive power of pathos. Doreen is questioning why the social norms have to define, threaten and shake the peace of their home. Like in this case, the woman suffers emotionally, simply because Martin believes so much in being a man who is defined by fulfilling the social mirror of his society. However, Doreen is of the opinion that the home must not be threatened by the failure to meet social norms. Unlike Adaku, in Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, who leaves her husband because she is not happy, as she is always being reminded that she is not able to bear male children (Kwatsha, 2015), Doreen decides to keep her marriage and accepts how things are. Their culture supports the men while degrading the mother as if she makes herself pregnant. Husbands and wives should face problems and be able to solve them together. Voicing these through pathos Doreen systematically calls for solidarity of the families in general because the loyalty to the family can keep it intact. If the family is not working together then she is calling men to act in a way that will not put their wives in painful positions that lead to unhappiness. This appeal to pathos is what Brax (2015) refers to as the one linked to our cravings, since people act differently because they feel a shortage of something; which means women can feel differently when they know the man's loyalty is not there as it was in the absence of problems.

The blame for not conceiving a boy child is placed on Doreen; Martin believes that if there could be any problem, it is on Doreen. Doreen stands out to be the mouthpiece of women who happen to be scapegoat for not falling pregnant. "But both of us had to walk that bridge into each other, where a mystical touch between human seeds would take form and breath and spirit. Why

was blame meted out to me alone?” (Lema, 2001, p. 149). In a patriarchal society, the woman becomes the scapegoat for not giving birth to kids as the husband requires, however Doreen rejects being casted in this position. By means of logos, Doreen liberates herself from being oppressed; she voices that pregnancy requires both of them: man and woman. She uses the question “why was blame meted out to me alone?” to attract the attention of woman not to accept the blame of not falling pregnant. Doreen’s appeal to logos embraces that women must consider both sides; they must not let themselves be doomed because blame is not supposed to be placed on both parties simply because the norm says so. Kivai (2010) advises that the society needs to look at the value attached to boys and it must be challenged by the imagination of happy families who do not have sons. This is to say a blessing in marriage must not be defined by the gender of the children because this degrades the value attached to the other gender. This belief contributes to inequality as the girl child seems not to be acknowledged, so Lema (2001) raises this claim to show discontentment that it brings in societies. If the girl child continues to be belittled in society the trend will go on, therefore, it needs to be broken and the presence of both boy and girl child be equally acknowledged.

Roberts (2010, p. 19) writes that for speakers to be credible, they must appear before their audience as people of good sense, good moral character and a good will. Doreen embodies these qualities and her conduct is that of a good African woman. Doreen has seen love in their home and when she sees it growing distant she does not leave her home. Doreen is the kind of woman who is capable of handling her home even if things are not going well, at the same time maintaining respect for her husband. It is seen that Doreen’s character is constructed to show that no matter the challenges of the marriage one can develop self-strategies to overcome. Her

reliability becomes apparent when she decides to stop worrying about what is happening in her home and how Martin is treating her:

When he is away, feel nothing

When you see him, feel nothing

When you hear his voice, feel nothing

When he is near you, feel nothing

When you feel nothing, you are free. (Lema, 2001, p. 152)

This demonstrates that Doreen constructs her own happiness, not dependent on her husband. Married women are encouraged not to rely on their husbands for happiness. In cases when the situation is not going well, they must be able to avoid depression. Doreen's self-reliance is the quality that may win the audience's trust. The researcher seems to disagree with the strategy of feel nothing. It might be that the novelist intends to make Doreen visible, but this may not happen in the real nature of human beings, considering human beings' emotions.

Kennedy (2007) states that according to Aristotle, ethos is "the most authoritative form of persuasion and is comprised of competence, integrity and good will" (p. 73). The audience sees the sense of good will from the rhetor, that they can put their trust on the rhetor and that they believe the rhetor has their best interest at heart (Milotta, 2011, p. 73). The choice made by Sebastian's wife and Doreen to keep their marriage in the midst of challenges testifies to the goodwill they have for their society by accepting to stand for the African womanist philosophical point of view. These women show distinguishable motive to keep their marriages, despite knowing that their husband are cheating on them. This amounts to competence; that these

women are capable of keeping their marriages no matter the circumstance. In the same vein, Doreen and Sebastian's wife are equated to be the architects of their marriages. Instead of confronting, fighting and imitating what their husbands are doing, they have cared for their families during the time of challenges:

Sebastian's wife acted as the best daughter-in-law in their time of test. She cared for the old parents without showing any grudge to the husband. (Lema, 2001, pp. 111-112)

Martin travelled out of town quite regularly. Sometimes he took his girlfriend on those official trips. She was by now not a secret to me anymore. I lived with that knowledge like a secret disease that was taboo to talk about. (Lema, 2001, p. 167)

They both have knowledge of other women in their husbands' lives, but they look at this as a test in their marriages. One thing that Doreen and Sebastian's wife bring to the readers' understanding is that marriage may not be smooth sailing; it includes challenges that one has to overcome. It is up to them to develop strategies to overcome these challenges as they have demonstrated. "The village praised her, lavishing her with indulgences. She is exemplary; a wife to be proud of" (Lema, 2001, p. 112). As indicated in the quotation, the society can extol women who manifest a sense of indulgences. Sebastian's wife is able to maintain the social values of her society. The society needs these exemplary women to follow in the footsteps of faith. By maintaining their marriages, Doreen and Sebastian's wife show their desires to "self-respect, an active role, dynamic participation in areas of social development, and dignity alongside the men" (Kolawole, 1997, p. 36). Doreen and Sebastian's wife have taken a commendable decision of accepting Nnaemeka's nego-feminism that supports African women and men to compromise and accommodate each other even in difficult times. With this African outlook, they are persuading

other women that challenges are inevitable and one can overcome them by changing the attitude towards patriarchal settings. It is in the interest of this study to find out how Lema (2001) promotes the attitude towards self-determination and immanent value.

The women in the novel show their social maturity in how they handle their difficulties. With the help of Aunt Mai's philosophy towards life, Doreen and Foibe "are creatively and intelligently interpreting Aunt Mai's insightful life philosophy that a woman is a social orphan" (Odiemo-Munara, 2008, p. 13). They try to use their voices to question the social arrangement that brings painful experiences and re-arrange it into the milieu that fits them better. Aunt Mai becomes the woman who assists others to face life in its reality no matter how excruciating things seem to be. Her advice is somehow outdated but Foibe and Doreen tend to adopt it and learn a lesson from - "sit down until your buttocks touch the grass and think. Look around you. Now, go to your husband" (Lema, 2001, p. 164). These words have helped Doreen to refuse to wither away because of the 'spider's web' that entangles her society, thus she continuously develops self-strategies to avoid being trapped in this web. Looking at her mother's antecedent, she draws valuable lessons from her that the struggle with the burden of life can shape your destiny. According to Mlambo (2013) this resilience helps to transform a person's identity into a better individual to be able to survive. Foibe's survival strategies are now appreciated by Doreen as a valuable lesson to look at. The writer highlights Aunt Mai's advice as acceptable to discourage women in the same situation to shun away from olden knowledge that may be of help in their situations:

Looking at my mother's life as it passed before my eyes, I again recognised how she had refused to let the apathy home in her flesh like a disease. Mother had fought life with a keen love for life. *Fight life with life! Don't let them refuse you now!* (Lema, 2001, p. 68)

With this reference from her mother and her own experiences, Doreen gets her determination to grow stronger, face life and redefine her real self in both public and private domains. Kabira (as cited in Kabira and Burkeywo, 2016) states that African feminists are involved in the twin journey: liberation from all forms of oppression and return to feel comfortable in their own skins and societies. The point made from this argument is that women that are determined to make changes have a chance to get rid of oppressive settings.

6.3 The man as a pillar of strength

An African woman's willingness to negotiate with and be around men in difficult times is common. Nnaemeka (2004, p. 372) highlights that there are men of good will so we cannot treat them as monolithic. African women are inclined to reach out and work with men in achieving their goals through negotiations, accommodations and compromise. Thus, Doreen trusts that she can ask for advice from men in order to understand their view of how they see life. Doreen refuses to abide by the warning of her neighbours of not befriending men, "they are shrewd, they are smart and can easily fool a woman with cheap presents or money, especially when a woman is young and beautiful and ignorant of the ways of the town" (Lema, 2001, p. 155). The neighbours are portrayed as anti-social with men; scared to be victims of men influences. Unlike her neighbours, Doreen does not live according to the set norms of the community. Providing the audience with a character who elicits courage, and acts outside of the norm is of course an ethical appeal. Doreen can win the audience's approval because of her bravery in asking the views of men to gain understanding about the man's nature. Doreen's character influences how her arguments are received. According to Larner (2009), the rhetor's ethos depends on the community ethos or to the extent to which the individual sees the community. To be credible a woman must represent the community norms of femininity, but as the rhetor, she must embody

quality usually coded as masculine. It is the aim of this study to analyse how the characters try to persuade the readers because of exceptional effort they render in battling with patriarchy.

Doreen transcends feminine characters simply because she wants to understand Martin as a man, husband and about marriage and its social expectations, so she confides in male friends to get more insights. Her male colleague and Joseph are used as men of good will in the novel who are depicted as accommodative ready to listen to women's questions and inputs. Her colleague gives her some insights, but she remains confused by the normality their marriage has turned to be. Nevertheless, the situation is explained but Doreen fails to understand this kind of normality in her marriage. Though things are supposed to turn out like that, she cannot fathom the colourless marriage she is in. It seems that her male colleague is well acquainted with cultural ties linked to marital life shown by the way he gives advice to Doreen. The writer of the novel thus argues that women must not confine themselves to such cultural beliefs that restrict them to converse with men; rather, they must be free to talk to men who are deemed to give them valuable advice. This is what Ogun-dipe-Leslie (1994) terms to be womanism that is more inclusive of people and it is a move towards gender equality too - it is tolerant because it promotes the elevation of both male and female. In addition, womanism desires that men and women are complementary and must be in harmony in the home and society at large.

Surprisingly, Doreen overcomes her insecurity and resentment after hearing Joseph's voice of courage. Joseph's voice is compelled to be the getaway to the understanding of how things work in the system of patriarchy and how to handle them to avoid imprisoning yourself. "Do not carry another person's load. It is better to try to sympathize and understand. Guilt and insecurity do not nurture love, understanding does" (Lema, 2001, p. 160). Doreen has been burdening herself with how Martin feels about not getting the boy child. She imagines that the issue of the male child

causes Martin's withdrawal of love from their marriage. Whatever the cause is, is not clarified because Martin acts as if their marriage is alright and he is happy; the words of his mouth seem to contradict the aura in the house though. What Doreen is experiencing evokes pity in the audience because she is going through circumstances she does not deserve. Colleran (1988) states:

Feelings of pain caused by the sight of some evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve or some friend of ours, and moreover to befall us soon. In order to feel pity we must also believe in the goodness of some people; if you think nobody is good, you will believe that everybody deserves evil fortune. (p. 166)

The above quotation suggests that if Doreen evokes pity in the readers because she is going through some misfortunes that she does not deserve, for the reader to realise this he/she must believe that there is something better than what she is encountering that she deserves. This means Doreen suffers because of the predetermined social order of marriage that it has just to be like that. In evoking pity, Doreen confesses to Joseph, whom she just met a while ago about the state of her marriage. "He does not love me anymore because I cannot bear him a boy child" (Lema, 2001, p. 179). This may not be reason enough to cause the tension in their marriage. Doreen has been emotionally tortured to the point she knows that she is sad; however, she refuses to acknowledge and deal with it, "I was just a walking zombie trying hard not to look at my sadness" (Lema, 2001, p. 179). Even though Doreen blames herself for opening up to a total stranger, she later realises that she is not alone in marital problems. This gives her courage to know that sharing is beneficial and she comes to comprehend that she is not letting the pain go, but circling it, thus it might be beneficial if she accepts the normality and be happy in it. Even her Great Aunt Mai has told her the same thing, to just accept what is there and move on. An

African woman is encouraged to accept changes that come in their marriages. Their happiness must not be dependent on men but they have to develop approaches to be the architects of their own contentment. Mikell (1997) comments that women have developed ways to exercise their influence by challenging cultural norms of femininity that have previously prohibited them reaching their full potential. It is the intention of this study to ascertain the women who have not given up on their fight to freedom, but are transformed by their plight and learn to live differently as confident beings. The novelist is commenting on the complementarity of women and men because it yields good results as seen above that Doreen's new insight has enabled her to accept the normality and move on with their marriage.

