

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GENDER PORTRAYAL IN SELECTED AFRICAN
MALE AND FEMALE AUTHORED NOVELS**

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DECLARATION

I, Awor Bridget, do hereby declare that this study is a product of my own efforts, and that it has never been submitted to any university or institution of higher learning for any award. All cited sources have been acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the following people whom I highly appreciate:

To my late father, Mr. Oketcho John Joseph, whose greatest desire was to see me through school, fully emancipated and supportive of our humble family. His words of encouragement, compassion and advice while in his deathbed still ring in my mind to date. I believe he is proud of me for reaching this milestone. This victory is his too. May he continue Resting in Peace!

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ABSTRACT

This study is a comparative analysis of the portrayal of gender in selected African male and female-authored literary works, namely, Oyono's *Houseboy*, Ocwinyo's *Footprints of the Outsider*, Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter*, Karooro's *The Invisible Weevil* and Sinyangwe's *A Cowrie of Hope*. The study was guided by three objectives: to examine the gender stereotypes in the selected literary works; to analyse the objectification of women in the selected literary works; and to investigate the effectiveness of the language used in the portrayal of both male and female characters in the selected literary texts. The study hypothesizes that both male and female genders are susceptible to stereotypical representation in African literary works. The study was purely qualitative and library-based that involved a close reading of both primary and secondary sources of data. The Marxist feminist literary perspective was used to anchor the critical analysis of the representation of gender in the selected literary works. The analysed data was then organized into four chapters. The findings of the study reveal that gender misrepresentation is a dominant theme in the selected African literary works authored by both males and females, and that this misrepresentation manifests itself in gender stereotypes by both male and female authors. According to the selected male African authors, besides Sinyangwe (2000), women are portrayed as the weaker sex, materialistic, witches and dependent beings, while men are presented as strong, industrious and responsible beings. Although female writers portray female characters as brave and intelligent, their portrayal of men is rather scornful—men are lustful, chauvinistic, callous and violent. Regarding the objectification of women, women are presented as sex objects and material objects—men's property; and regarding the use of language in the selected literary works, there is predominant use of sexist language that perpetrates subjugation of both genders depending on the sex of the author. Finally, the study recommends that gender scholars and activists should employ a variety of lenses in the analysis of gender representation for purposes of gender equity and balance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Women are subjugated through the unfair African traditions (female virginity till marriage, bride price, female circumcision, and endless domestic chores) and folklore (music, proverbs, poems, myths, riddles) that uphold male superiority and these spill over to written literature. Being largely male dominated, African written literature, has over the years been used as a vehicle to promote male supremacy as women are generally depicted with bias either consciously or subconsciously by male authors. The latter more specifically assign peripheral roles to their female characters and negatively portray them as weak, intellectually lacking, gossipers and seductresses unlike their male counterparts who are represented as superior, heroic and responsible beings. Julius Ocwinyo (2002) and Ferdinand Oyono (1956) selected for this study are perfect illustrations for the above view including other famous African authors like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. Elizabeth Oldfield (2010) argues that:

In African literature, traditional male authored representations of African women are of the mother Africa figure, the mother, creator trope, or of a ‘fossilised’ traditional, uncreative and rural woman left behind by and not interested in progress and modernity. (131)

Such superficial depictions of African women “overlook the complexity of women’s actual lived existence” (Oldfield 131) and thus force women to “respond to the literary tradition and frequently insist upon correcting the imbalances in which they are portrayed [by resorting] to the power of the pen” (Chukukere 9) through the rise of feminist movements in Africa in the early twentieth century that saw African women like Mariama Ba, Grace Ogot, Eflia Sutherland, Flora Nwapa, Nawal El Saadawi, Molara Ogundipe, Buchi Emecheta, actively take part in the male dominated literary field. These aimed at putting an end to sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression and to achieve gender equality through their literature.

In Uganda more specifically, a group of women under the leadership of Mary Karooro Okurut, a lecturer in the Department of Literature at Makerere University launched FEMRITE, an acronym for ‘Females Write’ in 1996 with the sole aim of having women write and create the female

experience from the horse' mouth so as to correct the distorted image of women in male authored literary works. According to Hilda Twongyeirwe (2006) in FEMRITE'S collective book in *Their Own Voices: The First Ten Years of FEMRITE*, Mary's eyes danced with excitement as she addressed us, 'We need a room of our own'; she said, "where we can fish out one another, encourage and help each other to shed our inhibitions and write. I know we shall make it. (02) Hilda describes the optimism and ambition with which the FEMRITE Uganda Women Writers' Association was established. Through this, women were encouraged to embrace the power of the pen and use literature as a tool to redefine and rectify the stained image of a woman by creating women who are "resilient, independent, agents of change and development" (Hunsu 2014:284) as evidenced in Okurut (1998) and Kyomuhendo (1996), texts that were chosen for this study and many other female authors who attempt to construct their identity within the repressive patriarchal situations. The latter however have been accused of demonizing men in their literary works.

While the male writers stereotype females in their literature as per the patriarchal cultural customs and propagate male superiority, female writers comparatively vilify men and depict females largely as victims. They however ironically stereotype the female sex as well inadvertently despite bitterly condemning this portrayal of women in male written texts. This is proof that no one is safe from gender stereotyping in literature. There is need for literary scholars and authors to recognize the need for gender alliance and creation of gender bias free characters in literature for equality to prevail. It is this dissatisfaction derived from the way writers portray gender that is the basis of this research.

Chapter one basically presents the background to this study, and a detailed literature review; with various scholarly opinions on the topic at hand. The scope of the study, objectives of the research, the research methodology as well the chapter breakdown of this entire study are also clearly expounded on in this chapter.

1.1 Background to the Study

The gender stereotypes that are typical of the African patriarchal setting absurdly flow over to the fiction of African writers and the effect is deleterious. Since the literary scene over the years was “male-created and male-dominated” (qtd. In Allagbe and Amoussou) as Femi Ojo-Ade and Eton (2012) put it, female stereotyping is the predominant theme therein. The pioneering African male authors “like Chinua Achebe, Elechi Amadi, Wole Soyinka and Cyprian Ekwensi” (Fonchingong 2006:135) whose sole aim was to propagate male supremacy created heroic male figures and assigned females peripheral roles that further gender imbalance. Similarly, their contemporary counterparts have not escaped this norm either as many are accused of condoning patriarchy and depicting females superficially. Kumah concretises this view by positing that due to:

The male-dominated literary tradition, many depictions of the African women are reductive - perpetuating popular myths of female subordination. Female characters in male authored works are rarely granted primary status- their role often trivialized to varying degrees and they are depicted as silent and submissive, immature, remaining absent from the public sphere (qtd. in Allagbe and Amoussou 14).

A parallel of the above is evident in the selected male-authored texts for this study that is, *Houseboy* and *Footprints of the Outsider*. The female characters in here irrespective of their race are generally depicted as voiceless, immature and absent from the public sphere as they concentrate on their domestic duties as housewives whether they are professionals or not as it is the case with Saida Acola in *Footprints of the Outsider*. They are portrayed as immature and thus irresponsible given their materialistic nature as observed through Bitoroci, Alcinora, Pascolina in *Footprints of the Outsider*, and Kalisia, Sophie and Madame Suzy in *Houseboy*. Oyono and Ocwinyo therefore have widely engaged in the intentional or unintentional literary rape of women by creating male protagonists who dominate the females through practices like “patriarchy, tradition, culture, gender socialization process, marriage and domestic enslavement” (Fonchingong 135). Their female characters are hardly developed.

Koussouhon and Doussoumou (2015) like Fonchingong above argue that “in the pioneering African (male) literary fiction, women’s (image or) identity was painted against the backdrop of the various societal schisms that seek to perpetuate the status quo of the enslaved female versus (the) lionized male” (314) as earlier noted. This means that the pioneer male authors depict the African patriarchal system as it is in their novels - a system that places men as masters over

women which norm resonates in Oyono (1956) and Ocwinyo (2002) through chauvinistic male figures like Toundi's father, and Adoli Awal respectively.

Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* asserts that "Humanity is male" (26) that is, it is only man, his desires and aspirations that matter. Men make and unmake laws in their favour with intent to make their dominance over women a right. Beauvoir further explains that "law makers, priests, philosophers, writers and scholars have gone to great lengths to prove that women's subordinate condition was willed in heaven and profitable on earth" (31). No wonder many a male author depicts females as weak, unintelligent, dependent and sexed beings while their male counterparts are depicted as strong, brave, intelligent, independent and superior. This is proof that indeed "males have always and everywhere paraded their satisfaction of feeling they are kings of creation" (Beauvoir 31). Through literature, therefore, they tarnish the image of a woman by creating prejudices and stereotypes to justify the inferiority of the female sex.

Consequently, response to such female relegating literature is inevitable especially with the rise of feminism in the late 19th century; a movement whose main purpose was/is to challenge the systematic inequalities women face on a daily basis. Many feminist critics like Cixous (1976) arose and called upon women to grab the pen and rewrite their story stressing that "woman must write woman. And man, man" (877) since each of them is in the best position to represent their sex based on experience and not mere assumptions. She disregards any writing by men about women for they portray female characters with lots of blemishes to suit them. Koussouhon and Doussoumou (2015) postulate that:

The upsurge of feminism in the seventies and other derived overlapping woman-promoting ideologies ... actually came with a conscience-raising from the part of and a wake-up call to women. Women in their quest for change, have diligently taken to the *plume*. From the colonial to the post-colonial times, pioneering female writers like Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Mariama Ba, Grace Ogot, Margaret Ogola, Tsitsi Dangarembaga, Yvonne Vera, Efua T. Sutherland, Ama Ata Aidoo, etc and contemporary women writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Sefi Atta, Kaine Agary, Amma Darko; to name just a few have increasingly contributed to the rehabilitation and redefinition of the African woman's image or identity by simply reflecting in literature woman-promoting themes such as gender equality, feminism, emancipation, etc (314-315).

These female authors create female protagonists that possess admirable traits of bravery, ambition, industriousness, confidence, intelligence and economic independence despite living under chauvinistic conditions. Under their umbrella of “feminists”, the female authors strive to rewrite and correct the distorted image of the female sex in pioneer male authored texts as discussed earlier. Dooga (2009) argues that the ultimate goal of feminists is “to challenge the masculinities underpinning the structures of repression that target women”. (qtd. in Allagbe and Amossou et al. 14). Such masculinities include economic power and patriarchy which female authors attest to the core. Cixous posits that pioneer female writers and critics faced opposition because their ideas were considered time bombs to masculinity. Lady Winchilsea explains this animosity towards female writers thus: “...a woman that attempts the pen (is) an intruder on the rights of men...” (Beauvoir 151) as their writing seeks to break through the codes of patriarchal notions that suppress women’s freedom of expression and is thus a threat to male superiority. Despite such challenges, feminism spread far and wide.

In Uganda, due to the loud silence of women in the male-dominated literary field, FEMRITE was born by a group of women under the leadership of Mary Karoro Okurut in 1996 with the intention of turning the literary desert into a haven of women’s voices. Hunsu Folasade (2014) remarks that among its successes:

The members have clearly demarcated a women’s literary tradition that is marked by a radical approach to issues of sexuality, female empowerment and gender role sharing both in the public and domestic space among others. They seek to portray women as resilient, independent agents of change and development. Examples include Mary Okurut’s *The Invisible Weevil* (1998), Susan Kiguli’s *The African Saga* (1998), and Goretti Kyomuhendo’s *Secrets No More* (1999). (284)

Goretti Kyomuhendo (1996) and Mary Okurut (1998) are texts that were selected for this study given the passionate manner in which they address the issue of female stereotyping in male written literature. In a bid to correct this distorted image of a woman, they create powerful female protagonists that fight against all odds to have their way in the repressive patriarchal systems in which they live. These authors use literature as an avenue to reveal and challenge all aspects of male domination and subordination of women, and the avenues and structures that have reinforced and maintained them. Female writers however face a number of setbacks in their writing career. Kiyimba (2008) in his study about the fiction of Ugandan female writers observes that, “The odds against the female writers are many, not least among them being the age-old

system of patriarchy that defines both men and women differently. In the face of these odds, it would seem like the women writers are attempting an impossible task” (219). Here, Kiyimba observes that female writers are discriminated against in the literary field because of being women; this in turn undermines their effort of presenting a better picture of a woman in literature. Patriarchy accords male authors advantage over the females because they are the superior sex. The persistence of female writers however is admirable and “their writings offer the public new and refreshing experiences...” (Kiyimba 219) about gender roles, relationships and behavioural patterns. Kiyimba adds that the critical contemporary female writers do this “by introducing to the literary scene several female characters, playing leading roles. Secondly, they attack established stereotypes and injustices in the society...” (219) as evidenced in their literary work. He further applauds them in their fight for gender equality thus: “By being so purposeful in their writing, Ugandan women writers have made a significant contribution to the mission of empowering society to eliminate discriminatory practices against women” (219). He salutes Ugandan female writers like Tindyebwa Lilian (1994), Violet Barungi (1999), Goretti Kyomuhendo (1996), Monica Arac de Nyeko (2008), Mildred Barya (2009) and many others for unapologetically portraying a much better image of a woman in their works, that is; they have created active heroines whose contribution to their societies is remarkable.