In addition, qualities that are attributed to Joseph qualify him to be the reliable man that assists an African woman to appreciate complementarity; he is established as a man of honesty and sound knowledge. The same man can be seen in Andreas' novel *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* in which Michael shows compassion, love, and understanding to his wife and he is willing to stand by her side in time of difficulties. Nnaemeka (2004) states that men like these are willing to listen and work together with women, thus they are men of good will. Joseph can win the audience's good opinion about him. Joseph articulates the implied values that feminists want to associate with in their fight towards freedom from subjugation. He listens quietly and talks with respect to a woman, which surprises Doreen. "Joseph made me wonder if the men ever thought that I could add anything of value to their plans, dreams, and opinions; and if they didn't, then why would they talk to me at all?" (Lema, 2001, p. 187). Joseph does not undermine a woman's contribution to their conversations. This is to portray that women appreciate equality, self-determination and immanent value in the conversations with men. They also want to contribute and be valued. This is the reason why Doreen acknowledges the role of Joseph's willingness to

participate in the process of change. This is the first time she sees a man of this character in her life:

In most of my life, I have listened to men talk, say things to me that they believed in or did not like; things they did or planned to do and how. They have wanted me to listen but not comment or give my opinion and I have obliged. (Lema, 2001, p. 187)

Indeed Doreen indicates the domination of men in society through emotional appeal. She has described her experience to show the unfairness of the patriarchal society. She thought it was favourable because that was the only system she had known until she sees things differently when she meets Joseph. This argument is worth considering for the reason that the change of this attitude will change the whole society. Women's contributions can make valid differences in their work places, social life or economic contributions. Doreen mentions that it is important to listen to how a woman feels; she is not only ready to receive, but ready to give. The act of ignoring other people's contributions and feelings can cause separation in marriages. Joseph acknowledges that the act of ignorance has caused separation in his marriage. He did not know what his wife, Justine, had really wanted so he thought that providing material things makes his wife happy which was not the case. "We often think we are appreciating when we provide material things, comfort - a car, a house, money" (Lema, 2001, p. 197). At least Joseph is honest by accepting his contribution to their failed marriage. Therefore, Doreen clarifies it to men that a woman needs to be appreciated as a contributor to the life of the whole household. Doreen is depicted as an agent of change in men's attitude to reconsider the way they handle their wives.

6.4 Shaping the future of an African woman

A notable point that Lema (2001) emphasises is the journey to educate an African woman in order for her to reach her potential. Education opens many avenues and once a woman is educated, she can partake in both private and public spheres' decision-making. This has to be achieved if changes in beliefs, traditions and customs are to be achieved, as confirmed in Akin-Aina (2011) who writes that African feminisms are still changing continuously based on the context in which they are wrought; to an African experience, African customs and traditions. Lema (2001) has shown that the changes she is advocating for can lead to activism. Traditionally it is a man who gets formal education but in this case, it appears to be different because it is Doreen who manages to finish school. "Then I grew up, left home and went to a boarding secondary school and later became a teacher. It was initially exhilarating, being on my own, with my own room, doing a job with a salary" (Lema, 2001, p. 9). There is a voice of independence in Doreen's expression being able to live and support herself. Not only that, but she is able to run projects at school. The leadership positions are believed to be masculine, but Doreen has taken it upon herself to make sure that the planning, organising and mobilising of teachers is done for the project's success. Being a hardworking teacher makes her popular among other teachers and pupils. Doreen becomes happy to show how she can contribute to her school. She is yearning to reach her full potential, what other women did not do in the past because of different limiting circumstances. She is determined to motivate other women that it is self-assuring to achieve your objectives. Though the principal and pupils praise Doreen, it is not the same with other teachers. "It was not so with other teachers. They considered me foolish to work for a school as though it were my own" (Lema, 2001, p. 15). The writer places this challenge on her path to indicate that challenges are indeed part and parcel of everyone's life. This is in fact done to test her if she

would give up on her position because of fear of criticisms, instead of disregarding the criticisms. She is made of the character that can persuade other women to be confident in what they are doing and to believe that challenges will naturally be there in the journey to your destiny. Doreen persuades the readers with the qualities she possesses: “It helps a speaker to convince us, if we believe that he/she has certain qualities himself, namely goodness, or goodwill towards us” (Roberts, 2010, p. 37). Doreen portrays good qualities towards the audience, the willingness to improve her school and motivating other women to be confident despite the criticisms they encounter.

Another apparent contribution Doreen makes to the school is the creation of the club The River Pebbles Club. This club signifies the sense of solidarity among the female teachers. After failing to present the report of the workshop she has attended, she invites the other teachers to join in the club so she shares what she has learnt from the workshop. By logical persuasion, she presents the materials they can use in the club. Even though they were a bit reluctant to join, they joined after she persuades them that they have all they need to function as a team for the benefits of the learners. It turns out to be a success, enjoyable and like a socialising event. Doreen speaks for those who are still stereotyped that they cannot achieve success because they are women. Doreen also mobilises other female teachers to work together as a team, which has cemented their abilities that were hidden in silence:

That club was really the springboard for my life of struggle, the push to bring changes in things and situations, the knowledge that one should not give up before every chance is tried. I never thought that was possible before then. (Lema, 2001, p. 33)

The audience can be moved by Doreen's audacity to propel even in the midst of her struggle. This is an appeal of desire; desire to change the attitude of women. In this instance, Doreen is going through difficulties in her life and that makes her determined to make a change in the public arena. Doreen believes that one has to attempt every chance possible to attain the desired objectives; personal problems are not to be used as an excuse to neglect your private and public responsibilities. Her transformation embraces many people in the process. The female teachers' spirit is positive, the principal and pupils are also motivated. Doreen accepts Ogun-dipe-Leslie's (1994) philosophy of STIWANISM that an African woman needs to participate as an equal partner in social transformation. From this perspective, Doreen speaks for women not to give up their dreams because of societal negativities. When transformation has to be attained, one needs to persuade others to change attitude in order to see the positivity in the desired action.

The voices of the women in the novel recognise the presence of patriarchy in their society. Some have decided to live according to it and some defy it. It is normal because the roots of patriarchy cannot be uprooted at once; it is a process that requires patience. The writer uses Foibe as a motif to encourage women to train their daughters to stand in confidence in order to defy patriarchy. By juxtaposing Doreen and Rebekka, Martin's sister, one can see the difference of how these two view patriarchy. Doreen is made aware from a young age that she must not let other people define her, let alone rely on them for support:

She [Foibe] warned me about putting all my expectations and trust on just any relations. They will throw away your dreams like they throw cow dung in the grove, she said sounding angry. Girls should learn to work hard, always. Hard work should be their salvation. She told me that the world has very little to give girls for free, that they should

never, never let people walk on their heads and kill their spirit before they know who they are. (Lema, 2001, p. 49)

The style of language Foibe uses to motivate her daughter is inclusive. She does not only direct the message to Doreen, but to all African girls who want to liberate themselves from the chains of patriarchy. This is shown by using inclusive words ‘girls’, ‘their’. By reasoning, Foibe persuades girls with arguments that speak for their freedom. Judging the way she presents her arguments, one can conclude that she speaks from experience and she does not want girls to go through the same ordeal. Aristotle provides argumentative bases because arguments serve as the tool of persuasion; anyone who takes an argument to be valid and accepts its conveyance as true, is bound to accept its conclusion (Fosmire, 2015). This means the girls that Foibe refers to will read the message and evaluate whether the argument is valid. If it is not they are indebted to disapprove/reject the argument made by the rhetor. The arguments the characters make in persuading the readers to accept their claims are the interest of this study. The advice Foibe offers shows her genuine desire for equality in future. Foibe also stresses the importance of formal and informal education. Foibe has been teaching Doreen from childhood to confront patriarchy and Doreen is still dependent on such advice. She points out why formal education would rescue a girl child. With education, she would not be where she is today, an indication that she aspires for advancement. “She talked about how important it is for girls to aspire to learn and know new things of the world. If I had enough education, you think I would be here? She said.” (Lema, 2001, p. 49). She affirms that education can bring changes in the person’s life. One of the critics of Aidoo’s *Changes*, Amadiume (2001), identifies Esi as an educated statistician who works for the government which gives her the right to live in the nice house as part of her job contract. Esi surpasses her people at the village because of education. One thing worth debating

is that when a girl child is educated, she turns away from her people and culture. Amadiume (2001) confirms this by referring to the Ashanti girls that the higher the education they get, the more they turn away from traditional ways and would seem to begin to desire “whiteness”. The same is true in the case of Doreen who gets married without parents’ involvements; she goes to ask for advice from male friends, despite being warned by other women that as a married woman, she has to avoid conversing with men other than her husband.

Although Foibe wants her daughter to be educated, she refuses to deny her the important aspects of her culture. She concurs with Ogundipe-Leslie’s (1994) STIWANISM in which women’s transformation happens without banishing her culture. During Doreen’s schooling years, she is made to wake up early and do house chores; fetching water from the stream before she goes to school and washing plates used the previous night while her brother, Godbless, sweeps the court yard. Doreen is also taught how to care for her brothers in her mother absence. She takes charge of the house, even though there is an older brother, Godbless. Foibe is training her daughter to have a solid foundation with her culture and motherhood. Later in life, Doreen has appreciated what her mother taught her, “Mother had done her job well” (Lema, 2001, p. 10). It becomes beneficial for Doreen that she has always been in charge of the house because she becomes a sustainer of the values of her society and the one who brings fundamental changes by means of getting education. The novelist praises those who preserve the cultural beliefs that are beneficial to them. Doreen is still connected to the qualities she learned while growing up:

I still rolled into the mould as naturally as breathing! So I grew vegetables in a small plot, not because I could not buy the produce in the market, but because I had come to love cultivating the earth. (Lema, 2001, p. 10)

Doreen comes to love cultivating naturally; it is tied to her or part of her. The writer suggests that patriarchy needs to be detached from girls when they are growing up, so when they are women its impact is not evident because they are already aware of how to deal with it. Now that she can practise what her mother taught her when growing up, it motivates other women not to give up their cultural practices even if they are educated. The writer is keen to tell educated African women to be the maintainers of their culture. Bergman (2016, p. 18) however, argues that African feminism does not approve all cultural beliefs, for example cultural practices that are harmful. The researcher agrees with Bergman that at least cultural practices that do not support fair treatment of women should be discontinued because it is the aim of African feminists for all cultural practices to be harmonised to accommodate everyone.

The novel also stresses the act of freedom for a woman to choose who she loves without restraint. In displaying Doreen's self-consciousness, the writer demonstrates the options of men Doreen has to choose from. Doreen is not influenced by the culture in choosing her love, she freely follows her heart. There is Zima, her colleague, who dearly loves her, who gets brightened by Doreen's presence, but she does not feel the same way. Zima would say, "You make my heart soar, Doreen. There is something so beautiful in you that I wish to be near you, all the time. I cannot help that feeling, I cannot control it" (Lema, 2003, p. 12). Zima expresses his feelings to Doreen who has contrary feelings towards him. Doreen's inside remains quiet until she meets Martin who raised something in her heart. Doreen is a representation of a free woman who is able to choose whom to marry without thinking of cultural differences and lobola negotiations. Martin is from the other side of the country where his tradition is different from hers but it does not deter her from loving him. Doreen has approved her marriage without the involvement of her family, which is a contradiction of the traditional belief that pronounces that the two families

have to be involved before the wedding takes place. Even though marriage is the union of two people, families need to get involved in the process. Marriage is undertaken in different ways depending on the culture of the people involved. In some cases, love or emotional attachment to a person is not a pre-requisite, but it can be developed along the line (Selasi, 2015). The researcher believes that the writer uses Doreen's transgression of her culture to emphasise the new culture of independence that gives a woman choices of what she wants to do with her life. Being acquainted with Doreen's character of confidence, the readers will not doubt that she is able to do what she just did. It is her confidence that can inspire the audience to be moved by her actions.