The scholarly arguments above however focus their critical stance on the unrealistic depiction of women in male authored texts and turn a blind eye to the fact that men are also victims of stereotyping by feminist female authors. In their bid to paint a better picture of women, they tend to demonise men in what is dubbed “revenge literature” hence worsening gender imbalance, as will be discussed in the findings.

This study engaged in a comparative study of the portrayal of gender in the selected African male and female-authored novels from the viewpoint of Marxist feminism, a theory that blames capitalism for the exploitation and consequent stereotyping of women in society and literature. For Marxist feminists, empowerment and equality for women cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalism. It can only be achieved by dismantling the capitalist system in which much of women’s labour is uncompensated. Marx for instance asserts that:

The change in a historical epoch can always be determined by the progress of women towards freedom, because in relation of woman to man, of the weak to the strong, the

victory of human nature over brutality is most evident. The degree of emancipation of woman is the natural measure of general emancipation (Engels 259).

To eliminate gender stereotypes and achieve gender equality, a woman; who is the victim here, should be freed from male domination. A woman should be granted the opportunity to freely participate in the public sector and gain economic power as well. Women and men should work together as complementary forces in the society. Marx concludes that emancipation of women is the only gatepass to a classless society.

Gender depiction in five primary texts by selected African authors was the pivot of this study. These include: Oyono's *Houseboy*, Owinyo's *Footprints of the Outsider*, Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter*, Karooro's *The Invisible Weevil* and Sinyangwe's *A Cowrie of Hope*. These were chosen on account that they represent three regions of the African continent: the West, the East and Southern Africa; thereby providing a wider scope of the African views, attitudes and beliefs on gender through the given literary works. Besides, the selected texts widely express the varying gender views in the colonial, post-colonial and contemporary era as they are published between 1956 and 2002; a period when gender awareness was prevalent and the oppressed gender was advocating for a room of their own. The researcher chose three male authored texts and two female written texts with intent to dwell on a deep comparative analysis of gender depiction. The first two male literary texts, *Houseboy* and *Footprints of the Outsider*, are juxtaposed with the two female authored texts, *The First Daughter* and *The Invisible Weevil*. Gender portrayal in the last male authored text, *A Cowrie of Hope*, was discussed in comparison with the representation of gender in the other selected male authored texts to ascertain whether the feminists' view that male writers portray women with bias hold water. Below is the biography of the selected authors alongside the literary background of the given texts:

Ferdinand Oyono was born on 14th September, 1929 in Cameroon. He is a writer of anti-colonial literature through his mouthpiece- ordinary and naive Africans. His notable works include *Houseboy* (1956), *The Old Man and The Medal* (1956) and *The Road from Europe* (1960), all written in French originally. His novel, *Houseboy* is a biting satire of racism, religious hypocrisy, exploitation and immorality that characterized the French Cameroon during the colonial times. It is about Toundi, a houseboy of Fr. Gilbert and later, The Commandant whose wife has a premarital affair with M. Moureau, the Prison Director in Dangan. The two lovers use Toundi as

their go between. Toundi on the other hand examines all their flaws with wonderment making them to feel guilty. Eventually, when The Commandant finds out about his wife's affair and Toundi's role in it, he shamelessly blames the latter. Toundi is falsely accused of theft and is tortured mercilessly while in police custody. He escapes but later dies, away from his tormentors. Oyono's negative portrayal of female characters unlike the male is a point of interest for this research. The females in here suffer 'double jeopardy', a concept by Marxist feminists that emphasizes the vulnerability of women in society. They suffer due to the repressive patriarchal norms and also suffer because they are women as will be discussed in the findings.

Julius Ocwinyo was born in 1961 in Teboke village, Apac district- a setting that resonates in his novel, *Footprints of the Outsider*. His father was a Prisons Officer and mother, a housewife. He went to Aboke Junior Seminary. His works are a true reflection of writers shedding their sickness on paper since traces of his life experience are evident in his novels. He writes about the political instability, religious hypocrisy, dire poverty and corruption in post-independent Uganda. His notable works include *Fate of the Banished* (1997), *The Unfulfilled Dream* (2002) and *Footprints of the Outsider* (2002). *Footprints of the Outsider* is about Abudu Olwit, a son to Alicinora, a reknown prostitute in Teboke, a rural setting in Apac district in Uganda. He is born in a very impoverished household, his education is disrupted due to financial limitations however he makes it to Makerere University given his commitment to study and the support of his guardian and uncle, Odwong. He graduates with a degree in Economics and soon gets into prison service where he is promoted to the Officer in Charge of Alaro Prison Farm. Here, he amasses wealth and reverence from his people. He supports his community financially and morally which disgusts Adoli Awal, the area Member of Parliament when he catches wind of it. The latter accuses him of rebel activities and he ends up in Luzira where he develops the passion to contest for the Ayer Constituency parliamentary seat with a vengeance. After his release, he does so and the last campaign at Alemi turns out to be bloody. We are then left in suspense to decide who the next Member of Parliament will be. The portrayal of gender in this text is similarly controversial and thus relevant to this study.

Goretti Kyomuhendo was born on 1st August 1965 in Uganda. She is a Ugandan novelist and literary activist. She is a founding member and coordinator of FEMRITE, Uganda Women's Writers' Association which promotes writing by women. She is internationally recognized for

her novels like *Waiting: A Novel of Uganda's Hidden War* (2015), *The First Daughter* (1996), *Secrets No More* (1999) and *Whispers from Vera* (2002). In her novel, *The First Daughter*, she presents her protagonist, Kasemiire, a fifteen-year-old school girl whose dreams are shattered when she conceives and is abandoned by her boyfriend. To add salt to injury, her father, Kyamanywa throws her out of the house. She has to struggle to fend for her child. As luck would have it, she gets an opportunity to work for a politician, Mrs. Mutyaba who takes her to her home. This job is however short lived when the former's husband, Mr. Mutyaba attempts to rape her and she is thus thrown out of that house as well. She later gets a rare chance to return to school. Education is indeed her only liberating tool. Kaase's intelligence, industriousness and perseverance contribute to her happy ending. Kyomuhendo however demonises the male sex in her text for they are to blame for the suffering of the females therein. That is her view of men; callous, egocentric and sex maniacs.

Mary Karoro Okurut was born on 8th December, 1954 in Bushenyi, Uganda. She is an educator, author and politician. She has worked with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Affairs, spokesperson for National Resistance Movement- the ruling party in Uganda, and now, the elected Member of Parliament for Bushenyi District Woman Representative. She is the founder of FEMRITE, Uganda Women's Writers' Association, an organization that aims at rectifying the maimed image of the female sex in male authored literary works and promoting writing by women. Her novel, *The Invisible Weevil* presents Nkwanzu, a woman who is deeply in love with Genesis but refuses to engage in premarital sex till her wedding day so as to make her parents proud, as per cultural demands. It is sad though that she is raped by Rex before her marriage to Genesis thus shattering her dreams of chasteness before marriage. Her aunt, Senga decides that they should keep the incident a secret and let her marriage to Genesis go on as planned but Nkwanzu chooses to report the case to police. Rex is arrested however the rape negatively impacts on her relationship with Genesis. It is close to impossible to come across any admirable male character in this text.

Binwell Sinyangwe was born in 1956 in Zambia. His notable works include *A Cowrie of Hope* (2000) and *Quills of Desire* (1996). The novel, *A Cowrie of Hope*, is about the plight of Zambians due to the harsh socio-political and economic climate of the 90's, a period of "havelessness". The story vividly reflects the hardships women face in rural Africa through his

female protagonist, Nasula also known as Belita Bowa. Nasula is widowed at a very young age and unfairly thrown out of her matrimonial home by her in laws, the Chiswebes when she refuses to be inherited by Isaki Chiswebe, her late husband's brother who is very irresponsible and sexually immoral despite the mysterious disease of the 90's. She spends a night with her baby, Sula at the station but eventually finds her way to Swellini where she bravely fights the pangs of poverty as she does all sorts of odd jobs to survive and take her only hope, Sula to school. She later, when forced by circumstances, sets out to Lusaka with the help of her best friend, Nalukwi to sell her only bag of beans so as to raise one hundred thousand '*kwacha*' to send her girl to school. At the market in Lusaka, she is conned by Gode Silavwe however, she does the unimaginable to catch the conman and get justice. This determination enables her to eventually send Sula to school by the end of the novel. The novel calls for emancipation of women through education in order to undermine female exploitation and oppression by man.

Given this background, this study seeks to critically cross examine gender portrayal in the selected male and female authored texts. This study also posits that gender portrayal by writers ought to be reviewed often so as to minimize the tendency of gender stereotyping.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Gender ought to be realistically depicted in literary works to ensure gender balance however the representation of gender disparity in the prose fiction of many African writers, both males and females, continues to be a highly-debatable subject in contemporary literary enquiry. The selected male and female-authored texts for this study are not an exception since this phenomenon resonates in the livelihoods, thought patterns and customs of the people in the societies of the given texts. These include Oyono (1956), Ocwinyo (2002), Kyomuhendo (1996) and Okurut (1998). On the one side, the male authors represent women as passive, confined, irrational and compliant beings whose survival is dependent on the dominant male characters, and in so doing, they encourage female marginalization by upholding male superiority over women. On the flipside, the female authors—dissatisfied with the superficial representation of women by their male counterparts—made it their duty to 're-write' the story of a woman, for only they can truthfully "describe this reality from a woman's point of view, a woman's perspective" (05) as Molar (1987) asserts. In a bid to correct this image of the maimed female

in male-authored literary works, the selected female authors create powerful and dignified female protagonists, but are accused of demonizing men in their literary works.

Unlike the usually over emphasized female gender by many contemporary scholars, the researcher engaged in a comparative and non-discriminative analysis of the depiction of gender in selected novels by both male and female African authors, and used the findings to emphasise the significance of bias-free representation of characters in selected African prose fiction.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study zeroed on the following primary texts in order to cross examine the portrayal of gender by selected African authors: Ferdinand Oyono's *Houseboy* (1956), Julius Ocwinyo's *Footprints of the Outsider* (2002), Binwell Sinyangwe's *A Cowrie of Hope* (2000), Goretti Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter* (1996) and Mary Karooro Okurut's *The Invisible Weevil* (1998).

The chosen texts are products of the late 20th Century and early 21st Century, a period of intense enlightenment on human rights violation, particularly on gender-related cases; a period of the call for affirmative action so that women can freely participate in leadership and economic roles in both the private and public spheres; a period of the massive outcry for gender equality as evident in the United Nations Development Programme's Millenium Development Goals of 2000 and the current Sustainable Development Goals meant to be achieved by 2030.

Besides, the selected authors of the given texts are also prominent writers whose works have been subjected to scholarly criticism widely and thus there is a wealth of knowledge which aided in this research. Additionally, much as researchers like Kiyimba (2008)_have studied gender issues in relation to some of the selected texts, they have hardly dwelt on a comparative and non-discriminatory study of gender portrayal employed in this study. The researcher consequently thought it wise to use this approach in this study in order to make a balanced analysis of gender portrayal in the given novels.

1.4 General Objective

The general objective is to make a critical comparison of the portrayal of gender by selected African male and female writers.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

1. To examine the gender stereotypes in selected literary works by both male and female African writers.
2. To analyse the objectification of women in the selected literary works.
3. To investigate the effectiveness of the language used in the portrayal of both male and female characters in the selected literary works.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What gender stereotypes are depicted in the selected works?
2. How are women objectified in the selected literary works?
3. How do the authors use language to portray both male and female characters in the selected literary texts?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is hoped to enrich the field of literary criticism by putting forward the contribution of women writers as a very crucial element of literary appreciation.

This study reinforces the already existing literature on the gender question by offering a robustly comparative and non-discriminatory perspective that stresses the importance of both gender, a departure from the usually over-emphasised female gender at the expense of the male gender which usually promotes radical feminism that worsens gender imbalance.

Essentially, the study is hoped to aid gender scholars and activists to appreciate the fact that in the quest for 're-writing' a better image of the female sex in male-authored works, the female writers actually end up misrepresenting the opposite sex. Hence, both sexes are susceptible to poor/stereotypical representation. Besides, the broad analysis of the objectification of women is hoped to be an eye opener particularly to the women who are victims of self-objectification, to strive and break free and to policy makers to create gender bias-free laws. Therefore, the study strives to promote an unbigoted critical lens in the appreciation of literature regardless of one's sex.

1.7 Review of Related Literature

The scholarly citations in this section are discourses on gender stereotypes and objectification of women in literature that provide a deep and critical analysis of the vice of gender stereotype by selected male and female African writers. Literature being a reflection of the society, this review analyses cases of gender stereotypes in society as well. The review is divided into three broad categories that is, namely: gender stereotypes, objectification of women and language:

1.7.1 Gender Stereotypes

Macrae et al. (1996) posit that “the concept of a stereotype was introduced in social science in 1992, when Lippman used it to describe “the typical picture” that comes to mind when thinking about a particular social group (qtd. in Pilcher and Whelehan 166), which means that stereotypes are not new in the literary field. Gender stereotypes thus are the “typical” habits that society associates with men and women for instance cooking and humility among women and bravery and hard work among men. The impact of gender stereotypes is disastrous as it robs the stereotyped individuals of their dignity as human beings. Enteman (1996) states that “we treat them instead as artificial persons, which means as an extension of the category we have constructed” (qtd. in Pilcher and Whelehan 167). As a matter of fact, authors ought to appreciate that all human beings deserve to be accorded the right to individualism and strive to portray characters, both male and female realistically. In Kyomuhendo’s *The First Daughter*, Kyamanywa’s drunk friends mockingly point out their expectations of women as submissive, weak, and sex objects as they discourage the latter from educating them. Comparatively, men are generally depicted as chauvinistic, cruel and rapists as seen through the actions of Mr. Mutyaba. These stereotypes further gender imbalance.

Pilcher and whelehan argue that “gender stereotyping exists in key agencies of socialization such as families, the education system and the media” (167) as evident in *Footprints of the Outsider* where married women focus on their domestic duties and raise their children as per societal expectations for instance Bitoroci who proudly advises her daughter Saida to marry a rich man that can take care of her and not bother whether he has concubines. Elsewhere, Alcinora worries about her son Abudu whose sexual virility is questionable since unlike his peers, he hasn’t impregnated anyone’s daughter. Deaux and Lewis (1983) further lay down the given stereotypes in three broad categories thus: “Physical characteristics (soft voice, dainty, graceful)

and certain psychological /occupation traits (nurturant, dependent, weak, emotional) and will engage in particular kinds of activities (child care, cooking, gardening) (qtd. in Golombok and Fivush 17). The given stereotypes present women as the inferior and weaker sex in comparison to men. Besides, it is absurd that such stereotypes do not reflect “women’s lives in reality” (Pilcher and Whelehan 167). Stereotypes solely “represent culturally shared beliefs in the values associated with male- and female-typed traits...” (Golombok and Fivush 18). In other words, culture significantly propagates gender stereotypes which particularly accord women a second-class status in the society and unfortunately, these stereotypes spill over to literary work. Culturally, women are viewed as weak and sex objects whereas the men ought to be brave no matter what. Traces of these stereotypes are evident in Ocwinyo (2002) through Irene Namu, the daughter of Ikangi who is said to be a major attraction in her own bar, Namu’s Bar and Restaurant. This depicts her as a sex object. Kyomuhendo (1996) on the other hand presents Kasemiire, the protagonist expressing shock about her boyfriend Steven crying like a woman. This is not typical of a man. Similarly, Oyono’s Toundi, when subjected to a thorough beating by the father decides not to cry in order not to be thought a woman by his peers. There is need to appreciate the fact that men are human too, with emotions that should be let out and not restrained.

The subjugation of women in society is therefore deeply rooted in culture which places men in superior positions and relegates the position of a woman. In the family for instance, women are generally considered unimportant and their views disregarded because they are women. The man is the head and woman is headed hence the man carries the sole authority in all family matters. Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1940) posits that the term family “was invented by the Romans to denote a new social organism, whose head ruled over wife and children and a number of slaves, and was invested under Roman paternal power with rights of life and death over them all” (31) meaning that the family is an organ for the oppression and exploitation of women. We see this in *The First Daughter* through Kyamanywa a chauvinistic man that leads his family with an iron hand. He causes unnecessary terror to his wives and children when he so desires because he is a man. He beats up Kasemiire when she conceives at school along with her mother and sisters, brands them whores and pushes them out of his house. Goora, her mother and sisters face a similar ordeal in *The Invisible Weevil*. In Oyono’s *Houseboy*, Toundi and his mother are crazily beaten up by his chauvinistic father to the

extent that they take a week to heal. This authoritarianism is linked to masculinity as noted earlier. Since the origin of family is patriarchy, it is not questionable why women are expected to be submissive for that was its original objective anyway. Engels adds that the monogamous family in particular was created to enslave the female sex and to ensure “the wife’s fidelity and therefore of the paternity of the children” (31). Men on the other hand have the liberty to prove their sexual virility by engaging in as many sexual relationships as possible and they are answerable to no one for this behavior since they are men after all as seen through the Mekongo and his sexual exploits and Adoli Awal in *Footprints of the Outsider*. After marriage, Engels stresses that the woman “is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights” (31). Similarly, Kyamanywa beats up his second wife Ateenyi when she goes to her parents’ home against his will. After the beating, he orders her to go to bed and spread her legs wide apart, then he rapes her as a means of exhibiting his power over her. She ought to seek permission from him and submit to his will (Kyomuhendo). This places a woman in an insubordinate position in marriage for she has no power over her actions or even life. Through marriage, she lives in the chains of man, her master throughout her life. She is subjected to domestic violence and is expected to take no offence nor share her pain with anyone out of the home for a good woman keeps family matters within the family walls. That aside, her husband is her master and thus has the right to do with her as he pleases.

The insubordination of women is also propagated through culture. Culture continues to give men the power to dominate women and the latter have no basis to fight in, Simone de Beauvoir a prominent feminist argues that “humanity is male” (11) in reference to the view that it is male centered that is, it is about achievements of men, their inventions and superiority over the women. She adds that women are considered “the other sex” (32) and that “A true woman” is one that is “frivolous, infantile, irresponsible, the woman subjugated to man” (33). Such stereotypes have continued to accord women a trivial status in the society since theirs in comparison to men is a peripheral role. whoever tries to act otherwise for instance by standing up against oppression by men is considered disrespectful and alien even by fellow women just like Nkwanzu in *The Invisible Weevil* who is beaten up by the husband and accused of trying to be the man in the house whenever she would insist on using condoms with her adulterous husband to protect herself from the deadly HIV/AIDS. This is because her husband, Genesis believes he has the right over her body and everything since he is the man.

Simone further postulates that men detest the idea of liberation of women because it injures their pride and is a threat to their superior positions in society. She writes “The conservative bourgeoisie continues to view women’s liberation as a danger threatening their morality and their interests. Some men feel threatened by women’s competition” (33) and thus do all it takes to suppress such ideas and their proponents. Simone states that a student in Hebdon Latin once declared, “Every woman student who takes a position as a doctor or lawyer is stealing a place from us” (33). This student in so saying simply expresses his concern about the looming threat that women empowerment imposes on male superiority. He desires to protect his patriarchal rights from destruction by the emancipation of women and also to remind his audience that men ought to be in charge always. Similarly, in *The Invisible Weevil*, we see this through Genesis who detests the fact that his wife, Nkwanzu is a minister, and thus he blames her for disrespecting him and abandoning her marital role of taking care of her home and child to focus on ministerial work. He blames her job for giving her ‘unnecessary wings’ and destroying their marriage. The fact is that he is actually jealous of her and feels that his pride and power as man over her are reduced.

The aspect of stereotypical presentation of women is also foregrounded by Olorunfoba-Oju in their analysis of male-authored Nigerian texts:

The entrenchment of a cultural view of “woman” from a bio-essential lens was a standard staple of early male authored Nigerian literature. It manifested largely in three relegation forms – in the absence of any grand representation of the female in the literature, in the portrayal of female characters only in the domestic spheres and only in relation to nurturing and mothering roles, and thirdly in the negative portrayal of women. Conversely, the exclusive portrayal of males as heroes and protagonists, is a feature of all male dominated literatures and has also been observed in relation to black literature (8).

Comparably, male-authored texts by other African writers including *Houseboy* and *Footprints of the Outsider* reflect the same as they entail male protagonists like Toundi and Abudu Olwit respectively and assign the female characters peripheral roles. Saida Acola in *Footprints of the Outsider*, despite completing a course at Uganda College of Commerce proves to be very unambitious when she decides to bury herself in housewifely duties and only takes pride in her husband, Abudu’s achievements. These traditional roles imposed on women “reinforce the

assumption that women and power are incompatible, which has in turn, relegated women to secondary status” (qtd. in Uganda Media Women’s Association 21), for they cannot lead so they ought to be led and guided by men. This puts forward the patriarchal notion that women are not wise enough or rather do not have the brains to make appropriate decisions on their own.

Many literary critics particularly feminists like Kyomuhendo (2003) express distrust in male authored texts especially pertaining their portrayal of female characters just as Poulain De La Barre argues that “Everything that has been written by men about women should be viewed with suspicion, because they both judge and...” (qtd. in Beauvoir 5). Poulain therefore warns readers of male authored texts to be cautious and not be carried away by the portrayal of women in their but rather treat it with disregard. Through FEMRITE in Uganda, Kyomuhendo and her team have resorted to rewriting literature with intent to portray a more realistic image of a woman that has been misrepresented in phallogentric texts. They present female protagonists that fight all patriarchal odds and emerge victorious. Stratton posits that these “strategies of the resistance by gender sensitive women authors to essentialist representations of female characters have been well established. The most important of these is the strategy of inversion, basically by fronting female subjectivity and relegating, even discrediting the male subject” (qtd. in Oloruntoba-Oju and Oloruntoba-Oju 9). This is exactly what Kyomuhendo (1996), Okurut (1998) and many other female writers adopted in their writing hence giving life to Stratton’s recommendation. A parallel of this is in *The Invisible Weevil* through Rex whose inherent lust drives him to rape Nkwanzu. He defiles school girls and sleeps with prostitutes. His entire life is stained with greed, betrayal and sexual sin. The same applies to Matayo and Equation who hide in the umbrella of religion to advance their wickedness to unsuspecting girls. Female authors also create strong and powerful female protagonists that are agents of change. We see this through Kasemiire and Nkwanzu in *The First Daughter* and *The Invisible Weevil* respectively. The female writers’ efforts in advocating for gender equality has not been in vain as the lives of their audiences, particularly female readers have been touched significantly. They along with so many other feminists are also the reason why Women Emancipation is a point of concern in the world today, for instance, it is among the Millennium Development Goals (2000) and continues to be a pertinent issue to date.

Kyomuhendo (2003) further presents a heated debate on the issue at hand by generally criticizing the insensitivity of male authors. In her essay, *FEMRITE and the Politics of Literature in Uganda*, she similarly notes like Olorunfoba-Oju, the Nigerian literary critic that the subjugation of women stems back in history as she posits that the literary climate of the sixties was majorly masculine. Transition Magazine published mainly male writers and very few women writers attended the university's important events on African writing. Overall, the literary tradition of Uganda then played such an important part in shaping and reflecting the gender hierarchy. On one hand, men's perspectives and goals dominated that tradition. On the other hand, women's voices were suppressed. But since the late 1990s, with the emergence of new public debates and political struggles, women's voices have become increasingly prominent. Women today have developed a different literary perspective and generally challenge the male dominance associated with literary activities in the sixties (60s) by employing what Stratton earlier on described as the "strategy of inversion" where the female authors present confident and responsible female protagonists in their works, a norm that is unknown of in male authored works where women are presented as weak physically and mentally. In short, Kyomuhendo argues that women's writing today is meant to avert the negative portrayal of female characters by the early 1960's male authors (Kyomuhendo).

Nawal El Saadawi strongly agrees with Goretti's view about the unrealistic portrayal of women by male authors being an age-old practice, in her article, "*The Heroine in Arab Literature*" where she states:

Among the male authors I have read, both in the West and in the Arab world; irrespective of the language in which they have written or of the region from which they have come, not one has been able to free him from this age - old image of women handed down to earth from an ancient past no matter how famous many of them have been for their passionate defense of human rights, human values and justices, and their vigorous resistance to oppression and tyranny in any form (qtd. in Yoseibo 77).