6.5 An invitation to an understanding of patriarchy: A conversation

Invitational rhetoric stands in contrast to a traditional rhetoric that imposes a particular bias and attempts to achieve supremacy and control by directly changing the audience's ways of thinking or acting (Claussen, 2000, p. 107). Invitational rhetoric involves sharing information rather than contrasting one's view of feeling superior to the audience. The conversation between Joseph and Doreen on the day they first met illustrates many aspects of invitational rhetoric as outlined by Foss and Griffin (1995); for example, they have started the conversation in Joseph's house by asking each other's questions about their families to eschew distance. Once the distance is removed from the conversation, Doreen gets the freedom to talk about the problems in her marriage. "He does not love me anymore because I cannot bear him a boy child. Milika, our daughter, was okay for us at the beginning, before we became normal" (Lema, 2001, p. 179). Doreen's openness supports Foss and Griffin's (1995, p. 10) contention that "rhetoric contributes to the feelings of safety when it conveys to audience members that the ideas and feelings they share with the rhetor will be received with respect and care". Doreen freely provides this

information depending on what Joseph has confessed about his wife and children and she believes she is not going to be judged because of her confession. This confession helps Joseph to relate to Doreen's emotional turmoil that they are in the same boat. "Doreen you are not alone. Many of us seem to be wandering in this bewildering emotional forest, seeking for direction, a way into the open clearing" (Lema, 2001, p. 179-180). He listens to her challenges, relates them to his and that is how they have reached identification. This identification is realised from the unfamiliar, which is the different experiences they have in their marriages, to the familiar, the emotional forest each of them is burdened with. Claussen (2000) states that some forms of identification that can be identified in the text: identification between the speaker and audience, between what is familiar and unfamiliar to the audience, between individual and group. This identification is reached because Doreen and Joseph value each other as interlocutors; they acknowledge each others' views by listening attentively and give comments. It can be seen from these kinds of conversations that invitational rhetoric elevates women's contribution as there is no intimidation and their contributions are considered as important. Therefore, the immanent value, equality and self-determination of both genders are enhanced.

Their conversation is two-sided; each one contributes to the conversation. Through offering their experiences, Doreen learns that she is wrong about the love between her and Martin. "Love did not end, nor did lust. I was being like Great Aunt Mai, I was circling the hurt, I was scaring away the pain. That is why I was failing to accept normality and be happy in it" (Lema, 2001, p. 181). Joseph does not impose this on her, but she concludes after Joseph's explanation of his experiences. This illustrates the feminist principle of self-determination, "Self-determination allows individuals to make their own decisions about how they wish to live their lives" (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 4). Joseph permits Doreen an opportunity to listen, compare her situation to his,

and make her own conclusions and how she wants to make use of the understanding she has just gained.

Further, in offering her vision of the world of women that is parallel to the subject under discussion, Doreen says:

They weave fantasies around their lives. They live by those fantasies until a little wind blows through the cracks, then they merge inwards, collapsing into themselves like a sand castle, falling at the feet of their mighty men. The very courageous ones, the outrageous one, go out and engage in timid play. (Lema, 2001, p. 182)

The kinds of actions that women take in their outrageous moments show her immanent value in their conversation. Doreen is able to contribute uniquely to the conversation. As mentioned earlier, these two exchange information, as each gets a chance to offer information on how they see the world according to their genders and this evinces the safe environment of information exchange.

Change may occur as the result of invitational rhetoric, but change is not its purpose (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 6). When Joseph concludes that what Doreen explained is patriarchy “that is the glorious mirror of patriarchy” (Lema, 2001, p. 182) he has no knowledge that Doreen does not know what patriarchy is. Therefore, he has no intention to change her perspective, and if in any case she is changed by the explanation of patriarchy, it happens because of the new understanding and insights. Through their discussion, Joseph invites Doreen to what Foss and Griffin term as ‘an invitation to understanding’. Having realised that Doreen does not know what patriarchy is, Joseph explains it:

It is a social system which has defined how men and women will relate in all spheres of life, including private life, right down to the way we love and have sex. It has determined how a father, brother, husband, uncle will treat the woman: the wife, sister, mother, and daughter related to them. It is an ideology that has given the man the authority to decide, to act, to give or withhold, to access or retain anything, really almost everything. (Lema, 2001, p. 182)

From the explanation given, patriarchy gives hegemonic power to men; it explains how men relate to women, not how women relate to men. This is how Doreen understands this new perspective and she feels that it is designed by men because it privileges them. Her responses and questioning for further understanding serve as an indication that she appreciates and values the perspectives offered by Joseph and there is a relationship of equality in their conversation because everyone is at liberty to make contributions. Mihalcea (2014, p. 61) points out that conversations assist the invitational approach because those in conversation reach a mutual understanding when they finish their encounter, but it does not mean that the participants agree; what is important is that they share equally and have respect for each other.

To make sure that Doreen understands the concept of patriarchy fully, Joseph clarifies that the system involves both men and women. However, Doreen is not convinced that as a woman she is also part of it. By going on with their conversation, Doreen develops trust in “this man who knew so much and could talk to me without restraint” (Lema, 2001, p. 183). To Doreen, this man is different from other men because they are learning from each other. Their relationship is enhanced by this trust and their camaraderie places them in a comfortable situation with one another, and also helps the readers to learn more; the more the trust, the longer the conversation and more information to be offered.

Doreen's perspective claims that the system of patriarchy must be demolished and be replaced with another system that is more inclusive of both genders. Joseph says, "Don't worry, it is decaying already. It is weakened to its very foundations because situations that sustained it have changed so much. You know, girls are going to school and some are discovering that they have rights" (Lema, 2001, p. 184). In this offering, Joseph assures Doreen that the system of patriarchy is in the process of demolishing. He uses examples that Doreen can identify with for examples 'girls are going to school' that she can relate to. If Doreen thinks of herself and other female teachers, she can really believe that patriarchy is being deconstructed and that she is contributing to that process. Having learnt that Joseph is a knowledgeable man, he offers advice on how to throw patriarchy overboard. He is identifying with the African feminist readers who support that deviation from the societal norms is one way of beating patriarchy, for example "accepting that, yes, a man can need another man and a woman can need another woman as intimate partners" (Lema, 2001, p. 184). Joseph has not said his suggestion is right, but just offered something that can help for further understanding in that situation.

It can be seen that these two conversationalists have offered their perspectives considering feminist principles of equality, immanent value and self-determination. They have listened attentively to each other in the safe, free and valuable environment. Their conversation brings new awareness more especially to Doreen who has learnt the new term 'patriarchy'.

6.6 Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter discussed how Foibe and Doreen are portrayed as women to make the social changes in African women. Foibe transcends the cultural norm; that she is the father and mother to her children and gives her children her surname, something that is considered odd in

some African cultures. The children are negatively affected by this decision because they cannot enjoy their paternity relationship. The problems that Foibe encountered helped her to act against patriarchy as they propel her to be independent by refusing complementarity from the fathers of her children. Doreen, unlike her mother, is married but marriage has not solved the problems that African women encounter. However, Doreen's case is different because she is educated and has a job, which means she can be economically independent and able to make the private and public contributions, but that does not mean she is free from oppression. Watching her mother suffers when they were growing up and learning life lessons from Aunty Mai help her to cope with challenges in her marriage. Love seems to wither between her and Martin because of her failure to bear a boy child, but instead of filing for divorce, she develops strategies to deal with the problem and accept how things turned out to be. Foibe and Doreen have been emotionally tortured by the set of traditional beliefs that deprive women of their happiness, but their authority to propel amidst the challenges may motivate and persuade other African women to do the same.

Foibe is an activist in Doreen's formal education, but she does not deny her to learn traditional norms. Doreen is able to do house chores, gardening and at the same time attends school; the skills learned during her childhood have been used later in life - something she has been thankful for. This highlights the importance of women's transformation while keeping the cultural practices that are beneficial to women. Doreen's ability to make choices has enabled her to marry Martin without family influences. She marries a man from a different background and without lobola payment. She has not let culture gets in the way of her marrying the man she loves. Providing logical proofs of her challenges and determinant acts, may win her goodwill from the readers. In addition, Doreen is the one to contravene the norm of married women not conversing with men other than their husbands. She decides that culture cannot limit her to get important

information that can help her to understand her husband's behaviour change. With logical proof, Doreen has confirmed there are noble men in society who are ready to share their views with her and at the same time value what she has to contribute to the conversation. At least Joseph is honest to accept that he is the reason why his marriage failed, something that shows that the attitude of men is changing; the willingness to participate in the process of breaking patriarchy. Now, Doreen is telling the readers the importance of attaining social equality amongst men and women; that it will help them to learn from each other. It is through sharing with Joseph that she learns what patriarchy is and it becomes clear to her how everybody is entangled in that system that she refers to as a 'spider web'. The willingness of Joseph and Doreen to contribute to their conversation, however they want, on the topic of patriarchy is a sign of society ready to accept immanent value. Throughout the novel, Doreen and Foibe illustrate their self-determination by deciding on how they desire to live by defying the orders of patriarchy.

CHAPTER 7

THE STATE OF WOMEN IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE AND EDUCATION IN KALENI HIYALWA'S NOVEL *MEEKULU'S CHILDREN*

7.1 Introduction

It is to some extent understandable why some women in Africa refused to be associated with the notion of Western feminism. An African woman has gone through predicaments that the Western sister might not know about. Frank (as cited in Verba, 1997, p. 4) finds it difficult to understand some African writers like Mariama Ba, Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emechata and Ama Ata Aidoo because their novels are to some extent more radical, and more militant than their Western counterparts yet the authors refuse to be called feminists. The reason is that these women think that Western feminism generalises African contexts assuming that all African women have similar problems. Some African women like Ketja in Kaleni Hiyalwa's novel *Meekulu's Children*, have tasted the bitter fruit of colonialism, while some have not, so they cannot be put in the same box, neither can men be generalised as subjugators because they are different depending on culture, exposure and colonialism. Because of these differences there must be African feminisms. African feminisms should not contain a monolithic view of the continent, but rather be aware of the context of a pluralism of African feminisms that encompass the fluidity and dynamism of different cultural beliefs and historical force (Attanga, 2013 and Nnaemeka, 1998). Therefore, this chapter looks at how women and men relate to each other during the difficult time of the liberation struggle.

Colonialism is believed by some feminist critics to be the cause of inferiority of some women in Africa. For example Amadiume (2001, p. 55) argues that "colonial education through Christian

missions excluded girls, as colonialists were only interested in training a few men to serve as warrant chiefs, court clerks and messengers in local administrative areas". However, this view must be dependent on the context as shown in *Meekulu's Children* where boys and girls are given the same opportunity to become educated. Hiyalwa (2000), through Ketja, persuades the readers that it is true that boys and girls are unable to attain education simply because the colonists have rejected both genders to attain education.

In *Meekulu's Children*, the writer condemns specific patriarchal settings as disempowering factors for women in societies. Ketja is seen as a dynamic being that transcends the stereotypes of women's total dependence on men. The discussion of this chapter shows how Hiyalwa (2000) commends women and men working in collaboration for a harmonious environment. In Elombe village, men may be viewed as indispensable members of the society, not necessarily the oppressor of women. In the novel, notably, there are male colonists who challenge the wellbeing of the Elombe people, but there are different male characters who are used to persuade the audience of their good will towards women and society in general. Although the rhetorical tradition was just meant for spoken discourse, it is now applied to the analysis of literary works. According to Burke (as cited in Keith and Lundberg, 2006, p. 55) rhetoric may be found in everything we do and is not so much a way of approaching language but rather a function embedded within language. Logos, ethos and pathos appeals are found in the description of characters used by Hiyalwa (2000).

Furthermore, this chapter discusses women's portrayed not as subordinated beings, demonstrating rather the manners a woman can empower herself to stop being a bystander. Hiyalwa (2000) declares her commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of Ketja by making her an active member of her society. Instead of submitting to her pain, she stands up to

prepare herself for the better future when she is united with the children that Meekulu has been talking about.

Invitational rhetoric was introduced as an alternative rhetorical option promoting rhetoric as an agency of voluntary transformation. Kindred (2007, p. 8) declares that the chief characteristic of invitational rhetoric is its 'offering' rather than 'imposing'. Space is created in a communication setting for willing transformation as a result of personal decision to learn, choose and change. Invitational rhetoric is visible in the dialogues of the people of Elombe as they value each other's presence and contributions. The chapter discusses how the conducive environment made for discussions contributes to the feminist principles of self-determination, immanent value and equality among interlocutors.

7.2 The participation of women in the liberation struggle

In Africa, women were said to have opted to be out of politics because the patriarchal power structures were found to be hostile towards the entry of women into politics, but they then managed to make their way into this male domain with amazing speed and determination (Geisler, 2004). Women were able to work alongside men, which was impossible previously. Even though fighting colonialism was equally done by women, who fought alongside men, their efforts have been largely unacknowledged because societies have really no idea what to do with women as they believed that women do not have real power, only pseudo power to rule (Gatwiri & McLaren, 2016). According to Geisler (2004) at the time of the liberation struggle women did not complain because of the restrictions imposed on them. Dissatisfactions and disappointments came in after independence when their efforts were not acknowledged as expected and dreams of personal liberation were not realised. African women contributed to their countries' anti-colonial

wars differently. Some joined political movements, some helped soldiers with food, and so on. The road to independence was not easy; many lost their lives, some were crippled, but the more troublesome it was the more some women learned endurance strategies. It is therefore in the interest of this thesis to observe how female characters alongside the male counterparts have reacted towards the difficult journey of the liberation struggle and what they become after the endurance.