This is indeed the reality about most past and contemporary male authors. Majority or all the female characters in their works are mere stereotypes that is: sex objects, trouble causers, witches, gossipers, weak and therefore submissive, brainless and dependent on the male sex and worst of all, morally ill as portrayed in Julius Ocwinyo's "*Fate of the Banished*", the legendary

Chinua Achebe's *"Things Fall Apart"* and *"The Concubine"* by Elechi Amadi. The list is endless. Saadawi in *"The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World"* further bluntly posits that the depiction of women in phallogocentric texts is that of:

A capricious vamp, a playful and beautiful slave, a she-devil imbued with cunning and capable of a thousand artifices, an explosive danger, versed in all arts of deceit and conspiracy, a seductive mistress captivating in her passion. She is as positive and dynamic as Satan and his evil spirits, wherever matters of sex and love are concerned. Woman in all the aspects of the role she is made to play whether it be that of a queen or a slave bought from the market, remains a slave (qtd. in Yoseibo 77).

This is evident in Oyono's *Houseboy* through female characters like Kalisia, Sophie, Madamme who are all depicted as sex objects and seductive she devils and Alicinora, Ikangi's daughters particularly Irene Namu and her co-workers at the bar in *Footprints of the Outsider* by Ocwinyo. This act of associating the female sex with evil as an expression of misogyny by male authors.

Blamire, a prominent English poet and feminist presents a coherent view to Saadawi's when she argues that the above "stereotyping of female roles in male produced literature has a negative influence on women readers in imposing traditional roles upon them" (qtd. in Yoseibo 78). It terribly affects the esteem of female readers given the unfair representation of their sex. Some are forced to believe that they as women are surely meant to be below a man and hence submit to all sorts of exploitation by men. In Uganda today, many women endure abusive relationships because they do not have any hope of redemption in or out of the relationship. Blamire, however fails to appreciate the fact that comparatively, stereotyping of male roles in female written novels impacts negatively on the male audience. Both sexes are not safe from stereotyping.

Feminists front that the only way out of such stereotypes is to ensure a fair image of women in literature as Zirimu does. Zirimu's short story, *"The Hen and the Groundnuts"* presents a young female who bravely asserts her independence by choosing to abandon her domestic duties and opting to play with fellow children which is considered inappropriate female behavior. This defiant act contradicts with the traditional concept of exploiting women through subjecting them to endless housework. The young female (protagonist) in the story says, "My mother had instructed me thoroughly in traditional cookery at an early age. By the time I was thirteen I could prepare a meal worthy to be set before any chief" (qtd. In Cook 137). This shows that the

ultimate goal for all females is considered to be marriage culturally, thus parents of girl children; mothers particularly, prepare their daughters for this from a very early age as seen in the case of the young protagonist above. Zirimu foregrounds how the female child is raised differently from the male whose right is to relax, play and enjoy as his sister toils over domestic chores in preparation of the meal he is yet to eat. The girl child is denied her entire childhood as she is burdened with work at an early age, and made to know that hers will be a journey of toil all her life for that is what it means to be a woman. Zirimu, in presenting this defiant female child who strongly convinces herself that she “had a right to play as well as anybody else” (qtd. In Cook 138). This defiance is evident through female characters in the *The First Daughter* and *The Invisible Weevil*: Kasemiire chooses to focus on her studies at the university before getting married to her boyfriend, Steven. Nkwanzu refuses to have sex with her adulterous husband, Genesis to protect herself from the deadly HIV/AIDS. These women speak their minds and make relevant independent decisions unlike the voiceless females in male-authored novels.

The scholarly opinions above have varying inadequacies like counter- stereotypes, the approach used by radical feminists to uplift the image of a woman which instead promotes male vilification thus worsening the gender inequality.

On the contrary to the discriminative concern on female stereotyping in society and literature as noted on the scholarly views above, a team of researchers in a survey at Los Angeles City Schools Instructional Planning Division (1976) strongly postulate that men too are subject to stereotyping and the impact is disastrous. They state: “In becoming stereotyped in literature and in life as the master, the achiever, the warrior or the brute, men have been frequently denied expression of such human emotion as fear, frustration, and tenderness” (19). This study also contends that men too are indeed victims of stereotyping in literature and society as noted above. Much as the given traits seem positive, they psychologically haunt the men as their entire thoughts are “caged” in the struggle to live up to the given expectations lest they get branded losers or ‘womanly’; a word associated with weakness in the patriarchal society. Besides, men are expected to be strong no matter the circumstances they may encounter, so even when emotionally down, they shouldn’t exhibit any fear or worries. This is unfair for it is a way of stripping men off their humanness. A holistic human being openly experiences both emotions of bravery and weakness without fear. We see this *The First Daughter* when Steven, Kasemiire’s

boyfriend cries after seeing the wounds inflicted on the latter by her father due to conceiving while in school, Kaase is shocked to see a man cry and concludes that he is rather too soft for a man. She has been conditioned by patriarchy to believe that a man must be brave and emotionless. Kasemiire's brother, Mugabi is depicted as an intellectual dwarf and weak man. The sister does better than him in school to the disappointment of his father. The same applies to Nkwazi's brother, Tingo who fails to make it to the university and loses his dream of becoming a 'big man' (Okurut).

Relatedly, the 2012 research by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees contends that boys and men are victims of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) just like girls and women. The researchers argue that "men and boys are at risk of being coerced into unwanted sexual acts and may be forced by circumstances to engage in survival sex" (12), that is sex in exchange for food, shelter and other basic needs. The only difference is that boys and men who are victims of SGBV suffer in silence because of the gendered norms and stereotypes attached to manliness. The society expects men to be strong and such "sexualized attacks against men serve not only to diminish their masculinity in their own eyes and the eyes of the perpetrators ..." (3-4) but also before the entire society as well. Being victims of sexual abuse, which is associated basically with the females who are culturally considered physically weak, such men feel that their pride as men has been totally shattered and are not brave enough to disclose this injustice done to them to anyone for fear of being mocked. Many a time, such men either become very violent or socially withdrawn. A case in point is of bullying in school that Tingo informs his sister about through a letter in which he explains how younger boys are forced to practice bestiality by the older boys at his school. This is sexual exploitation of the helpless young boys and ironically, it is their fellow men who derive pleasure from this inhumanity on them. Besides, men too are victims of domestic violence in the society and are thus mocked in female authored literary works. Some are beaten up by their wives who are too demanding, stronger and very aggressive. They too choose to suffer in silence for they have no way out. A case in point is Kyamanywa who is tortured physically and psychologically by the elderly woman that marries him in *The First Daughter*. He is denied food, insulted and made fun of. It is thus unfair to stress that it is only women who are always victims. Men too deserve public concern and sympathy and above all, realistic portrayal by female authors.

There is need for a fair portrayal of both gender in literature for equality to prevail. Leacock (1978) and Sherzer (1987) suggest that the groups are complementary— separate, but equal (Foley, 1997). What ought to be done is propagating a fair portrayal of both sexes as equal partners in development. The overall point of contention of the scholars above is that gender portrayal by authors is generally wanting which is the focus of this study. Their views therefore will contribute significantly to this research.

Conclusively, both men and women are indeed victims of stereotypical representation in literature and this must be brought to a halt for us to have a balanced society.

1.7.2 Objectification of Women

Soelistyarini and Ramadhanty posit that “women objectification is not a totally new issue in literary research” (288). This is proof that it has been a prevalent issue over the years and thus worthy of research. The scholars above postulate that:

The concept of women objectification was developed by Martha Nassbaum (1995) who argues that a person is objectified when they are seen and or treated in one or more seven features that are involved in the idea of treating a person as an object, namely: (1) Instrumentality: treating a person as a tool for the objectifiers purposes; (2) Denial of autonomy: treating a person as lacking in autonomy and self-determination; (3) Inertness: treating a person as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity; (4) Fungibility: treating a person as interchangeable with other objects; (5) Violability: treating a person as lacking in boundary integrity; (6) Ownership: treating a person as something that is owned by another (can be bought or sold); and (7) Denial of Subjectivity: treating a person as something whose experiences and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account (qtd in. Soelistyarini and Ramadhanty 288).

In illustration, the concept of “Instrumentality” is seen through the drunk men in Ocwinyo’s *Footprints of the Outsider* who lust after Ikangi’s daughters because they are irresistibly beautiful and Alicinora who is described as “a woman to whom a man turned when there was no other woman available to take” (10). In so doing, these women are reduced to sexual objects. Oyono’s Kalisia too brings out this concept when she reveals that whenever she meets Monsieur W. C, she does not open her hat but rather lifts her skirt. Madame Suzy is also sexually objectified by the Dangan houseboys at the market when they throw all sorts of insensitive

comments about her body at her, only that she is lucky, she does not understand their local language. Rex in *The Invisible Weevil* sexually objectifies Nkwanzi for a long time till he finally satisfies his lust by raping her. The concept of “Ownership” on the other hand is seen through the Cook’s lamentation of never being able to save enough money to buy a wife in *Houseboy*. In *Footprints of the Outsider*, this concept is brought to life through Jago Olima who sells his daughter to Abudu Olwit because she is not an ‘*akopi*’/ ordinary girl. He sells her off expensively through the tradition of bride price. Elsewhere, men in Teboke envy Ikangi because he has very beautiful daughters – “the kind of daughters a father would demand a lot of bride wealth for...” (12).

Goffman (1979) analyses the objectification of women in a number of ways for instance through what he calls “Dismemberment” and “Commodification”. He explains these thus respectively: The sexualized images of women portrayed by the mass media “turns women into a ‘thing’ and the *thing* is then broken down to component parts. She is dismembered. The result is that we have numerous images of lips, legs, breasts, butts and torsos” (qtd in. Perez 8). Female bodies are thus viewed by men with interest in particular parts for their own visual pleasure. Women are not seen as whole human beings but pleasurable play things with components that appeal to them. Similarly, male writers so much focus on the female body as they give vivid description of the ‘dismembered’ parts; that is, the lips, hips, breasts as earlier noted. In *Houseboy*, this aspect of dismemberment is vividly presented through the description of Madame Suzy’s body by the Dangan houseboys. One of them says longingly: “See the way those buttocks go!” and adds, “what a figure, what hair!” (54). Madame’s body is broken down to “buttocks”, “figure” and “hair” that are the centre of interest of the male speaker. Given that women are reduced to ‘things’ and their bodies dismembered, they are vulnerable to all sorts of violence by men for they do with them as they please. Kilbourn notes that “it is very easy to abuse a thing” (qtd In. Perez 14), after all it is unimportant. As for Commodification, Goffman relates it to adverts that portray women holding something “precious” and desirable. He says:

Most alcohol advertisements depict a highly sexualized woman holding, serving or drinking a certain beverage, in which men are lusting after. Both are promoted as a pleasure object. It sends the message that their role is simply to cater to others’ needs and desires, and males are persuaded to view women as nothing more than providers of pleasure. When females are presented as a commodity, their subjectivity and

humanity is denied (qtd in. Perez 9).

This explains the preference of bar maids to men in the society since they along with the services they offer are commodified, that is; they are considered desirable objects just like the drinks they serve to clients. This is relevant to this study and it is evident in Namu's Bar and Restaurant in *Footprints of the Outsider* where Irene Namu, the bar owner is described as a "major attraction" in the bar. Many male clients therefore flood this bar not only to enjoy the drinks but also another great object of their desire; Namu.

1.7.3 Language

According to Youngkin (2003), "language is the very basis of representation" (04) that is, authors use language as a medium to represent their thoughts and attitude towards given societal issues including gender related matters which are the pivot of this study. Extreme negativity and sexism in the portrayal of a given gender is proof that the author holds the former with contempt; whereas use of language of reverence for a given sex in literary work is a sign that the author adores that sex. Through language therefore, authors create gender stereotypes as per their beliefs as Markovic (2013) asserts:

Language is most certainly one of the biggest conveyors of prejudices. Consciously or subconsciously, we tend to depict all our beliefs, values and expectation via our choice of vocabulary, speaking style etc. Moreover, the attitude of speakers towards diverse social issues, such as gender equality, can be visible through our language usage (13).

The literary world is not an exception as authors through their characters use language to convey what they think and believe. In the selected female authored texts, sexist language is heavily used to describe the male sex as rapists, callous, and violent beings through words like "pig", "wild", "monster", "serpent", "devil" and "brutes" in *The Invisible Weevil* and "drunkards", "bastard", 'asshole" in *The First Daughter*. One can thus suspect that Kyomuhendo and Okurut are misandrists. The reverse is true in reference to Oyono (1956) and Ocwinyo (2002) as will be discussed in the findings.

Relatedly, in a survey done by Los Angeles city schools' Instructional Planning Division (1976), the researchers argue that language can be used as a tool to propagate gender stereotypes.

Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, prominent linguists postulate that:

Thoughts are limited by the vocabulary and syntactical patterns of language. Further, people cannot verbalize new concepts unless they have words to express

them. Language can handicap both sexes. Just as Women may be excluded from many positions in society as a result of this kind of verbal and, hence, behavioral patterning, so men are also expected to behave in certain ways, or over-extension. The enemy is he, as is the criminal, bastard, coward, peeping Tom, Thief. Although no man can be always aggressive, strong, fearless, or controlled, as the stereotype legend implies, he must never cry, feel weak or “have a poor spell,” The discrimination works both ways (qtd in. “Role: Your Own;” 6).

Through language as noted above, gender bias is propagated and it affects both sexes. In the selected male authored texts, women are generally portrayed negatively as voiceless and inferior using words like “mistress”, “prostitute”, “*alaya*”, “ugly”, “weak” among others while the men in the selected female authored texts are generally demonized as illustrated in the previous paragraph. This concurs with Edward and Benjamin’s view above that through language, both sexes are handicapped.

Guthrie (2011) in a survey entitled *Language and Identity in post-colonial African Literature: A case study of Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart*, posits that “an author’s linguistic stereotypes can affect his writing and promote cultural bias” (qtd in, Ijem and Agbo 55). This implies that authors, both male and female, have preconceived ideas of what masculinity and femininity is to them, and thus, their belief systems are reflected in their literary works through their choice of language in gender description. This is evident in the selected texts of this study as noted in the previous paragraphs. He also contends that the “female gender is often presented in literature as the sexually domesticated being: a weak vessel whose duties are to produce children and prepare food for the family. A man who fails to fulfill his roles in society is usually referred to as a woman, which demonstrates the underlying attitudes towards women” (Ijem and Agbo 55). In *Houseboy*, we come across Toundi, the protagonist who being a victim of the father’s violent nature restrains from crying for fear of being seen and thought a “woman” by his peers. The word ‘woman’ is derogatively associated with weakness and therefore, no man would like to identify with it. Toundi thus suppresses his feelings for the sake of keeping his pride as a man. His sister on the other hand is presented as a housewife. The husband goes out to work and leaves her to take care of the home as a woman. That is her duty as a woman. In *The Invisible Weevil*, Goora’s husband who is poverty stricken is deemed unworthy and derogatively described as a dirty and beastly. He is mocked due to his inability to provide for his family. In

the selected male authored works for this study, words like mother, wife, mistress, prostitute are used continuously to refer to women. This exhibits their inferior status in the society.

Fowler et al. postulate that “the choices regarding vocabulary and grammar in a literary text are both consciously and unconsciously ‘principled’ and systematic” and thus require a critical examination of the thought processes and patterns” (qtd in, Ijem and Agbo 56). This implies, that the language authors use in their writing simply reveals what goes on in their minds; that is their thoughts about what they present on paper. In case they portray gender stereotypically, then that is what they believe in. In short, male authors who portray women as second-class citizens actually believe that the position of a woman is below a man. Sapir holds that “language is the medium of literature just as marble, bronze or clay are materials of sculpture” (qtd in. Ijem and Agbo 56) that is, authors use language to communicate their thoughts and intentions in their literary works. Ijem and Agbo explain that “in literature, language is employed in the construction of gender types and roles of each gender type is described using language and linguistic resources that mirror unbalanced view of the male and female genders (56). These scholars thereby argue that language is the vehicle in which gender stereotyping is driven in literature. Without language, the latter would cease to be. Gender stereotypes are spread through spoken and written language, so women learn to behave and act ‘appropriately’ through the language they are exposed to and so do men. Ijem and Agbo add that “Literature as a socializing engine helps in placing men and women in unequal grounds where they dance unequal dance ...” (62). The linguistic choices of Oyono (1956) and Ocwinyo (2002) reflect the different ways men and women are perceived in the colonial Cameroon and post independent Ugandan societies respectively. Chauvinistic traits of domination, oppression, marginalization and derogation of the female gender are evident in the language and diction these authors; a reflection of the unconscious mind and socio-cultural beliefs about men and women in a patriarchal society. Oyono in his narrative depicts his male characters powerfully by referring them to “the commandant, head, a great chief, master, panther-eye, the mahogany-trunk, the white elephant, chief, a saintly man, the greatest terror of Africans” to emphasise male supremacy. Ocwinyo too follows suit with male characters described as “Adwong, chief, Officer-in-Charge, president, army commander, founder, senior prison warders” which depict men as responsible, brave and respectful.

John Gray in his book, *Men Are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, also presents the power of language in gender stereotypes. Gray uses the metaphor “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus” (9) to mark the distinction in the traits of men and women, especially given the view that they originate from totally different planets. Given this background, women and men think, feel and act differently. To illustrate this further, Gray adds that “Martians value power, competency, efficiency and achievement. They are always doing things to prove themselves and develop their power and skills. Their sense of self is defined through their ability to achieve results. They experience fulfillment primarily through success and accomplishment (16). Venusians on the other hand “have different values. They value love, communication, beauty and relationships, they spend a lot of time supporting, helping and nurturing one another. Their sense of self is defined through their feelings and the quality of their relationships. They experience fulfillment through sharing and relating” (18). Through Gray’s powerful language, he stereotypically depicts men as industrious, and work oriented whereas women are portrayed as emotional and relationship oriented. This is evident in Houseboy through Sophie whom we see lamenting for attention and love from her white boyfriend, the agricultural engineer. She initiates a conversation with Toundi so that she can share her pains with him and get advice. That is expected of women. Toundi’s father on the other hand values power and thus terrifies his wife and son through violent beating so that they fear and respect him more as the man in the home.

Cameron (1998) posits that, “Discussions of linguistic reform have been a central part of the field of language, gender and sexuality studies since its foundation in the early 1970s” (qtd. in Zimman 87). The “linguistic reform” in question is one propagated by feminists, they advocate for the kind of language that is gender inclusive and protest against any form of language that relegates the position of a women. Bodine (1975); Penelope (1990); and spender (1980) in addition to Cameron’s view above states that “the field came of age in the context of second wave feminist activism, which was deeply concerned about the naturalization of androcentric language and norms of usage” (qtd In. Zimman 87). The rise of feminism in other words has helped to minimize the use of male dominated language in the literature field. With Women having access to literature resources, they have tried to manipulate their position by using language that paints a better picture of the females in society, a picture that was distorted by male authors. Bodine (1975) a feminist “questioned the logic of grammarians and linguists who had argued that the use of pronoun he to refer to a generic person or man to refer to humanity was an

accident of history rather than the product of a misogynistic culture” (qtd in. Zimman 87). Bodine thus condemns patriarchy for the intentional use of such exclusive language in depiction of gender and disregards claims that it was a mistake of ‘history’. Kyomuhendo (1996) and Okurut (1998) use language that depicts women as autonomous beings and avoid generic terms and excessive use of words that represent women basing on their relationship to men.

According to Maass and Areun (1996), “language functions as a device not only for transferring information but also for expressing social categorizations and hierarchies. In this way, it contributes to the construction and communication of gender traits (qtd. in Sczesny et al. 1). The scholars above therefore argue that language creates or contributes to gender stereotyping in spoken and written literature. Culture places men at a superior position and so does literature and language. Carreiras, Garnham, Oakhill, and Cain (1996); Irmen (2007); and Cacciara and Padovani (2007) argue that “reading a personal noun, such as engineer makes readers think of a male rather than a female person, whereas Kindergarten teacher evokes expectations of a woman rather than a man (qtd. in Sczesny et al. 1). This is because culturally, women are associated with simpler and less demanding occupational roles in society. In *Houseboy*, and *Footprints of the Outsider*, language depicts men as responsible and in charge of the public offices given titles like president, director, agricultural engineer, prison director, head of Europeans, Doctor, army general, Member of Parliament while the women are referred to as wives, mothers, mistresses, and prostitutes, titles that further relegate them in society. “Sexist terminology has deleterious effects for Women” (Sczesny et al.9), as they are forced to live up to societal expectations and dump personal dreams which may be contrary to the former. Many silently endure abusive relationships because they are expected to be patient and responsible mothers especially for the sake of their children.

Sczesny et al. also postulate that, “People who hold sexist beliefs make deliberate decision to use language that perpetuates gender stereotyping and supports patriarchy” (9). This evidently stresses that male authors many a time have advertently portrayed women as second-class citizens due to their prejudices against the female sex and their phallogentric attitude. Such authors, particularly African male authors include Oyono (1956), Ocwinyo (2002), Ocen (1999), Achebe (1966), Armah (1968), Amadi (1966) and many others. Contemporary female authors

too like Kyomuhendo and Okurut have been accused of using abusive and harsh language that vilifies man in their literature. Their works above are products of their sexist attitudes.

In conclusion, the authors' turning away from linguistic sexism and embracing the use of gender-inclusive language is one way of "reducing gender stereotyping and increasing visibility of women" (Stahlberg et al. 9) in literature and society in general. Authors should thus adopt the use of neutral and realistic language in portrayal of gender for gender equality to prevail.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study draws from Marxist Feminism, a theory that is premised on the views and principles of Karl Marx and his close associate, Friedrich Engels as D. Stefano (2014) posits:

[It is] a species of feminism theory and politics that takes its bearings from Marxism, notably the criticism of capitalism as a set of structures, practices, institutions, incentives, and sensibilities that promote the exploitation of labour, the alienation of human beings, and the debasement of freedom for Marxist feminists, empowerment and equality cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalism. (Abstract 87)

To Marxist feminists therefore, capitalism is responsible for limiting women through inferior occupational and pay levels. They also consider the family as a fertile ground for the oppression and exploitation of women. They champion economic independence as a locus of the liberation of women and therefore, calls for transformation in the economic structures of society that will lead to emancipation of women through provision of equal opportunities and resources. Women and men ought to be given a fair platform on which to compete favourably for equality and development to prevail.

Schwendinger and Schwendinger posit that according to the Marxist theory, "the capitalist system is based on a hierarchical structure that relies on the oppression of certain groups, primarily women" (323). The oppressed groups include the working class/ peasants who are exploited by the capitalist bourgeoisie through subjection to heavy work and peanut pay and also the female sex that is exploited through the discriminative patriarchal standards which do not recognize or value their hard work in the domestic sphere. As men go out to work, women are expected to remain home and do the chores including cooking, washing, cleaning the home and raising children. Unlike men who are paid for their work in the public sphere, women do not

receive any pay despite their tireless domestic efforts. As a result, they remain economically handicapped and vulnerable to all sorts of abuses by their husbands on whom they depend. Capitalism therefore favours men as it grants them economic empowerment over women and makes the latter dependent on the former. Schwendinger and Schwendinger add that women are made “more vulnerable to violent victimization as a result of the social instability inherent in capitalist societies” (323). Marxist feminists thus strongly hold capitalism accountable for male chauvinism and the second-class status of women which this study largely explores. The details are discussed below in the tenets of Marxist Feminism that is, patriarchy, objectification of women and gender stereotyping.

1.8.1 Patriarchy

Eliesha Lema (2001) defines patriarchy as:

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 father, brother, husband, uncle will treat the woman—the wife, sister, mother and daughter related to them. It is an ideology that has given man the authority to decide, to act, to give or with-hold, to access or retain anything ... It is complex, it is a web in which, ultimately, even those privileged can become victims ... (qtd. in Kiyimba 220).

Patriarchy propagates gender imbalance by granting the male sex supremacy over women as they hold the power to determine everything that happens in society. Women therefore become victims of oppression and discrimination in this male-dominated set-up. In a 2010 survey of Patriarchy and Women’s Subordination, Sultana, a feminist similarly affirms that,

Patriarchy is a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways. The Subordination that we experience at a daily level, regardless of the class we might belong to takes various forms-discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence -- within the family, at the place of work, in society (07).

This means that patriarchy foregrounds the interests of men and relegates women. The latter are primarily made voiceless and their contribution in society unappreciated which is unjust. This study largely explores patriarchy, a system upheld by capitalism as the major reason for the marginalization of women. Many scholars have come up to defend this claim over the years. For instance, Hartmann concurs with the view above as he stresses “the link between patriarchy and

capitalism” and argues that “patriarchy links all men to each other irrespective of their class” (qtd. in Sultana 5), thereby making them a strong force to oppress women. He defines “Patriarchy as a set of relations which has a mental base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them, which in turn enable them to dominate women. The rational base of patriarchy is men’s control over women’s labour power” (qtd. in Sultana 5). Capitalism in other words unites men and they get the platform to find all means of suppressing the female sex whom they consider inferior. Each returns home from work expecting to find things done to their expectations and they share experiences and views on how to keep their women submissive. The men are solely in charge of their families and command respect. Sultana however does not realize that these “hierarchical relations between men” make some men superior to others hence resulting into oppression of the men of low status by fellow men. “The solidarity” among the men that he posits then does not make sense especially in a situation where some men “are more equal than others” (that Orwell 40). Ojo – Ade (1983) in his analysis of the impact of patriarchy in African literature concurs “Black literature is a mirror of man’s inhumanity and the voice of the victim” (71) due to its patriarchal system.