The novel *Meekulu's Children* is geographically set at a place that is hardly affected by the war as the narrator, Ketja, explains the reality of the impacts. This novel calls for the recognition of the contribution women made to the liberation struggle in Namibia. The novel has set off with the emotions of pity provoked by the first encounter of war in the village of Elombe. Ketja, the protagonist is exactly 9 years old when both of her parents are killed by the *omakakunya* (colonial soldiers). Ketja has to be the one to discover the death of her mother by first seeing the arm that is sliced off, "Oh, God! It is my mother's arm!" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 1). It is not just pity that the reader may have for this young girl; it is also terrifying to have seen what Ketja sees at the entrance of her parents' house and also the intensity of the violence. Ketja's age is an indication that war has a profound effect on everyone, despite the age. Hiyalwa (2000) wants to make the reader understand the impact of the liberation struggle on the local people. Ketja is the representation of the young children who have lost their parents at the tender age because of the political instability, which was mirrored in many African countries.

Though Ketja has managed to handle the sight of her mother's severed arm, she cannot handle seeing both of her dead naked parents lying in a row. The whole scene has sent Ketja into emotional and psychological interruption. "What I saw was unbearable. Meekulu was kissing two dead bodies laid in a row. They were my mother and father. What struck me most was they

were naked” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 6). Ketja has given the readers evidences to believe that the intensity of the brutality of her parents’ death is unbearable. When the sight of this scene affects her psychologically the readers can understand it because they can relate to the evidence given. The reader can then attest that what she has seen causes the state of her mind at the time. Murthy and Ghosal (2014) point out that if the statement is attempting to persuade the audience with a reasonable claim, the speaker offers proof in support to his/her statement using logical arguments. Hiyalwa (2000) does not only inform the audience of the death of Ketja’s parents; she also gives the evidence of how they look in their death for the audience to feel the immensity of the suffering this young woman has to tolerate. The writer may have emphasised this scene to show how women survived these kinds of incidents and how they have assisted each other to cope in difficult times.

Furthermore, the writer has outlined Ketja’s parents’ death graphically underlining that men and women equally partook in the liberation struggle of Namibia. One can conclude that women have suffered more than men because they were raped and murdered. Looking at it, Ketja’s mother has received double suffering because she is also raped by the soldiers before she is killed. Soldiers take turns with this woman in the open and also in front of her husband. Not only that, her arm is severed when she is still alive. The readers may put themselves in Ketja’s mother’s shoes by imagining the kind of pain she experienced in the process. This can be likened to Kiyimba (2008) who detects that in Alan Taca’s *The Silent Rebel*, the scene that is memorable is when Mrs Lamo is raped by soldiers before she is killed together with her husband. In the same vein, in Gorreti Kyomuhendo’s *Secrets No More* which is set in the turbulent time of the Rwandan genocide, the soldiers rape Mariana’s mother in the presence of her father and other children, and this has a lasting psychological impact on Mariana (Kiyimba, 2008). The act of

rape disempowers women and makes unequal social power more apparent to the victims (Pasi, 2015). When this misfortune befalls the woman, she thinks that there is someone who holds hegemonic power to cause her social and psychological pain. This scene is not exclusive to the Namibia context and has manifested in different African countries where war prevailed. The *omakakunya* (colonial soldiers) rape Ketja's mother in front of her husband to use her as bait for the husband to talk about all political activities that *eendume do momufitu* (soldiers of the forest) do in their village which he has refused to have knowledge of. Ketja's parents show an act of bravery because in spite of the pain inflicted on them, they have not told what happens in their village in connection with political activities; the only sound heard is whines of pain; even the mother does not show feminine deportment of being soft hearted. They do not want to implicate their fellow villagers as it is a promise to some members of the village that such activities are to remain unspoken of to anyone, despite the pain. Consequently, they have died with their credibility. The impression that they have given to the readers is the one that creates trust and respect.

Similarly, equality is depicted by Estela and Kamati, who at a young age have gone into exile because of political instability in Elombe village. Though Estela and Kamati do not understand the implications they are subjected to at the time, they cross the borders into Djambia (Zambia) with *eendume do momufitu* (soldiers of the forest), who are left with no option but to take them with, because the children cannot tell where they come from and where they are heading. This tells us of the unconscious choices children made to run away from their home country because of political instability. These choices have to be made by both girls and boys; looking at the case of Estela and Kamati, Kamati being the older, they both have no clue of where they are going. The only thing that can be recognised in them is fear; fear of what is happening at their house

where they leave their parents in the hands of *omakakunya* (colonial soldiers) and fear of what they are looking at now, *eendume do momufitu* (soldiers of the forest). Thinking of what these children are going through one gets emotional by thinking of their age and incidents occurring to them. Our judgment might be affected by how we feel towards what happened to them. Fosmire (2015, p. 196) illustrates that emotions are those things on account of which people change and differ in regard to judgments and upon which attend pain and pleasure, for example anger, pity, fear and all other things and their opposites. It might be imperative to note that the word *omakakunya* has a connotative meaning to this children that refers to people who do not have mercy, murderers, destroyers thus they run away from the house due to fear. Whereas, *eendume do momufitu* signify solidarity, peace, safety and haven to the children, which is why the writer relates them to the safety of these children. It can be noted from this argument that even if *omakakunya* and *eendume do momufitu* are all soldiers their aims in this society are depicted differently. This concurs with Nnaemeka's (2004, p. 380) warning of "not casting a pall over men as a monolith" as there are men of both bad and good will in societies.

It is significant to note that the novelist wants a woman to transcend the norms of femininity. She brings out the character of Ketja by modelling her as the one to report the death of her parents. The incident has been seen by Tate Mbela who later narrates the whole story to the villagers when they come to comfort Meekulu and Ketja. Tate Mbela has done all these later after Ketja has gone through the ordeal of seeing her parent's murdered bodies. It is Ketja who runs from their homestead to Meekulu to tell her the bad news and she manages to come back to their homestead with Meekulu to see what happened to her parents. Meekulu and Ketja show a sense of independence and confidence. Instead of calling the neighbours to run with them to the scene, they go alone to see for themselves. They have done away with what Machel (as cited in Geisler,

2004, p. 47) refers to when she says, “the greatest obstacle to women’s emancipation will thus be created by women themselves, by their habit of dependence, their passivity and the dead weight of tradition they carry over from the old society”. That is the beginning of seeing Ketja developing character into a determined woman. One thing to note is that the more challenges Ketja endures, the more determined she gets, which is why Selasi (2015) notes that some African women are reactional in nature; what they go through propels them to be who they are. This can also be related to chapter five of this study about Adichie’s novel *Purple Hibiscus*, where Beatrice gets her determination to poison her husband because of the misfortunes she encounters at the hand of Eugene. Even the fellow villagers know that Ketja might be young, but she is strong for what she has seen in her life. When Meekulu is burnt alive by the *omakakunya*, the woman who delivers the message to Ketja says, “It does not matter whether your age is swelling or stable, my daughter. It is your mind - your brain that has seen much more than it should have to” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 81). She has also confirmed her determination herself, saying when she runs to the hut where Meekulu is lying down helplessly: “I did not care about what I would see there. After all, it was not the first time. That was my fate” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 81). Ketja is self determined and is ready to face the challenges that life can bring. She is reflecting an African girl whose identity is not defined by some traditional beliefs that can steal her self-recognition and participation. This means self-recognition for women can be achieved by partaking in those things that are out of the norm and that require endurance in harsh conditions.

As the saying goes ‘one hand cannot go into counsel’, Ketja lives in society that is naturally helpful and a special unity ties them together. The writer unifies both genders in society to show their interdependence. When Ketja decides to take Meekulu to the hospital, she is aware that she cannot carry her alone. Tate Mbela and Kashoko’s volunteerism to assist Ketja is the sign of a

collaborative society that is working towards the common goal; the wellbeing of Meekulu. This shows the African man's sensitivity even in difficult situation; the willingness to help. This is what Nnaemeka (2004, p 380) indicates by saying "African women's willingness and readiness to negotiate with and around men even in difficult circumstances is quite pervasive". The writer here stresses the existence of African feminism even in taking turns to carry Meekulu on the stretcher. The presence of Tate Mbela on this journey becomes an amusement to the two: Kashoko and Ketja, when he narrates about his boyhood. This has not only sent the message about how they behaved then; it is a means to smooth the sadness that war brings to them, more especially to Ketja. Tate Mbela's personal narrative is a way of persuading the listeners to believe that he was indeed a popular boy in the community, among his peers, elders and girls, and at the same time identifies with Ketja and Kashoko. According to Hansen (1996, p. 51) Burke agrees that identification can be a function of persuasive appeal, for example when the politician is trying to identify with the audience. Thus from Burke's perspective on rhetoric, communication is a means of establishing and maintaining social life (Hansen, 1996). Tate Mbela's identification can also be seen in the light of Burke's identification as he is establishing a social relationship with Ketja and Kashoko where both are amused and feel that they are now grown-ups. Tate Mbela sees them as adults now, thus he shares a story of his life of how he behaved when he was exactly their age which is a bit sensitive:

The old man amused me. That was a sensitive issue to touch on especially in front of young people. Maybe I was right when I felt that I was growing with every heartbeat. Probably Tate Mbela was seeing it too. Kashoko and I kept on laughing unceasingly. (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 90)

In the above account, identification is used to maintain equality among them all. Ketja and Kashoko accept that they are grown-ups because the division between them and Tate Mbela is broken by the openness of the old man who shares a sensitive personal lived experience with them. Through the use of the mother language, Oshiwambo, Tate Mbela uses another strategy to identify with them “*Onda li mefimbo lo kuwila oukadona vahapu ngaashi ndahala ndele nee oukadona wefimbo letu itave ku efelepo opo!* In my time one would have as many girlfriends as possible and they would not let you have sex with them” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 90). This utterance illustrates that men were privileged by the freedom they had then to date as many girls as they wished, but girls were empowered to refuse having sex with them to keep their dignity. These girls had chosen what was good for them rather than accepting men to decide for them, which shows that women had had authority over their bodies and were empowered to refuse male dominance. Even Tate Mbela is proud to say girls of ‘our time’ because they are so different from the girls of the now; he still maintains that respect for them. This perspective is shared to get across the realisation that women’s voices have been loud, as heard by Tate Mbela, which concurs with Gale (2000) who confirms that there had been women rhetors in the past, but their voices have subsequently not been recognised. Furthermore, by using the mother tongue, Tate Mbela makes it easier to identify with his listeners. Burke (as cited in Cheney, 1983) illustrates the same essential case of identification strategy: “when you are with Athenians, it’s easy to praise Athenians, but not when you are with Lacedaemonians” (p. 146). This illustrates that Tate Mbela can easily identify with those that can speak his language than those who do not.

The writer uses many incidents to bring forth Ketja’s character. Though Ketja is not fighting with rifles together with the *eendume do momufitu*, she is fighting with her emotions and the assistance she renders to those who are hurt by *omakakunya*. She is indicating that those who

were inside the country were also fighting differently to liberate their country. Ketja is already emotionally drained by Meekulu's situation, and now Kashoko, who is assisting in taking Meekulu to the hospital, is shot in front of her by *omakakunya*. As mentioned, Ketja has seen more unpleasant incidents than her age mates have. "The *omakakunya* did not wait for Kashoko to explain more. They shot him and he died instantly" (Hyalwa, 2000, p. 91). After they have shot him, Ketja just cries inside a sign that they live in fear to make even a slight expression to show emotions. The death of Kashoko signifies the limitation of movement to young men in their societies. The *omakakunya* are threatened by the presence of these young men around because they are potential *eendume do momufitu* that they want to eliminate. Tate Mbela, who is an old man, is not harmed for he will not be able to join the war. It is mentioned in Chapter 6 of this study that patriarchy not only negatively affects women, men are also recipient of the system's oppression. The same is happening to the people of Elombe where young men are misfortunate to be young. They are robbed of the freedom to move around due to the fear of the dominant *omakakunya*.