Engels in his book entitled *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* posits that this was not the case in the pre historic period, a period where the female sex had a higher social status and their labour appreciated, for they were in charge of their households. Matriarchy was the form of leadership at the time and women also had the “mother-right” (280) as men did not really know who their children were given the “unrestricted sexual freedom” (18) that prevailed in the community through the culture of group marriage where no woman belonged to no man and vice versa. Communistic housekeeping therefore was the norm and Engels expounds on this thus:

Communistic housekeeping, however means the supremacy of women in the house; just as the exclusive recognition of the female parent, owing to the impossibility of recognizing the male parent with certainty means that women--- the mothers --- are held in high respect...among all savages and all barbarians.....the position of women is not only free, but honorable (26).

In this period, capitalism was unknown to all and so was the subjugation of Women. Women run their homes freely and were highly revered by men and children. Their domestic work was held

with high regard then. Engels however forgets to note that through matriarchy, the male sex was relegated in the society as all the attention was on the superior being, the woman. This shows that gender inequality has been on for ages and men were originally the victims. This is significant to this study as will be later seen in the findings. Engels further goes on to explain the origin of patriarchy which he argues came up as a result of abundance in agriculture and success through hunting activities which at a later time was construed as male wealth since it was primarily due to the effort of the men as in the quotation: “... domestication of animals and the breeding of herds had developed a hitherto unsuspected source of wealth and created entirely new social relations” (29). With this acquisition of private property, men took over the mantle. To keep the male lineage, monogamy was instated but only as desired by the women. Engels explains this thus:

This advance could not in any case have originated with the men, if only because it has never occurred to them even to this day, to renounce the pleasure of actual group marriage. Only when the Women had brought about the transition to pairing marriage were the men able to introduce strict monogamy- though indeed only for women (28).

The monogamous family therefore was the basis of the supremacy of man and its major purpose was to ensure “The wife’s fidelity and therefore of the paternity of the children” (Engels 31). The female sex became enslaved through monogamy and stripped of all rights of humanity. After marriage, “She is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights” (Engels 31). This is proof that a woman was reduced to a thing; a personal property to man who therefore had the sole right to do with her as he pleased. A woman was thus dehumanized through the system of monogamy. Engels explains that with the social changes noted above, work too was divided along gender lines. The first division of labour therefore between man and woman was and is that of procreation, with man being solely in charge. This is evident in the contemporary societies where men are heads of families whereas women are expected to be submissive and faithful to them. It is the role of the woman to reproduce and raise the children who actually belong to the man. This is servitude at the family level. Engels further explains this thus:

Once it had passed into the private possession of families and there rapidly began to augment, this wealth dealt a severe blow to the society founded on pairing marriage and the matriarchal gens. Pairing marriage had brought a new element

into the family. By the side of the natural mother of the child it placed its natural attested father, with a better warrant of paternity, probably, than that of many a “father” today. According to division of labour within the family at that time, it was man’s part to obtain food and the instruments of labour necessary for the purpose. He therefore also owned the instruments of labour, and in the event of husband and wife separating, he took them with him, just as she retained her household goods. Therefore, according to the social custom of the time, the man was also the owner of the new source of subsistence, the cattle and later of the new instruments of labour, the slaves (29-30).

The woman’s position was, therefore, marked as housewife. This accumulation of wealth by the male sex eventually placed men in a superior position in the family leading to the marginalization of women. “The male line of descent and the paternal law of inheritance” (30) substituted the ancient matriarchy. The impact of this was disastrous as “the man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude, she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children”, (30) a practice that is in existence to date, and a practice that has spilled over to the literary field as male authors like Achebe (1958) portray the position of both sexes thus in their works of art, that is, the men are presented as superior to women hence perpetuating women insubordination even in the modern setting.

Several Marxist feminists attest to the above argument by Engels. They too blame the subjugation of women and male domination on capitalism which provided fertile grounds for patriarchy to thrive:

Donovan argues that capitalism enabled men to accumulate wealth, and in comparison to that, women’s domestic work became less valuable. As this shift in mode of production gave men economic power, men became dominating inside the family also. As women’s domestic work did not produce a direct and conspicuous economic benefit, this kind of work got the status of ‘servitude’ and women were regarded as “a mere instrument of the production of children’ (qtd. in Hossain ‘et al. 13).

This is relevant to this study as it relates to the relegated position of women in male authored texts given their economic disability as will be expounded on in the findings in the next chapter. This argument of Donovan is also applicable in our society today, as many women particularly house wives are subjected to all sorts of abuses; both physical and emotional in the hands of their working-class men specifically, some are brutally beaten up, insulted and coerced to do all sorts of degrading things for the pleasure of their husbands. The poor women endure because they are economically incapacitated. They are prisoners of economic circumstances that are unfair.

This irrelevancy of women as propagated by patriarchy spreads over to other sectors besides the family. Fagunwa, a Nigerian activist and writer blames patriarchy for the segregation of women in the education sector in the past as the intention is to marginalize them in all spheres of life. She says very few girls had access to education during the colonial period, besides it is heartbreaking that “The education of girls focused on subjects around housekeeping, home-nursing and office management” (64). As a result, “girls” were not prepared to take up government jobs or occupy any public space. Denzer adds that for the few Women who were fortunate to be employed by the colonial government, their remuneration was less than that of their male counter parts” (“A Marxian Analysis” 64). This places women in a position below the man given the financial inequality. This background of the discriminative colonial education system also clearly explains the poor mentality that some females till date have towards science subjects which they consider ‘masculine ‘and thus resort to art subjects which many consider feminine. Consequently, the jobs they have access to do not pay them as much as what their male counterparts in the science field get. Women thus remain economically inferior to men, which makes them vulnerable to subjugation. Besides, women’s labour is exploited in some public workplaces even when they do the same jobs as men. This is simply because they are women. They receive less pay compared to their male counterparts which is unfair. This proves how much women are disregarded in the patriarchal society.

Patriarchy also inhibits women from inheriting property, particularly land since it dictates that only men have the right to this. This coerces women to be dependent on the men in their lives for survival, basically their spouses who may use their superior position to marginalize them. This aspect is vital to this study as it too stresses such portrayal of women in literary texts where women are oppressed due to their financial disability. They are chased out of their matrimonial homes at the death of their husbands and the property is taken on by their brothers or even fathers in law, just because they are merely women with no one to turn to seek justice. In some cases, they are inherited by the brothers or relatives of their late husbands along with the property. This is unimaginable! Researchers, for instance Slavchevska et al. argue that:

Gender inequalities may differ across the various land rights. Even if women have rights to work and use land, they may not be able to transfer it through sale, lease or rental. Women’s agricultural decisions may be abused, in part, on the rights that they have over the land. And in turn, this may influence their economic

empowerment and welfare. By assuming that land rights are unidimensional, we may miss key elements of gender gaps (3).

The findings above are proof that women in the contemporary society are suppressed through denial of land ownership, an important factor of production, just because they are women. It is absurd that even to date, a lot is being done to empower women especially in developing economies given their subjugated position. The unfair patriarchal laws are still keeping women in the periphery and holding men with high regard, for they are the owners of means of production. Parity of gender is necessary though for development to be achieved. Slavchevska et al explain this thus:

Gender inequalities in access to productive resources, including agricultural land, continue to be an important concern, particularly in low-income countries. The sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) adopted in 2015 recognize that to end poverty (Goal 1), It will be necessary to ensure equal rights in ownership and control over land, as equal rights to inheritance of productive resources (target 1.4). The SDGS also imply that to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5), policies and legal reforms are needed to give women equal rights and access to ownership and control over land and other economic resources (Target 5a). Therefore, improving women's land rights is well-recognized in the international development agenda as an important pathway for achieving poverty reduction and gender equality (2).

This basically implies that to promote equality of gender, the walls of patriarchy, including capitalism, ought to be shattered so that women compete favourably with men in the public sector. It is this same message that contemporary feminist authors preach, a message of redeeming the girl child and the woman from all sorts of oppressive tendencies of men. They do this through presenting female characters that defy exploitation by men and choose to work hard to gain financial freedom by all means. This is therefore relevant to this study as will be discussed in the proceeding chapter. That aside, women should be granted rights to land ownership and inheritance of property in a bid empower them.

Engels concludes that “the supremacy of man in marriage is the simple consequence of his economic supremacy and with the abolition of the latter will disappear of itself” (43). To a greater extent, it is true that granting women equal rights as men in marriage will be a fertile ground for improving their economic situation as well, since the unnecessary wings that the male gender possess would be cut off, forcing them to walk at the same pace as women. This act too would enable women to regain freedom and break free from the trap of patriarchy. This study

therefore seeks to preach the gospel of gender equality in marriage and beyond especially through literature, so as minimize the marginalization of women.

The shortcoming with the views of the scholars above however, is that they solely blame patriarchy, the brain child of capitalism for male domination and oppression of the female sex which is not entirely true. There are several other factors that relegate the position of a woman in the society including savage customs like female Genital mutilation, low esteem among some females to mention but a few.

1.8.2 Objectification of Women

This is a situation where women are stripped of their dignity and right to be human that is, they are reduced to objects; objects for men's sexual pleasure, material objects (objects for sale), toys to be used and dumped when they have outlived their usefulness and personal belongings to men who thus do with them as they please. This objectification of the female sex applies to real life situations and is prevalent in literature as well, where women's bodies are overly sexualized by male authors. The latter in their literary works put uncalled for emphasis on "women's appearances, bodies, sexual body parts or sexual functions more than their faces and other non-observable attributes, such as thoughts, feelings, and desires" (Gervais et al. 3). This has significant repercussions on the readers as it makes them vulnerable to sexual assault by their male counterparts who are inclined to believe that women are meant for men's sexual pleasure. In short, this act reduces women to sex objects. Fagunwa condemns capitalism for the sexual objectification of women in the society given the fact that it places "Women at the bottom economically" (60). Women are thus coerced into acts of prostitution in order to earn some money. Young girls on the other hand become victims of sexual exploitation in their bid to get material gains from men who have been economically empowered by the capitalist system as earlier noted. This is relevant to this study as a deep analysis of the sexual objectification of women in selected literary texts will be presented in the next chapter. The scholarly articles below vastly present the Marxist feminist views on the objectification of women, as a product of acquisition of private property by men and capitalism;

Engels, in his text, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State*, widely argues that the emergence of private property gave man the economic power over woman and led to the overthrow of mother-right (in deciding the descent of the progeny), which is considered "the

great historical defeat of the female sex” (Beauvoir 88) as man “became the proprietor of the woman” (Beauvoir 88), the master of the house while a woman was reduced to the slave of man’s lust and a mere tool for procreation. A woman is thus sexually objectified at family level for she is financially crippled and inferior to man. Paternal right requires that “transmission of property is from father to son” (Beauvoir 88), a practice that further cripples the female sex economically since the chain of private property ownership is accorded to man alone. This also makes women vulnerable to exploitation and objectification as they solely depend on men for survival. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir assesses the impact of the sole economic power held by men:

“Man reigning sovereign permits himself, among other things, his sexual whims: he sleeps with slaves or courtesans, he is polygamous ... Woman takes revenge through infidelity: adultery becomes a natural part of marriage. This is the only defense woman has against domestic slavery she is bound to: her social oppression is the consequence of her economic oppression” (88).

Because of this economic power, man fully dominates woman; he reduces her to a sexual object to satisfy his extensive libido. The objectification of women becomes inescapable as ironically, the only “defense” they have against the “domestic slavery” in their marital homes is engaging in adultery. It is absurd that even this act of resistance against male domination further pushes them into sexual slavery outside marriage. Beauvoir also discusses the phenomenon of sexual objectification of women when she argues that “It is impossible to consider woman as a solely productive force: for man, she is a sexual partner, a reproducer, an erotic object, an other through whom he seeks himself” (93). Man does not consider woman an autonomous being but a mere “object” that he uses to satisfy his sexual appetite and to reproduce. A woman belongs to a man, she is a material object to man, she is man’s property just like the other property he accumulates due to his economic power over woman. Beauvoir asserts that “just as a pear tree is the property of the owner of the pears, the wife is the property of the man to whom she provides children” (142). All in all, women and the proletariat are both victims of oppression as Beauvoir states it and they can only be set free by the same economic development resulting from the upheaval caused by the invention of machines (89). According to Beauvoir, the objectification and general exploitation of the female sex is bound to stop with intense transformation of the economic conditions in the family and the public sphere; women too should inherit property and be free from the “male-office” syndrome in the public sphere. They should have equal access to

economic opportunities in order to be emancipated from male domination. Engels further notes that in Aragon, the serfdom therein undermined the position of a woman and subjected her to objectification, the law dictated thus:

We judge and declare that the aforementioned Lords (senors, barons) ...when the peasant takes himself a wife, shall neither sleep with her on the first night; nor shall they during the wedding-night; When the wife has laid herself in her bed, step over it and the aforementioned wife as a sign of lordship; nor shall the aforementioned lords use the daughter or son of the peasant, with payment or without payment, against their will (qtd. in Engels 28).

This places the female in a vulnerable state as she is sexually exploited by men who are not her husband just because she is a woman and by law, her acceptance of such exploitation is proof of her submission to the lords.

Engels (1884) posits that the objectification of women is propagated by the practice of monogamy which is a form of marital enslavement that grants man supremacy over woman. Engels directs his critical eye on the Greek society where the severity of this type of marriage is witnessed particularly during the heroic stage where female oppression and male domination is prevalent. He quotes Marx's observation of this phenomenon: "In Homer young women are booty and are handed over to the pleasure of the conquerors, the handsomest being picked by the commanders in order of rank; ..." (33). Women that were slaves of war were sexually exploited by the conquerors of war at their pleasure. Slave women are awarded to the commanders of War victors as though they are materials and not human beings. The Greek heroes even quarrel and scramble for ownership of these slave girls just like the legendary Achilles and Agamemnon. This reflects the slave girls as material objects to the war lords. Engels also adds that the beautiful slaves of war belong unreservedly to the man (33), an indication that they are denied their humanly rights and lowered to sex objects. Meanwhile,

"The legitimate wife was expected to put up with all this, but herself to remain strictly chaste and faithful. In the heroic age, a Greek woman is indeed, more respected than in the period of civilization, but to her husband she is after all nothing but the mother of his legitimate children and heirs, his chief housekeeper and the supervisor of his female slaves, whom he can and does take as concubines if he so fancies" (33).

Women in the Greek society are generally presented as erotic objects and property to man and they have no say in this. A married woman suffers the disgrace of taming more sexual objects

(female slaves) for her husband besides herself. This injustice to the female sex is because of capitalism, a practice that enables man to acquire private property and thus gain economic power over women. In the ancient Greek society, men would return home with a lot of property after war; slaves inclusive but the female slaves would suffer 'double jeopardy' that is; they would be both material and sexual objects to their male masters as noted by Marx above. Engels like Marx asserts that capitalism indeed is to blame for the objectification of women since it paralyses the economic power of women and renders them vulnerable to exploitation by man.

Angda King (2014) in her critique of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* illustrates how the female body is a particular target of disciplinary power by the male – something that furthers male supremacy. She bases on the sub heading "The Body of the Condemned" in which Foucault gives a vivid description of the female body and why she ought to be disciplined and punished consequently. King shows how "woman has been discursively constructed (condemned) as an inferior yet also threatening to man, thus in perpetual need for containment and control and subjected (condemned) to particular disciplinary techniques" (30). Such techniques include subjection to all sorts of beauty routines that enable them to live up to the expected standards of beauty. This involves getting onto a strict diet, bleaching, dressing seductively among others which all contribute to the sexual objectification of women.

Chattopadhyay (1999) also provides an insight on the objectification of women as he observes that Marx, in his third Parisian Manuscript of 1844, declares that in the capitalist society "marriage" is a form of "exclusive private property" for man and adds that man perceives a woman "as prey and the servant of the social lust" (68). A woman is identified as game to be hunted and devoured, she is a domestic worker whose role is to ensure that man lives comfortably. In marriage, a woman is a man's possession; this attitude strips woman of her right to be human. As a belonging, she is oppressed and demeaned by her master who does with her as he pleases. This is absurd. This undesirable state of the female sex is to blame on the unfair capitalist norms which propagate male supremacy over women by empowering the former economically and making the latter entirely dependent on the former. In a capitalist state, sex-based division of labour is prominent: a married woman is expected to focus on her traditional roles of child birth, and house chores whereas the man dominates the public sphere which opens

doors for him to acquire as much property as possible and consequently, hold dominion over the woman as well.

In his book, *Capital: A Critique of Political economy*, Marx further dwells on the gender question as he condemns capitalism for the objectification of women with regards to industrial revolution. He asserts that “Before the labour of women and children under ten years of age was forbidden in mines, capitalists considered the employment of naked women and girls, often in company with men ...” (71). One wonders what these perverts had in mind as they came up with such a despicable scheme. May be the intent was to motivate the male workers and consequently increase the quantity of production, but of course at the expense of a woman’s dignity. To capitalists, a woman is nothing but an object that they can take advantage of especially since she is economically vulnerable. As Marx notes above, capitalists are indeed morally depraved and inhumane beings. They are obsessed with material wealth and thus do not mind dehumanizing those they consider weak as long as they accumulate wealth, and in this case, women are the victims. The insane plan above is a total abasement of the female sex and thankfully, it was never effected because of the labour laws put in place.

Marx, in *The Holy Family*, his first publication with Engels, indulges in a serious discussion on gender, basing on his “critique of Szeliga’s analysis of French socialist, Eugene Sue’s novel, *Les Myteres de Paris*. In this book, Sue relates the stories of a number of characters from various classes in Paris during the 1840s” (Brown 35). These include Rudolph, a German Prince who turns over a new leaf by engaging in doing good so as to atone for his ugly past misdeeds; Fleur de Marie, a prostitute and Louise Morel, a young servant that is sexually exploited by her bourgeois master. In response to this text, Marx casts his critical eye on the two female characters; Fleur de Marie and Loiuise Morel who are both victims of sexual objectification in the given capitalist setting. Marx’s analysis of the condition of these two female characters “illustrates his humanism as well as his disdain for bourgeois society—this in contrast to both Sue and Szeliga’s moralistic commentary” (Brown 36) as he condemns the bourgeois for the injustices that women suffer. Marx describes Fleur de Marie as “a prostitute, a serf to the proprietress of a criminals’ tavern” who “preserves a human nobleness of a soul, a human unaffectedness and a human beauty that impress those around her” (Marx and Engels 225) despite living among the morally corrupt. Marx argues that Fleur de Marie remains good, her

humane nature is not corrupted at all even when she associates with criminals. Unlike the bourgeois society, Marx does not judge Fleur de Marie for engaging in prostitution but rather, considers her a victim of sexual objectification in her bid to make ends meet. Marx further explains that “in spite of her frailty, *Fleur de Marie* shows great vitality, energy, cheerfulness, elasticity of character—qualities which alone explain her human development in her *inhuman* situation” (Marx and Engels 225). He thus emphasises that Fleur de Marie is actually a victim of an ‘inhuman’ situation, which situation drives her into prostitution. Marx further explains that this unfortunate condition does not kill Fleur de Marie’s spirit to fight in the face of exploitation:

When Chouineur illtreats her, she defends herself with her scissors. She does not appear as a defenceless lamb who surrenders without any resistance to overwhelming brutality: she is a girl that can vindicate her rights and puts up a fight” (Marx and Engels 225).

Marx admires Fleur de Marie’s bravery and fighting spirit against her oppressor. He believes that women should do the same when faced with injustice, instead of behaving like a helpless sheep being driven to the slaughter house. Marx also adores Fleur de Marie’s optimistic attitude towards life in spite of her oppressive economic and social situation. She takes to prostitution to earn a living but later, regrets ever making that disgraceful decision of “selling herself to the proprietess of the criminals’ tavern” (225) and consequently, making herself vulnerable to objectification. She sadly narrates her experience to Rudolph:

“... I was only seventeen years old. Who could tell? On such occasions I thought I had not deserved my fate, that I had something good in me. People have tormented me enough, I used to say to myself, but at least I have never done any harm to anybody” (226).

Fleur de Marie does not condemn herself because she knows that it was not her by free-will to embrace prostitution but rather coercion due to being economically handicapped. She believes that she is not evil, she has never hurt anybody despite being hurt countless times by the ‘self-proclaimed moral’ bourgeois. Marx expresses his admiration for Fleur de Marie’s world view and good nature when he asserts that:

Good and evil; in Marie’s mind, are not the moral *abstractions* of good and evil. She is good because she has never caused *suffering* to anybody, she has always been *human* towards her inhuman surroundings ... She is good because she is still *young*, full of hope and vitality. Her situation is not *good* because it does her unnatural violence, because it is not the expression of her impulses, the fulfillment of her human desires, because it is full

of torment and void of pleasure. She measures her situation in life by *own individuality*, her *natural essence*, not by the *ideal* of good.

In natural surroundings, the chains of bourgeois life fall off Fleur de Marie, she can freely manifest her own nature and consequently is bubbling with love of life ... these show that the bourgeois system has only grazed the surface of her and is a mere misfortune, that she herself is neither good nor bad, but human. (Marx and Engels 226-227).

Marx argues that Fleur de Marie's actions are because she is 'human' and she too desires to survive by doing anything humanly possible. The fact that her resorting to prostitution is not her inner most desire makes her guiltless, that action is out of compulsion and "void of pleasure" as Marx states. He satirizes the hypocritical bourgeois for failing to support and protect her and instead judging her unjustly in her struggle to keep living despite the unfavorable economic conditions. Fleur de Marie is the victim here; and not the villain. She has never harmed anyone in spite of being tormented by many. She is a victim of objectification because all she has to offer in order to survive in the harsh capitalist society is her body. The moral ideology of the bourgeois society is questionable since it entirely points fingers at the victim and ignores the actual culprit; that is, the bourgeois who pay for the services of helpless girls like Marie.

The old priest, Laporte whose task is to revive Fleur de Marie's faith in God instead condemns her for being sinful. He tells Madame George, the girl's host that marriage is out of the equation for Fleur de Marie since she is dirty and unworthy, "no man, in spite of the priest's guarantee, will have the courage to face the past that has soiled her youth" (Marx and Engels 229). One wonders whether this poor girl "soiled her youth" herself! Of course, it is man that did that having seen and used her as an erotic object. It is ironic that not even such a man would dare to take her on as a wife, instead they would all prefer a chaste woman. This is unfair! The callous priest insists that Marie ought to have stuck to the moral virtues just like "the commonest of the bourgeois" (229) and that she deserves absolution in order to be forgiven. Unlike the "slave of religion"; the hypocritical man of God who condemns Fleur de Marie, Marx points to the actual problem that drives the poor girl into that undesirable lifestyle:

The hypocritical priest knows quite well that at every hour of the day, in the busiest streets, those virtuous people of Paris go past little girls selling matches and the like up to

midnight as Marie herself used to do and who almost without exception, will have the same fate as Marie” (229).

Marx exposes the undesirable conditions that the working-class girls and women are subjected to in this capitalist state. They hopelessly work for very long hours yet they barely earn enough and if their situation doesn't change, Marx asserts that they will be forced to take the same drastic measures as Marie. Brown (2012) remarks that “As members of the proletariat, they have nothing to sell but their own labour and, when there is not enough productive work, women are forced to sell their bodies in order to survive” (37). Like Marx, Brown asserts that in the face of the old capitalistic norms, the sexual objectification of women will remain a reality for their bodies are their only treasure.

This phenomenon is also reflected in Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* in the essay, ‘Needs, Production and Division of labour’ as he argues that under capitalism, everything is commodified:

Everything which you own must be made venal, i.e., useful. Suppose I ask the economist: am I acting in accordance with economic laws if I earn money by the sale of my body, by prostituting it to another person's lust (In France, the factory workers call the prostitution of their wives and daughters the *nth* hour of work, which is literally true). He will reply: you are not acting contrary to my laws, but you must take into account what Cousin Morality and Cousin Religion have to say... (Brown 37).

Prostitution, a vice that strips women of all dignity and reduces women to mere erotic objects is encouraged by capitalism. It is shameful that the terrible economic situation forces men to let their wives and daughters make extra money through prostitution. What matters is “the ends” and not “the means”. For the sake of money, prostitution is acceptable but the only barriers are two cousins that emphasise virtuousness, that is, Morality and Religion. Since our focus is on objectification of women, Marx's view above vividly reflects the fact that capitalism propagates prostitution which reduces women to objects of man's sexual lust.