Another notable contribution made by women is the provision of food to *eendume do momufitu*. Geisler (2014) notes that:

In Zimbabwe it was ultimately the realities of the struggle that forced men to admit women into the armed struggle. We could not win the struggle without the help of women. It is like a family, the two have to contribute. The people that were cooking food for fighters were women. So there was a need for the two to work together. (p. 50)

The above account can be related to what women did in the case of Elombe village. Meekulu is the evidence that women cooked food for *eendume do momufitu*. To give credence to this point,

Geisler (2014) states that “rural women, such as in northern Namibia, become involved in supporting guerilla fighters, supplying food, shelter and hiding places” (p. 49). So, Meekulu becomes a reliable character by giving food to *eendume do momufitu* who are deemed to bring freedom to the people of Elombe. *Eendume do momufitu* come to Meekulu’s homestead on several occasions to eat. It is known to them that if they appear from their hideouts, they are hungry and of course the supportive villagers have to cook for them. In some instances, there is no food in the house; Meekulu has to tell them to go somewhere else. Meekulu’s credibility is also displayed through her sensitivity towards the appearance of *eembulu do momufitu*. It is a subject that cannot be discussed with anyone, hence she warns Ketja, “She told me not to say any word about the visits to anyone even a best friend (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 54). She is shielding the *eendume do momufitu* from being found by *omakakunya* and from some community members who are against them. At the same time she is protecting herself from being harmed by *omakakunya*; it is not an easy situation at all. If you partake in such activities, your life is at stake. For example, “As I gave a glance to Meekulu, I saw her busy trying to erase the military boot prints on the ground, left by two previous visitors. She was using the broom to sweep away the foot prints” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 68). They have to save themselves from the wrath of *omakakunya* or else they will be killed. This becomes a norm of this society that wants to liberate itself from the colonial system by supporting the *eendume do momufitu*. The relevance of an African woman liberating herself finds an echo in Chesaina’s (2015) comment that self liberation by African women will be more meaningful than that from external sources because African women are the ones who know their plight from their experiences. It is worth finding strategies to liberate themselves from the oppression. This assertion is in agreement with the purpose of

this study, which is concerned to bring out issues and strategies women use to transcend the patriarchal system that forces them to submit to the authority manifesting from colonialism.

Towards the end of the novel, the writer brings in another woman's voice, Shofiya. Shofiya presents the attainment of freedom to Meekulu, Ketja and Elombe people. Meekulu has been yearning about the return of her children who will bring freedom, unfortunately she does not live to enjoy it, but she felt its coming. Shofiya is the one who brings Estela and Kamati from Ondangwa reception centre. She brings in a lot of emotions: laughter, sadness, a sign of the new dawn (Estela and Kamati) and the death of Meekulu who dies soon after her wish is fulfilled. This again shows that women have participated in the liberation struggle from the beginning to the end of war period. Hiyalwa (2000) highlights that a woman must be commended for her participation in the liberation of African land, having always been part of the struggle. Ketja is a voice of a woman who does not despair. She has seen the beginning of the war "killing of Dila and his wife - the first ever incident that happened in Elombe" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 109). The struggle benefits her though; she becomes determinant and bold through endurance.

After the death of Meekulu and arrival of Kamati and Estela, Ketja portrays the readiness to head their home, carrying the headship from their grandmother. Does this mean Ketja does not acknowledge the presence of the man, Kamati in the family? Looking at her antecedent, Ketja has been embracing equality in her society; equality seems to be prevalent amongst the people of Elombe, therefore, it might not bother her as to who heads the house. The end of the novel signifies joy and at the same time sadness. It is a relief to the readers that Meekulu's children are back and most importantly, women have immensely contributed to this freedom. It has been the interest of the readers and characters to achieve freedom. Murthy and Ghosal (2014, p. 253) assert that the speaker gets connected to the audience when appealing to their sense of interest.

The underlying principle that the text embraces is that the choice you make as a woman shapes your character. For this reason, Ketja and others who act like her become icons of freedom.

7.3 Why do you always objurgate men?

It seems to be indisputable that African males have not been enemies to their female counterparts. “Historically, African males and females have found it necessary to cooperate in order to liberate the entire African community from enslavement, poverty and marginalization” (Izgarjan & Markov, 2012, p. 58). Cooperative effort has been pervasive in African cultures. A close reading of *Meekulu’s Children* shows that some men have positive relationship with women in the society. They often complement each other in providing necessary assistance when there is a need. On many occasions, a man, excluding the *omakakunya*, is portrayed to be the other hand of the woman. This complementarity helps women to feel better about themselves and to achieve their desired goals. This co-act of people of Elombe is likened to the African womanist point of view that celebrates the compatibility of males and females to ensure the survival of the entire community (Izgarjan & Markov, 2012). This is not to say women do not strive on their own, they do. Throughout the novel Ketja is the leading character in decision-making, endurance and achievement, but she does all these in relation with men. Thus, the researcher comes to slightly disagree with Kwatsha’s (2015) statement:

Feminist theory has given women authors’ the opportunity to write and define themselves from female point of view. It is believed that by taking this bold step, readers will be able to read about female characters who can stand up for themselves without the support of a man. (p. 9)

In reality, it is practically impossible for women to strive on their own without the support of men. Men and women need each to reach their full potential and to have harmonious societies as underlined by Hiyalwa. Kwatsha's statement comes to disagree with the theory of African feminism that "African women are more inclined to reach out and work with men in achieving set goals (Nnaemeka, 2004, p. 380). Thus, even if women are advised to excel in their doings, they need to work hand in hand with men. It is not surprising that Tate Mbela is one of the villagers who come to sympathise with Ketja and Meekulu during the time of their loss. The villagers understand the emotional turmoil Meekulu is experiencing when Dila and his wife are murdered and the disappearance of their children: Kamati and Estela. It is sympathy that draws them to this family for they know their presence will smooth Meekulu and Ketjas' emotions. "Emotions are powerful motivators to stimulate the hearts and minds of individuals to accept the claims" (Murthy & Ghosal, 2014, p. 253). When these villagers are sympathising with Meekulu and Ketja, they are making it easier for them to accept the loss of their loved ones. The audience can easily be moved by the state of Meekulu and Ketja, thus they feel the fate that has befallen the family demands immediate intervention to stop such a situation occurring again in future. "What are we going to do about it? Tatekulu Topi continued, fuming" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 19). Needless to say, Tate Topi is overwhelmed by what has happened. This shows a cooperative society that supports each other regardless of gender. They are undertaking an informed dismantling of the belief that men are oppressive by making everyone an active participant in societal matters. The seeming promotion of equality portrayed in the novel meets the objectives of this study. The study aims at finding how social, political and economical perspectives map women's recognition in relation with men.

The novelist's intention is to show us that men and women support each other equally. The text portrays that the society is quick to respond to others' trials. When Ketja gets back home after she has not slept at home, Meekulu thinks she followed her siblings into exile, so she ululates upon seeing her coming back home.

The women, many of them who were Meekulu's age, began to ululate. The older men lift up their *eedibo* sticks, pointing them into the air toward the sky, as if they were pointing to God on high to say to him, you up there, You are great! The young men, boys and girls kept their cheerful smiles illuminating their innocent faces. I was frightened. I had never seen such a big crowd of men and women, old and young people, in my village before. (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 31)

The presence of all in this celebration signifies *Ubuntu*, which means, "I am what I am because of who we all are" (Maluleke, 2012, p. 4). The overall concept of *Ubuntu* values people as a community, rather than as individuals. What is displayed by the people of Elombe is that celebration and suffering are shared by all people in the community. They care for each other's wellbeing, thus, each of them mumbled a word to Meekulu to show solidarity. However, the emphasis goes to what Tate Mbela has mumbled: "Thank God Ketja is back. We should always pray to God and He will answer us positively" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 31). It is noted that the problem of one affects all the people in collective. They have all prayed to God for Ketja's wellbeing. The emotional appeal attempts to persuade the believers of God that if you are totally dependent on Him, He will answer positively. Meekulu is a Christian, thus Tate Mbela identifies with her as they belong to the same faith. Burke (1931) explains that identification is needed as a rhetorical strategy because there is a division among people. He contends that the need to identify arises because humans are born and exist as biologically separate human beings and

their social class, political and history make-up are different as well, hence the need for rhetoricians to preach for unity. However, in times of trial Meekulu seems to contrast her Christian faith by questioning if the ordeals are a punishment from God. When her faith is getting at the deplorable state, there is always someone to lift her up. Meekulu's everyday experiences weaken her faith, and it can be understood by the readers that Meekulu's path has not been easy and she needs shoulders to move on spiritually and emotionally.

It appears that the confrontation of Paulusa's mother with Meekulu adds to the wounds not yet healed. She relates this incident to what happened in the past. The church caretaker is the one who comes to share his emotions with Meekulu: "I have never seen a man so moved like the church caretaker that day" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 42). It seems that there is always a man to sympathise with Meekulu. Meekulu's personality becomes brittle and it is easy to draw sympathy from people around her. Her words are mixed with emotions: "what have I done to deserve this kind of pain? Everyday!" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 42). These emotional words resonate well with the view of Murthy and Ghosal (2014, p. 253), that "such words become invisible weapons that would mend the thinking process of the audience towards the truth". It is to be distinguished that Meekulu has experienced challenges, but that there have been men to help her overcome them.

The protagonist, Ketja has excelled as a character in collaboration with male characters. It astonishes her sometimes to be in society that is cooperative. In her trying experiences she runs to men for assistance or advice, "I thought of going to Tate Mbela's homestead instead. I wanted to tell him what happened and probably get his advice and support" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 79). This is to say the writer portrays the female's freedom to make her own decisions and choices, but

they proceed in collaboration with males. Ketja is enriched with an African feminism that is built on feelings of ownership that open the door of participation and democracy. In another instance, Ketja has evidently shown that assistance is required to take Meekulu to the hospital. “Meekulu’s life was at stake and something had to be done immediately” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 86). Meekulu has to be carried on a stretcher which she can not carry on her own, it is heavy and the hospital is far. Assessing the evidence given by Ketja, that she needs help, we are not surprised that she gets the assistance of Tate Mbela and Kashoko.

It is pertinent to note that the *eendume do momufitu* are also helpful to the community. In contrast of what *omakakunya* say about them, they are not harmful to the community members. In most cases Meekulu refers to them as her children; all of them who crossed the borders to liberate the country. Meekulu includes both males and females to signify their equal importance to her. Meekulu identifies with them because they are the hope of the awaited liberation and peace. When Meekulu leaves Ketja alone in the house and there is no food, one of the *eendume do momufitu* give her something to eat, “He told me that he was going and that he had left some food for me” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 76). Solidarity in this community is a direct appeal to the readers’ emotions. It is a unique relationship especially that they are going through a difficult time of war. It is from this standpoint that the researcher states that the novel illustrates the belief that a patriarchal society where men follow the set order to control women is surmountable.

From the above evidence, we cannot treat men as monolithic as there are good and bad men in this society. There are cooperative and caring men in the village of Elombe. The problem of oppression is brought in by the presence of *omakakunya* who treat women and men as their enemies and properties. In other words, oppression amongst the people of Elombe is aggravated by war, thus, it can be stressed that feminist issues have to be understood as dependent on the

context. Some gender disparities are brought by colonialism and some are culture based. According to Attanga (2013), African feminism is dependent on pre-colonial and post-colonial era. Because of these eras, African feminism should not contain a monolithic view of the continent, but rather be understood in the context of a pluralism (African feminisms) that encompass fluidity and dynamism of different cultural beliefs and historical forces. This is to say, in the novel, the writer shows us the significance of valuing Attanga's claims. The *omakakunya* act differently from other men characters in the novel. They treat women as objects as they rape them, "Tate Mbela saw the soldiers taking turns with my mother in the open" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 17), "women were raped and others shot and their bodies exhibited to the public" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 67). Those are the other men we have seen in societies during colonial time. Women have received double oppression; they have been raped and killed. Here we have an appeal to pathos. These emotional incidents are somehow persuading the readers to believe that women really suffered at the hands of *omakakunya*. For example, the image that one creates in his/her mind when a dead body is exhibited to the public creates the feeling of sympathy, anger, pity.

From the above evidence, Hiyalwa's (2000) writing is inclusive of everyone in society (good and bad). This is emphasised by Asante (2002) who highlights that African writers aim to enhance inclusivity. Their ideology is integrative rather than singularly adversarial; their views are community centred rather than self-oriented. The novelist intergrates the voices of women and men, at the same time acknowledging their cooperation that leads to harmonious living. The people of Elombe may persuade the readers that they live in the African sense of 'ubuntu' because they live as a community rather than individuals. The researcher submits that the

novelist wants to eliminate the negative portrayal of men, in most cases, as the perceived oppressors of women.

7.4 Women and education in pre-independent Namibia

Following the unrest of the liberation struggle era in Elombe, challenges continue to manifest in the villagers quest to get education. Even though Ketja is faced with challenges of colonial oppressions she is empowered to stand against all odds. The novel manifests the willingness of Ketja who wants to free herself from poverty and societal orders through formal education. *Meekulu's Children* employs different focuses to show this willingness. In this context the woman is dynamic; she rules and she is ruled. Perhaps, Hiyalwa (2000) has seen the need of urgency to replace the ideas of patriarchal constraints that limit women from realising their dreams.

As in Flora Nwapas's novel, *One is Enough*, Hiyalwa (2000) portrays the protagonist, Ketja, as remarkable, strong, competent and courageous. The researcher doubts if how the writer depicts Ketja's determination at the young age is the true reflection of this society. Despite this shortcoming, the writer has good intention of the women to transcend the normality of economic dependence. Furthermore, Ketja, a determined young girl, is yearning to confront the institutional structure of patriarchy by gaining freedom through education. Ketja's role in terms of pathos is noted through her rejection of subordination. She believes that once she is educated, she will free herself from the painful slaps of her grandmother and earn money for herself. This is to show that the woman may be subjected to dependence when she has no education. On the other hand, appeal to pathos comes in when the limitation to Ketja's education is mentioned. "But there was no money to pay for my school fees in the first place" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 25).

This evokes the feelings of pity that a woman may want to break the chains of subjugation but the means are scarce and she sometimes ends up being tied to the societal patriarchal structure. Ketja becomes sad about having to remain poor for the rest of her life, but she resolves to do something about this situation. True to Ketja's ethos, she starts thinking doing odd jobs to earn money to pay for her school fees at a very young age. Even though the cases of their limitations are different, Ketja and Tambudzai in Dangarembga's *Nervous Condition* share the same determination. Moyana (1994) observes that Tambudzai refuses to be cornered into gender apartheid from an early age; as a child of eight, she works on her own plot determinedly and successfully in spite of problems earning enough money to finance her whole primary education. After all, Ketja is not secured with the job to earn money because her society sees a toddler in her that is not able to perform the job. However, one thing to be noted here is that in this community school was not taken seriously; kids go to school whenever they feel like it and "many of the children especially boys, remained home, looking after their parents' livestock" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 36). All these do not change Ketja's resistance towards her freedom. The researcher also wants to underline that this stands contrary to what some other African writers have indicated, that in some African cultures education is for boys. Tripp (1999) points out that many families prefer educating their sons over their daughters with assumption that the son, unlike the daughter, will care for the family when the parents die while the girls go away to get married. This argument again underscores that African feminism cannot be generalised, as cultural beliefs are contextual.

In the novel the school as an institution is shown as a limiting factor to get education. The rules set to order the school are rigid and tend to scare children from attending school. Mr Job for example is feared by many children because of his whipping and they drop out of school and

some never attempt school because of what they hear. The rules are rigid such that even a simple mistake will lead to beating: “he beats for misbehaving or simply failing to learn” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 35). This reasoning is an appeal to logos in terms of providing the truth of why the children drop out of school. Capps et al. (1926) point out that persuasion is affected when we have a truth or an apparent truth by means of persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question. Ketja has not followed this normality of behaviour, but she obeys the rules out of fear. She then knows what she wants to get out of education unlike other children who go to school due to their parents’ commands.

We are learning that Ketja is gaining trust from her teachers at school, therefore creating an ethos of trustworthiness. This persuades the readers because seeing a woman leading others is something that may be considered out of bounds then, but she defies traditional structures. Keith and Lundberg (2006, p. 36) concur that ethos is established when the rhetor mentions what she/he has done; achievements and expertise say something good about the character. It is in fact what is said about Ketja that makes her credible. Ketja’s commitment leads her to become the leader of the choir group that Tate Mwati, one of the well educated teachers of Elombe, has created. It has boosted her morale and it is also a healing experience from the loss of her family. In the same vein, Mr Job is also used to praise a woman’s character who is determined to break with normal behaviours. Ketja is doing well at school, thus Mr Job starts to trust her, and “even started to leave his class in my care whenever he went to the school office or to see another teacher.” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 42). The trust emanates from the woman’s defiance to dependence. Ketja is excelling in her activities to achieve freedom; to be able to work and earn a salary in future. By making Ketja the leader and best learner in her class, the writer seems to advance women recognition and participation in education guided by the African womanist philosophy

that acknowledges the role of men in emancipatory process. It is also worth reiterating that by getting education women will free themselves from subjugation. Chesaina (2015) has commented that it is through education that women can be exposed to political participation, getting jobs of their own and in return questioning the general state of subjugation in Africa. If the rate of illiteracy among women is high in the continent, it will lead to the persistence of subjugation.

Moreover, the woman's good motive is distinguishable in the novel. Through logos, Ketja is providing evidence that her motive is to do well at school. "I had all my sums correct and Mr Job was full of praise and left my territory smiling" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 37). That she provides this evidence, the readers would know why Mr Job praises and smiles at her works. It is also notable that when Ketja is doing well, it brings enlightenment to her spirits. This happiness naturally comes from within you when in the process of reaching your goals, you are doing well. This resonates with Selasi's (2015) statement that education brings enlightenment, knowledge, awareness; these realisation are geared towards the duty of the woman owes herself. Women must not wait for other people to make them happy, it is a duty entitled to them. Ketja's happiness emanates from her firmness to reach her goal; she could have chosen the route that other children from her village chose, to come to school whenever they like, but she knows that she owes herself this happiness from education. Ketja's happiness is demonstrated in her contact with Meekulu; she is joyful and wants to persuade Meekulu to go to church with her so she can go and see how the granddaughter is doing at school. "Come and see how I can write. I am intelligent, you know! I said proudly" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 38). Not only that she is excited, she is also confident in persuading Meekulu to see her work with positive words she is uttering. The knowledge acquired through education propels women to be confident in questioning colonial and

patriarchal systems. The researcher again questions the level of self-determination Ketja portrays, looking at her societal exposure. She does not reflect any kind of influence from other people like other young people; she seems to live in her own world.

Furthermore, pathos is a powerful means of persuading your audience to believe your position. The novelist is aware of this power and she evokes the emotions of the readers by showing them how Ketja's dream of independence is fading away because of colonialism. Sometimes women are willing to study further, but because of circumstance, they cannot (Chukwuma, 2007). *Omakakunya* and *eembulu* (white soldiers) have burnt her school and church. The writer's description of the place where the school and church had been, "there was no human movement anywhere as was usually the case" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 51), suggests no hope of attaining Ketja's desired freedom. Ketja is faced with the problem of financing her education that leads to not writing exams sometimes, but this she can solve; Meekulu can pay her school fee if she gets money. Now, she is faced with this gigantic challenge which is difficult to overcome and she knows that it will take long to rebuild the school. Here, the novelist wants to highlight that the colonial era is above all a challenge that constrained women from defining themselves through education.

The colonisers make it difficult for young people to attain education because they also know that education can expose them to political participation. They want to keep on taking advantage of them for if they cannot read and write, they will not know their rights and the only participation in political activities is by taking arms. Ndlovu and Mutale (2013, p. 75) emphasise that "evidence from research has shown that education is one of the most imperative paths of encouraging women to speak out". The colonial system has been against that and the only way they stop them from acquiring necessary skills to communicate in public arena is to demolish

schools. After the dream of those who are yearning for education wanes, the patriarchal settings remain the same; women succumb to their oppression, women will not question the political system; they will follow the normality their society has set for them.

One of the unique features of *Meekulu's Children* is how the novelist defines patriarchy among Elombe people. Hiyalwa (2000) has not made a woman the only receiver, but the woman is depicted as both the one suffering from patriarchal setting and at the same time one who defies it. Ketja again demonstrates that she is not standing the belief that a woman cannot fight a man because of the societal order to rule a woman. She cannot take Paulusa's disturbance and accusation of stealing other childrens' territories in class, "He struggled to get loose but I was too strong for him. I punched him with heavy fists" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 39). Ketja is advocating for equality that she can also take a stand in fighting to protect her territory and win the fight. Taking this position, the writer credits that women can take the authority that was believed to be men's, but only if they act without wavering.

7.5 The Elombe people and invitational rhetoric

Invitational rhetoric gives interlocutors an opportunity to listen to ideas without being forced to accept them. The dialogue offers them liberty to choose what is right for them. In many accounts, people of Elombe are engaged in conversations that embody feminist principles of equality, self-determination and immanent value. The villagers are supportive of each other especially in times of trial. The death of Dila and his wife introduces the beginning of war and throughout the time of ordeal caused by war, the villagers have been supportive and cooperative. When the villagers come to sympathise with Meekulu every day, Tate Mbela who has seen the incident of the brutal killing of Dila and his wife narrates the story. Tate Mbela is inviting the

listeners to visualise what happened by giving them exact details of the incident. First he creates awareness so that they can respond however they like. The listeners choose to partake in the narration with comments of supports, encouragements and warnings to show that they value Tate Mbela's narration. The contributors respond in anger; Foss and Foss (2003, p. 77) suggest emotions to be an elaboration of invitational rhetoric because "they can be a powerful way to develop ideas". The response in anger shows that the listeners share the same perspective with Tate Mbela who is equally disappointed by the death of Dila and his wife, as shown in the narration. The society emanates the feminist principle of self-determination because every listener is free to engage with their emotions and immanent value as everyone is considered as an important part of the conversation as they are not limited from airing their emotions.

The people of Elombe are there for each other in good and bad times. When the neighbours hear Meekulu ululating because of Ketja's return, they send word to each other that something good is happening. This humanistic way of living reflects the *ubuntu* that Maluleke (2012) refers to as an African harmonious way of living where joys and suffering are shared by all the members of the community. Older women and men, young women and men, boys and girls are all in attendance to welcome Ketja; some ululating and lifting *eedibo* sticks into the air to show the sign of happiness among them all. Young boys and girls keep on smiling also to show that they appreciate the moment. The society enacts different ways of showing excitement, but they depict the appreciation of each others despite these differences. They manifest the feminist principle of equality because each chooses how they want to show their happiness. The power to choose lies with everybody as Foss and Foss (2003, p. 11) state that "power is not a quality to exercise over others but something that can be employed by all members of the interaction so that it energises, facilitates and enables all individuals involved to contribute and learn from the interaction". The

researcher wants to support Bone et al.s' (2008) critical view that communicators in invitational rhetoric need not share equal economic, political and social standpoints for it to exist. This is rare in society and if strictly applied in conversations, invitational rhetoric cannot be applied in real-life contexts. The researcher comments that the novelist might be credited for reflecting the African cultural way of living in which everybody's contribution is celebrated.

“A critical dimension of the offering of perspectives, in whatever form it takes, is a willingness to yield” (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 7). The audience's willingness to attend to the rhetors' perspective is entirely on them. Tate Mbela embraces God in comforting Meekulu who is in excitement for her granddaughter's return:

Thank God Ketja is back, he said. We should always pray to God and he will answer us positively. That would have been too much for you in this spell of time, Tate Mbela noted, while still holding Meekulu's hand. God is great and he loves us all. I pray to him that nothing should happen to my only child, Meekulu said, with eyes full of tears. (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 31)

Tate Mbela has offered a perspective that Meekulu yields to. It is up to her to show that they demonstrate the same perspective about dependence on God for positive responses. Meekulu respects the value of Tate Mbela by responding to his perspective. They enact the feminist principle of equality for they share the same religious standpoint.

Furthermore, Elombe people share the same viewpoint in disciplining their children. Every elder in the community has the right to discipline each child who is misbehaving. “In Elombe, there was a belief that every elder had the right to discipline a child for whatever the reason” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 47). Lozano (2013) refers to this situation as the process of showcasing equality within

the group. The children of Elombe see all elders as equal with the same authority to discipline them. Ketja cannot tell her grandmother that she left school early because she has misbehaved; rather she has to keep it to herself, in case Meekulu can also try to discipline her because she has the equal right to do so.

It is to be argued at this point that Condit's (as cited in Edwards, 2001) claims that invitational rhetoric is gender specific has to be questioned. Foss and Griffin (1995, p. 3) dispute this claim and argue that invitational rhetoric can be used by anyone, both male and female, and not by a specific gender. In the same vein invitational rhetoric is not confined to a certain type of discourse. As noted in the above discussions both genders are involved in different discourses in the manifestation of invitational rhetoric.

Moreover, the Elombe people again show cooperation when Meekulu is burnt by the *omakakunya*. People have gathered in Meekulu's house to offer support. The herbalist is in attendance to provide traditional medicine to Meekulu. "In the hut where Meekulu lay, the herbalist was busy. She cut Meekulu with her blades several times on her body, and smeared her whole body with the liquid from her pot of herbs" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 83). Ketja has decided to take Meekulu to the hospital after realising that she is not getting any better. "I decided that Meekulu should be taken to the hospital" (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 84). These scenes are the manifestations that this society believes in two ideologies; traditional medicines and western medicines. They support each other despite their differences to reach a common goal, which is Meekulu's healing. They respected all these ideologies even if they are based on different foundations, as supported by Lozano (2013). On their way to the hospital, Kashoko, Tate Mbela and Ketja support each other to carry Meekulu on the stretcher. They appreciate each other's immanent value and that everyone's contribution is equally valued irrespective of gender.

One of the elements used to promote equality, immanent value and self-determination in the novel is the use of rhetorical questions. Mihalcea (2014) argues that when using rhetorical questions the rhetor does not expect immediate answers, however, they are used to challenge the audience members to reflect upon the ideas being discussed. Hiyalwa (2000) has used the technique of rhetorical questions to challenge the readers to think critically about the issue of brutal killing of Dila and his wife. Through Tatekulu Topi, a listener in a group of mourners, rhetorical questions are presented to show emotions and challenge the audience to think critically about the topic. “What is going on in this, our world? (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 19). Tatekulu Topi has just listened to the account of what has happened but he stands up to ask the same question. He does not necessarily need the answer; he is stressing the point under discussion. This question goes to everyone present in his community, “People of Elombe, do you hear my questions?” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 19), to make sure that the hearers know his questions are directed to everyone. He values everyone in the community because he gives them a fair chance to think about the issue, promoting self-determination, immanent value and equality in return. To change the subject, Tatekulu Topi asks, “What are we going to do about it? Are there no men in this village?” (Hiyalwa, 2000, p. 19). Now he is patriarchal because he believes that it is only men who can solve the problem. The novelist is raising awareness among readers that the root of patriarchy is present in Elombe, despite her emphasis on equality in this community.

7.6 Chapter summary

In the analysis of *Meekulu's Children*, the researcher has established that challenges that arose in Elombe due to the liberation struggle have assisted Ketja to be empowered at a very young age. Ketja's endurance and surpassing of the normal set societal orders is persuasion through characterisation that women can search for freedom despite the challenges in their societies.

Meekulu promotes equality by embracing all the children who crossed the borders to fight for the liberation of the community. Men and women participated in the liberation struggle, highlighting the importance of each gender's contribution to the liberation struggle which promotes the sense of equality and immanent value. The evidence of how both men and women have suffered is provided by describing the scenes of Dila and his wives' brutal killing, and the burning of Meekulu. Furthermore, there are different reasons why women were not educated during the liberation struggle: the rules set for school institution, understanding of the aim of education and demolishing of schools by *omakakunya*. The researcher feels that Hiyalwa has highlighted that a woman can achieve freedom depending on her personality and the difficulties she goes through.

Moreover, there are good and bad men in societies so we must not treat them as monolithic. The men of Elombe have been very supportive in assisting women to reach their desired potential embracing African womanist and nego-feminism philosophies. Ketja, the main character, is astonished by the cooperative attitude of people of Elombe: they have sympathised with them during the time of mourning Dila and his wife and they have been their shoulder to cry on during the time of loneliness, disappointments and joy. The interaction of people of Elombe manifests the feminist principles of equality, immanent value and self-determination as everyone has the liberty to choose to participate in different discourses. In their conversations, they acknowledge the value of the rhetor by offering their perspectives through rhetorical questioning and laughter. It is discussed in this chapter that invitational rhetoric is not gender specific.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate feminist rhetoric in selected novels by African women writers that are written in English. This chapter aims to conclude the study by giving the summary of findings and recommendations that show how the study has contributed to the feminist rhetorical field.

This chapter is divided into summary of findings, conclusions, contribution to new knowledge and recommendations sections. In the summary of findings section, the relevance of the research findings is made in the context of theoretical frameworks. The research objectives are reaffirmed and related to the findings in each chapter in order to show the significance of each objective to what is discussed. Finally, recommendations are made to indicate what feminist rhetoric studies should look at in future.

8.2 Summary of findings

8.2.1 Conclusions of the research findings in the context of the theoretical frameworks

The study was chiefly guided by rhetorical foundations of Aristotelian and invitational rhetoric theories. The Aristotelian rhetoric was used to carry out a rhetorical examination and interpretation of the selected novels; in essence how the characters employ the proofs of persuasion: ethos, pathos and logos in the principle of feminist perspectives. Ullen (2015, p. 142) indicates that literary studies have shown little interest in pursuing rhetorical analyses because rhetoric and literature have come to be seen as contrasting than complimentary practices; but this

study shows the opposite. This study displayed the complementarity of rhetoric and literary works. Just like other written works, it is possible to find out how the characters in the selected novels appeal to their readers through ethos, pathos and logos. For Aristotle, ethos is brought about by the character or virtue of the character revealed in their words and actions. The personalities of the characters in the novels and how they interact reflect who they are to the readers and who they want to become. This interaction within the text and involving readers determines the values of their contribution to the subject and in return links them to the act of persuading their readers. For example, in Chapter Four, in Dow's novel *The Screaming of the Innocent*, some women characters have continuously built personalities that the readers may deem as credible because they have shown the willingness to find out the truth about Neo's disappearance by questioning the dominating men in authority. The confidence shown by these women aims to persuade the readers that women are willing to challenge patriarchy in the search for gender equity. Ramage and Bean (1998) observe that this kind of character credibility is enhanced by the respect he/she earns from the audience, like Boitumelo's ethos in *The Screaming of the Innocent* being enhanced by her willingness to partake in social affairs; more especially when she wants to establish the truth of how the deceased Neo's clothes ended up at the clinic. She identifies herself with the villagers whom she is representing because of her sense of compassion for the masses than the individuality.

The Aristotelian theoretical framework used in this study emphasises emotional engagement as a central part of rhetoric, hence without it persuasion may not take place. The characters display pathos by objectifying emotions through the creation of pictures in the minds of the readers and evoking the emotions pity, anger, laughter, sympathy and hatred. The feeling of excitement is

evoked when the readers see that the character is able to fight against inferiority of women in her society and they assume that other women who are under subjugation should do the same to change patriarchal settings. At the same time, the feeling of pity ensues when women characters allow their husbands to have hegemonic power over their public and private lives. In Chapter Five, Beatrice's submissiveness and passivity seem to induce Eugene to mistreat her and the children. Eugene continuously beats and controls her due to the silence she has kept in her house. The descriptions of the scenes of the beatings and confrontations that Beatrice encountered are sympathetic, and convince the readers that being submissive and passive is not an alternative way for women to reach their freedom from subjugation. Persuasion may come through hearers when the speech can stir their emotions (Capps et al., 1926).

As part of persuasion, *logos* has accentuated its relationship with *ethos* and *pathos*. *Ethos* and *pathos* are mirrored through the arguments made by the writers. According to Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992), our tripartite of the sources of persuasion should not be seen as linear sequence but as a simultaneous process. *Logos* includes diverse arguments the writers formulated to bring forth their point of view whether simple or complex. The writers of the novels invent the arguments and present them to the readers, and then readers read these arguments to see if they are appealing. In some cases the writers do not just present their arguments, but prove them valid with evidence of personal experiences or of others as a way of persuading their readers. Arguments can be persuasive depending on emotional engagement and personality of the characters being analysed. In Chapter Seven, the narrator, Ketja, informs the readers that *eendume do momufitu* go in their houses at night in search for food. She supports this argument by describing how Meekulu wakes up early to erase the boot prints of *eendume do*

momufitu with the broom to prove the point. In Chapter Six, Lema lays emphasis on the importance of the girl child's education. In doing this, the protagonist, Doreen, is educated and the readers can see how education benefits her. Doreen is more privileged to get a job as a teacher, than her mother, Foibe, who has been earning a living as a domestic worker, so one can reason as to why education is important to girls.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the use of invitational rhetoric theory in the pursuit of equality has proven to be an exercise worth noting. Notably, invitational rhetoric is marked by its use in viewing those in interaction as equal because of its principles: equality, immanent value and self-determination. As a dialogic-based form of rhetoric, it liberates participants from division and prepares them to find a way to mutual understanding and willing transformation. If the feminist principles of rhetoric are followed accordingly, the decision made is shared among all members in question and they learn from each other. In Chapter Six as an example, Doreen and Josephs' interaction leads to mutual understanding of what patriarchy is and its current status. It is through this conversation that does not see 'male and female' that they are led to share information that eventually leads them to willingly transform. However, the study concludes that invitational rhetoric can eschew domination as it gives power to both males and females to contribute in conversations without judgement. The power to choose lies with everybody as Foss and Foss (2003, p. 11) state that "Power is not a quality to exercise over others but something that can be employed by all members of the interaction so that it energises, facilitates and enables all individuals involved to contribute and learn from the interaction." This theoretical framework seems to be resourceful with the people who had been previously

subjugated, like Kambili in Chapter Five, giving them hope that their contributions can be valued and that they can learn from others' input and be transformed according to their own will.

8.2.2 Conclusions

The foregoing analysis has shown that there is a connection between the findings and theoretical frameworks selected for this study. Furthermore, the conclusion illustrates how Chapter Three to Seven have answered the set objectives. The objectives are restated and they are connected to the findings in each chapter. The purpose of this study was to examine feminist rhetoric in five novels written by females. The aim was to uncover the arguments made by these women writers to demonstrate the subjugation of women due to patriarchal societies and how they reconfigured female subjectivities in order to dismantle forms of domination and relegation that eschew social, economic and political freedom. Once these arguments were identified, they were examined for their possible appeals to the readers. Considering the above, study objectives are revisited as raised in chapter one of this study:

1. To examine the feminist perspectives and ideas offered in articulating social, economic and political subjugation in the selected novels;
2. To evaluate how the selected novels promote ideas of equality, immanent value and self-determination; and
3. To analyse and interpret how the selected novels employ proofs of persuasion to appeal to the readers.

The focus of the first objective was to identify the feminist perspectives and ideas that demonstrate women's subjugation in social, economic and political settings. In all the novels, the study revealed that women deal with certain difficulties due to patriarchal settings. Each text

showed that women are affected differently in several milieu and all of them are striving for self definition in their circumstances. In some cases, women are reminded of their being; that they are women, junior members of their societies and need to follow orders without questioning them. These societal conventions do not set them back, but rather make them stronger contenders of patriarchy. Remarkably, the study has found out that even if women are striving for self recognition, a lot of women are willing to work together with male counterparts; they are sure their needs cannot be met if men are alienated from the process. Thus, Nnaemeka's (2004) point of nego-feminism matches the ideas used in the novels. These writers are lamenting because there is not enough space, not all space, but a fair space that can be created by both men and women.

In all the analysed texts, to a certain extent male dominance and oppression play a role. Male-dominated institutions make it challenging for women to make their contributions. Some societal orders are set to determine for women to follow rules without questioning them, hence in Chapter Four, the police officer sees Amantle as ill-mannered when she questions him to write her statement. Most men want to be defined by societal orders, not by themselves; therefore, this will make it difficult for women to achieve their goals because both women and men need to change for equity to prevail; as aimed for by some characters in the selected novels. These women writers insist on women taking charge of their own happiness and destiny in order to end oppression. This is done by making some of the characters work vigorously to transgress patriarchal settings, and also show their positive contributions towards societies. There are instances where women's positions in fighting against oppression fluctuate depending on their personal experiences. In Chapter Five, Beatrice is a submissive and passive woman who is resistant to changes despite the beatings from her husband, Eugene, but towards the end of the

novel she gets tired of violence. Beatrice deviates from silence to break the social stereotype of being silenced because she is a woman in which she gives hegemonic power to her husband. Painful experiences seem to be a motive of change to some women, as shown by Beatrice.

It has also been found that education seems to be key to economic, political and social freedom of women, without which some women tend to depend on their spouses and in return give them hegemonic power to subjugate them. In Chapter Five, lack of education has enabled Eugene to keep his wife, Beatrice, in close proximity and under his tight control with a negative self-concept. This study demonstrated that education may empower women to transcend inferiority and get their deserved social positions. Education enables women to make public contributions and open businesses to employ other women. In Chapter Four, Boitumelo is economically independent, owning Kukama, Badisa and Co that employs other women to define their independence, and is able to represent the villagers as an independent company without fear. In Chapter Five, Aunt Ifeoma publicly opposes how the administration of the university is handled and eventually loses her job, but she does not just sit idly, instead striving by all means to get another job. Some women characters do not just give in and allow patriarchy to silence them, but they strategise to make their way out to freedom. There are limitations that hinder girls to attain education; circumstances like lack of money to pay for school fees and cases where schools are not accessible due to political situations. In Chapter Seven, as a result of socialisation, the schools as an institution are defined by patriarchal rules that tend to scare children from attending school. Mr Job's whipping frightens learners; some drop out and some do not attempt school because of what they hear from others.

On the other hand, the study found out that it cannot be generalised that education is necessarily a way to women's freedom from patriarchy. Education cannot be generalised as a way to

freedom because some educated women are still knotted to patriarchal settings due to several reasons. This allows women to be subjected to further oppression. In Chapter Five, Auntie Ifeoma feels sorry for the girls who graduate but fail to secure jobs due to political reasons. They end up being married and depend on their husbands because they do not have other alternatives. It can also be a personal choice like in the case Manga, in Chapter Three. Manga chooses to be the second wife because she finds love that she has been searching for.

In addition, religion and culture are other aspects that contribute to women's subjugation. It is found that Christianity and cultural practices and beliefs are used in an oppressive manner to silence women. The state of Christianity in Africa is questioned as some men position one leg in tradition and the other in Christianity. The writers of the selected novels are concerned that Christian men in societies are still supportive of traditional beliefs that subjugate women. In Chapter Three, Liz and Ishaka are married in church, but afterwards Ishaka acquires another wife in a traditional way, which angers Liz. Some women have encountered problems in their marriages due to cultural settings, but instead of walking away, they develop strategies to overcome these challenges which further show their willingness to work with men, and work against the norms that hurt them. In Chapter Six, Sebastian and Martin are portrayed as unrepentant cheaters and the sources of their families' unhappiness. Martin manipulates the tradition by placing the importance of the boy child to the fore to abandon his family. He allows the society to define his position not himself as an individual. In some instance cultural practices seem to oppress and belittle women to remain in an inferior position. Chapter Three indicates that Liz has gone through the painful procedure of pulling at a young age in order to please her husbands to be. Liz voices the painful experiences that depict her as a sex object because she is

not happy with the cultural beliefs that make a man a supreme leader of a woman's body in consideration of the pain one has to withstand for the sake of pleasing a man.

Polygamous marriage is the cultural norm that contributes to women subjugation. It is discovered in this study that if the husband acquires another wife, more attention is given to a new wife. This act leads to hatred, jealousy and fighting amongst the wives. It also affects the children negatively as they may lack fatherly love and financial support. In Chapter Three Ishaka marries the second wife without the first wife's consent, and he seems not to mind about his first wife's discomfort because their society seems to allow it as a normal thing. Liz attests that she is able to make an intervention of perseverance and resilience until she breaks the polygamous marriage. The study also found out that polygamy is just as bad to the wife whom love is alienated from, but the recipient of love like Manga in chapter three is not complaining of any negative experiences.

This study found that the selected novels have also depicted reliable and caring men. It is understandable because societies cannot be comprised by men with the same attitude, so it is not advisable to generalise the state of men in societies. All the writers of the selected novels bring forth the good men in societies, men who are ready to listen and work together with their women counterparts. Interestingly, this study found out that patriarchy does not only affect women, in some cases it disadvantages men that it is meant to benefit. Mutunda (2009, p. 166) concludes that women writers "recognize that men are themselves victims who need to be liberated from patriarchal expectations within their societies". This suggests that men and women need to work together if Africa is to attain fairness of both genders.

In relation to the second objective, it is discovered that women go through different challenging circumstances. These challenges seem to empower them to develop strategies to deal with

patriarchal stereotypes. The selected novels show how women in different settings use their experiences to contest the oppressive institutions in an attempt to attain equity for all. In all the novels, education is identified to be the major weapon that leads to self-determination of most women. Education brings progress amongst women, especially the young ones, which changes the perceptions in some African cultures that education is for boys. Tripp (1999) indicates that many families prefer educating their sons over their daughters, assuming that the son, unlike the daughter, will care for the family when the parents die, while the girls will leave to get married. Educated women are economically independent and openly make decisions pertaining to their life and of their societies at large to show the destruction of dominating institutions. Some of the uneducated women also look at their deplorable situations as a gift; they get empowered through the hardships they encounter in patriarchal societies. In the end all women have embraced the essence of their unique contributions to the public and private spheres, therefore, determining their immanent value and self-determination.

Invitational rhetoric is grounded in feminist principles, but it is not meant to be used by females only. This study reveals that invitational rhetoric promotes equality, immanent value and self determination amongst both genders. In the lens of invitational rhetoric as identified in dialogic contexts, the second objective has indicated that equality, immanent value and self determination are hardly achieved in settings where men want to dominate the conversations or as household heads. Equality, immanent value and self determination are hard to achieve in such settings because there are those considered inferior and are simply expected to follow social orders. Offering of perspectives is incapacitated by those in authority because they tend to dismiss the contributions of the inferiors. Craig and Muller (2007) do not support communication that tends

to oppression and domination of others, as these efforts to dominate and gain power over others cannot be used to build relationships of equality.

However, it was found that domination can be shattered if subjugated, stereotyped groups confront those in authority. In Chapter Four, Amantle makes it clear to the police officer that the relationship between them is not made positive for good communication to take place; the police officer does not introduce himself and explain why Amantle is summoned to the police station. This should have been done to establish external environment of invitational rhetoric. This stresses that Amantle is acting against patriarchal settings so the oppressor knows that it is not acceptable to engage in forceful dialogues. Therefore, immanent value is promoted this way since everybody wants to be part of communication where offering of perspectives is made positive and is respected. The characters can acknowledge the value of other interlocutors by following up questions and listening attentively to their contributions. Responses from the audience may contain various emotional expressions of anger or pity. In Chapter Seven, Tate Mbela's listeners respond in anger to show that they share the same perspective and are equally saddened by the death of Dila and his wife. Immanent value leads to identification of the rhetor and the audience. When the participants share their perspectives, they understand them and relate to their life experiences. In Chapter Six, Joseph listens to Doreen's emotional turmoil and finds out that they share the same challenges; this helps them to share ideas. The study also discussed that rhetorical questions are used to challenge the audience to reflect on what has been discussed, but not necessarily to provide the answer.

Furthermore, the novelists also use appropriate language as a way of asking permission to share ideas and avoiding imposing ideas on the audience. Invitational rhetoric is not meant to impell participants to believe what the rhetor tells them, they just support each others despite their

differences in perspectives. In Chapter Four, Amantle asks, “May I suggest we use the next two hours to read the materials we have?” (Dow, 2002, p. 161), because she does not want to impose the idea on others. Tag questions are also used to show lack of uncertainty, an indication that the participants are free to make choices.

In addition, equality is promoted in the novels when external conditions of value, freedom and safety are created. It makes it easier for free perspective-offering from all members. But participants have a choice to participate or not (Lozano, 2013). When the rhetor respects the choice of the participants, self-determination is realised. At the meeting held in the bush by Amantle and friends, Amantle makes sure that before the actual discussions take place there is a mutual understanding; introducing all members and finding out their capacities of attendance is made clear for everyone to feel at home. Therefore, their meeting manifests the principle of equality because there is no dominance.

The third and the final objective of this study has analysed and interpreted how the selected novels employ proofs of persuasion to appeal to the readers. The study has discovered that the characters used in the selected novels may persuade the readers through ethos. The interaction of the characters reflects a group of values that link them to the act of persuasion. Characters show their willingness to partake in social issues pertaining to women and some of them demonstrate their motivation to surpass patriarchy from the very young age, like Amantle in Chapter Four who since childhood does not run away from problems but deals with them head on. Honesty is the value publicised by many women in this study. Honesty is the quality linked to ethos in rhetorical tradition (Keith & Lundberg, 2006). In Chapter Five, Aunty Ifeoma has been honest to Beatrice that she does not deserve to be oppressed by Eugene, so she needs to move out of the house. Aunty Ifeoma does not side with the brother; rather she cares for the sister in the burning

house, consequently displaying a sense of solidarity, which is a reflection of African womanism philosophy. Characters are resilient and share their life experiences to draw trust from their audiences. For example in Chapter Three Liz narrates the story from her own life experiences and has proven her agency to free herself from patriarchy. Their confidence in facing the problems signifies that women characters do not just give in and allow patriarchy to silence their voices.

Moreover, logos and pathos are revealed in the evidence provided by characters to support the claims of patriarchy. The study disclosed that there is the use of descriptive words in the evidence provided that may evoke emotions from the readers. In Chapter Five, the description of how Beatrice is being beaten by Eugene, “Swift, heavy thuds on my parents’ hand-carved bedroom door” (Adichie, 2003, p. 33), helps the readers to paint the picture in their heads and see how serious this beating is. In Chapter Six, the use of the imagery of the spider’s web awakens the readers’ awareness to fathom how patriarchy is complicated. The study further discovered that disrespect from those in authority evokes emotion. In Chapter Four, the police officer disrespects the mourning mother, Motlatsi Kakang, by using authoritative language to scare her away, and in chapter five, Eugene beats Beatrice together with their children for allowing Kambili to eat before Mass. This study discussed that personal narratives are also facts that prove arguments. In Chapter Three Liz narrates her personal experience of going through pulling just to make your husband happy. Liz seems to prove that such cultural practices oppress women because they are not meant to benefit both parties.

8.3 Contribution to new knowledge

The researcher recognised the need to examine feminist rhetoric because of its dearth in the literature, especially in Namibia. First, as an interdisciplinary study, it is an eye opener to

rhetoric critics that literature and rhetoric are complimentary rather than contradictory. Second, the rhetorical tradition had been constructed as a history of good men speaking well (Heenan, 2007, p.1). This study revealed that women's style of communication in their novels encompass Aristotelian proofs of persuasion, hence their contributions to the field of rhetoric can also be underlined. Third, in all instances of subjugation in the selected novels, women have shown an agency to free from oppression. Generally, the study has revealed that women are resilient and determined beings because in essence in their daily life they want to contribute positively and are in quest for honest living. Women's credibility is enhanced by the honest moves they make to question those in authority for the truth especially in the case of the killing of girl for *diphoko* (traditional strengthening medicine).

Fourth, the study sensitises the readers that invitational rhetoric is viable in achieving equality if its grounding principles of self-determination, equality and immanent values are followed. Invitational rhetoric proved to be the theory that can assist the participants to do away with forceful persuasion or dominance of others despite their political, economic or social positions or their gender. This study has given us insight into the importance of employing the alternate rhetoric of invitation in which the agency is the understanding of the viewpoints of all participants. Therefore, the power is not exercised over others but is equally employed by all in the conversation.

Fifth, the study has given us a new a way of viewing men, who we cannot treat as monolithic. The selected novels indicate that there are good men in societies that are willing to work towards the realisation of fairness of both genders. Invitational rhetoric disclosed such men who are willing to be listened to and who listen to others' contributions. Invitational rhetoric has given us a new way of viewing an African man's preparedness to acknowledge the contribution of all

people despite their genders; all members are seen as equal participants in the communication process. Finally, the study gives us the new view that patriarchy does not only negatively affect women, but men are also captive of the system that appears to benefit them. The study highlights that some male children suffer because of the cultural norms like being born out of wedlock, with the fathers who fail to recognise them as rightful sons, and that those born of polygamous marriages, experience the failure of their fathers to fulfil their needs.

8.4 Recommendations for future researches

In view of the findings of the study outlined above, the study recommends that:

- Using the same theoretical frameworks, in combination with reader-response theory, to examine feminist rhetoric, future studies may include responses of the readers of the novels in order to determine how they are impacted by the novels.
- Furthermore, using Nnaemeka's (2004) nego-feminism, future studies can be based on comparative studies of men and women literary writers. This will help to determine whether both genders see patriarchy as oppressive and promote the sense of equality and complementarity in private and public arenas.
- Finally, based on the findings of this study, that invitational rhetoric fosters communication and promotes the wellbeing of men and women - future studies should be conducted to underscore the importance of employing invitational rhetoric in conversations in order to enhance equality, self-determination and immanent value for all participants.

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