Loiuse Morel is another female character that Marx analyses in *The Holy Family* with regards to the objectification of women. Morel is described as a young woman that is a victim of objectification in her struggle to fend for her sick parents and siblings. Marx equates Louise Morel with “a ware held for sale to the first bidder who wishes to obtain exclusive ownership of her...” (Marx and Engels 259). This is an indication that she is more less a material possession to her boss due to the sharp claws of capitalism. The heartless notary that she serves takes

advantage of this exclusive right by raping and impregnating the helpless girl and later; falsely accuses her of infanticide when she loses the baby during birth. He uses this as a strategy to get rid of Louise Morel. By raping her, he reduces her to an erotic object for his sexual pleasure. Being a notary, the law enforcers believe him and Louise is arrested without being given the chance to protest her innocence. Upon her arrest, Rudolph indulges in reflexions which Marx bitterly criticizes:

Rudolph's reflexions do not go so far as to make the condition of the servants the object of his most gracious criticism. Being a petty ruler himself, he is a great advocate of the condition of servants. Still less does he proceed to grasp the general condition of women in modern society as an inhuman one (Marx and Engels 258).

Marx argues that Rudolph does not understand the "inhuman" conditions of work that working class women like Louise Morel are subjected to in the harsh capitalist modern society. Worse-still, the law is absurdly blind in that "the criminal who has practically driven a girl to infanticide is not punished" (258). The poor girl is a victim of sexual objectification and she is punished by the law for being a victim. This is absurd! Marx also satirizes the fact that "there is no law to punish a seducer" (258) and as a result, the sexual harassment of women remains inevitable. He thus recommends that since "the general condition of women in modern society [is] an inhuman one, legislation is insufficient: the position of women must be ameliorated" (Brown 39). Marx calls for a fundamental transformation on the situation of women in the modern society, there is need to emancipate the female sex in order to deal with the injustices that they suffer like objectification. Women should also be given equal opportunities in the public sector for she "cannot be emancipated unless she takes part in production on a large scale and is only inadequately bound to domestic work" (Beauvoir 89). In regards to the insufficient legislation on women matters as Marx observes, Beauvoir suggests that "Equality can only be re-established when both sexes have equal legal rights" (89). The law should be fair to both men and women.

With regards to the sexual objectification of women, Schwendinger and Schwendinger also argue that "traditionally, empirical tests of Marxist theories of rape examine variables such as overall levels of poverty, unemployment, labor force participation, and low wages" (324). In short, women suffer objectification because of capitalism; particularly due to their economic malnourishment and also engagement in the male dominated labour market. They are taken advantage of in their struggle to find means of survival in the male dominated society.

Amone et al., in an article entitled *Culture and Girl –child Education in Northern Uganda*: similarly argue that the vulnerability of the girl child in the Ugandan society is due to their financial disability:

Culturally, it is believed and maintained that a girl child and woman do not own property. This leaves them powerless and vulnerable to the forces of desire for material things that they cannot afford, this is because they themselves are looked at as commodities hence are in most cases unable to control their own situations and end up being victims to circumstances (577).

This ground research by Amone et.al stresses that women are viewed as ‘commodities’ by their male counterparts and this is an element of objectification. It is worth noting that being ‘commodities’ as presented above, many families view girls and women as potential sources of wealth or materials. Among the Baganda, a tribal group in Uganda for instance, when a girl is born, the parent(s) regardless of their sex proudly remark, “Nzadde ka Sukali,” translated as “I have given birth to sugar” which is symbolic of their materialistic expectations from the new born. Right from birth, a material value is attached to the girl child in many cultures especially in Africa. This comes to pass during the traditional marriage ceremony in form of bride price where a ‘price tag’ is attached to the bride and meant to be paid by the groom for the marriage to be considered complete and official. Many a time, when things go wrong in marriage or in case of misunderstandings, the men sarcastically remind their wives of how costly they were and thus demand submission from them, since they literally bought them. Amone et al, further observe that:

The cultural belief that a girl should be kept a virgin until the day she gets married such that she can be of great value also impacted on the girl child. This is because, in most cases, girl children are withdrawn from school for fear of losing their virginity to their peers, lustful teachers as well as men who lure them promising to marry them however, it does not turn up this way always, so for fear of this, their parents take them from school just to prepare them to fetch enough bride wealth when she finally gets married and also respect when their daughters are married while virgins (577).

School going girls in Northern Uganda and many other parts of the world are, thus, denied the opportunity of education by their greedy and materialistic parents who objectify them. This aspect is significant in the study as similar circumstances are presented in some of the selected texts where men discourage fellow men from educating their daughters because they are women and may lose their virginity in school and therefore lose material value. Little do these parents know that denial of education to their daughters results into their vulnerability to objectification since their only hope for emancipation is barred. This capitalistic tendency by parents is responsible for the marginalization of women in society. Money is given first priority over the human being –the woman.

The impact of capitalism on the lifestyle of African Women is deplorable and thus cannot be ignored since it contributes to the objectification of women as Fagunwa puts it in her essay, “A Marxian Analysis on the Bond Between capitalism and oppression of Nigerian Women since Colonial Times”:

The frequent portrayal of the images of women as sexual commodities are pointers to the social effects of capitalism, whilst it is correct... the tragedy of African women under the system is incomparable. For instance, the Atlantic slavery trade did not end with an attack on the image of African women. Through racism, African Women inherited a peculiar feeling of social exclusion and inferiority. Within the context of this inferiority complex, the general feeling of self-hatred among Nigerian women has indeed been one of the sources of the sustenance of capitalism in the country. Nigeria basically is one of the most fertile grounds for European-, Asian-, and Indian-owned capitalist merchandising bleaching cosmetics and human hair, otherwise known as weaves and wigs. This can be better interpreted as a situation wherein foreign capitalists in harmony with the indigenous capitalists, are making an abundant amount of wealth through the social exclusion and inferiority condition of Nigerian woman (60-61).

Fagunwa’s observation above points to the low self -esteem of African women generally which pushes them to resort to all sorts of ‘modern’ products so as to modify their bodies and look more appealing to the opposite sex. In so doing, they make themselves vulnerable to objectification by their male counterparts. In the contemporary society, like observed above by Fagunwa, Women bleach so as to ‘run away’ from their ‘ugly’ dark skin complexion, wear artificial nails, eye lashes, hips, breasts and all sorts of make up in a bid to enhance their looks, little knowing that these are acts of self -objectification, thanks to capitalism. This study deeply

analyses the self-objectification of women as well as will be seen through a number of characters in the selected texts.

The Lacuna in the views of the scholars in this sub-section of objectification of women is that they entirely blame the system of capitalism for this vice, which is not true. It is worth noting that objectification of the females has its roots in culture as well, as earlier noted by Engels' analysis of some of the pre-historic cultural practices, in the previous sub-section.

Since women are vulnerable to sexual objectification due to their low financial status which is a result of the unjust capitalist laws, the Marxist feminists conclude that "an improvement in women's absolute status will result in lower rape rates" (Schwendinger and Schwendinger 324). In summary, if women are granted equal opportunity or access to means of production as their male counterparts, cases of sexual exploitation and generally, objectification will dwindle significantly. It is also important to note that capitalism involves division of labour which in turn results into a class society as some people get richer and more powerful than others. This applies to both the domestic and public spheres. According to Marx 1884, "Since the origin of class society exists in the family, a classless society cannot be created and maintained so long as familial and gender-oppression exists. Any attempts at creating such a classless society without dealing with this problem would maintain the primary contradiction within the division between mental and physical labour..." (43). All conditions that propagate the objectification of women in the family should be dealt with first and consequently, the oppressive capitalist system towards the female sex in the public sphere will also be no more. Empowering women in the domestic sphere will definitely not leave room for their exploitation by man outside the home for they will be confident of their value and power as women. The best way to deal with objectification of women is by cleaning up the mess at family level by disempowering men and granting equal rights to women. The roots of women objectification should be cut down and soon, the entire tree will rot giving way to a classless society.

1.8.3 Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas attached to femininity and masculinity, and failure to live up to them results into alienation of the offender. These stereotypes are cultural-based and they basically relegate the position of Women in society no matter the country of origin, and they

affect the way women and men characterize others and themselves. Gender stereotypes are also to blame for gender inequality, as they determine the role of both sexes in the society and result in gender-based division of labour. Marxist feminists' view gender stereotypes as a barrier to women emancipation as presented in the scholarly arguments below:

In a footnote of *Das Kapital*, Marx writes, Mr. E., Manufacturer, let me know that he employed only women on his mechanical looms, and that he gave preference to married women, and among them, women who had a family to care for at home, because they were far more docile and attentive than unmarried women, and had to work until ready to drop from exhaustion to provide indispensable means of subsistence to support their families. This is how, adds Marx, "the qualities proper to women are misrepresented to her disadvantage, and all the delicate and moral elements of her nature become means to enslave her and make her suffer" (Beauvoir 165).

Women are stereotyped as submissive beings and capitalists take advantage of this trait to exploit them by subjecting them to heavy work and long hours of work. Marx argues that the female character of responsibility, compassion and dedication to family are used as mechanisms of their enslavement and domination by the callous capitalists. Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* confirms that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, employers preferred female workers because "They do better work for less pay" (164). This inhumane treatment of female workers is due to the gender stereotypes assigned to women. G. Daville also writes about the lamentable state of women workers in his summary of *Das Kapital* thus: "Beast of luxury or beast of burden, such is a woman almost exclusive today. Kept by man when she does not work, she is still kept by him when she works herself to death" (Beauvoir 165). This vivid description of women emphasizes their subjugated position as through their hard work, man lives a comfortable life. It is ironic that despite their industriousness, they are stereotyped as helpless dependent beings. Their hard work is in vain for it can't empower them in any way but rather subjects them to exploitation by man in the domestic sphere, and by the capitalists in the public sphere.

Marx (1867), in his analysis of the impact of capitalism on women labourers, explains that indeed the exploitation of women in the labour market is due to the stereotypes accorded to them; which in turn influences the gender-based division of labour. He writes:

With needlewomen of all kinds, including milliners, dressmakers, and ordinary seamstresses, there are three miseries – over-work, deficient air, and either deficient food

or deficient digestion ... Needlework, in the main, ... is infinitely better adapted to women than to men (200).

Employers subject female workers to the terrible conditions of work stated above because they are confident that they (the women) can not dare to resist or demand for better conditions given their 'docile' nature as noted in the previous paragraph. Women are also often stereotyped as the weaker sex, and capitalists in the era of industrial revolution take this into account as well when choosing employees. Marx (1867) reveals that:

In so far as machinery dispenses with muscular power, it becomes a means of employing labourers of slight muscular strength, and those whose bodily development is incomplete, but whose limbs are all the more, supple. The labour of women and children was, therefore, the first thing sought for by capitalists who used machinery (272).

It is humiliating that women are put in the same category with children, as capitalists believe that their physical strength is more less the same. Like children, women are considered weak for they possess "slight muscular strength" compared to their male counterparts whose macho strength is definitely incomparable. Since machinery does not require much physical strength but commitment, capitalists opt for female workers and children whom they can ably exploit to their advantage.

Marx also adds that capitalists intentionally prefer female workers to male workers because the latter are "repellent" to their capitalist exploitative tendencies. Marx reveals that:

The automation, as capital, and because it is capital, is endowed in the person of the capitalist, with intelligence and will; it is therefore animated by the longing to reduce a minimum of resistance offered by that repellent yet elastic natural barrier, man. This resistance is moreover lessened by the apparent lightness of machine work, and by the more pliant and docile character of the women and children employed on it (276).

Marx explains that the heartless and selfish capitalists hate resistance from workers which may affect the quality and quantity of their production. Consequently, they perceive male workers as 'repellent' and 'elastic natural barriers' when they try to demand for better conditions of work and deal with this problem by employing more women and children whom they freely exploit because they are weak and timid beings. Resultantly, the capitalists make a lot of money at the expense of their overworked workers whose timid nature keeps them at bay despite the injustices they face at work.

Gender stereotyping is also presented as an issue that has been in existence for ages as reflected in the quotation below from Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State*:

In the Stone Age, when the land belonged to all members of the clan, the rudimentary nature of the primitive spade and hoe limited agricultural possibilities: feminine strength was at the level of work needed for gardening. In this primitive division of labour, the two sexes already constitute two classes in a way; there is equality between these classes; while the man hunts and fishes, the woman stays at home; but the domestic tasks include productive: pottery making, weaving, gardening; and in this way, she has an important role in economic life. With the discovery of copper, tin, bronze and iron, and with the advent of the plow, agriculture expands its reach: intensive labour is necessary to clear the forests and cultivate the fields. So, man has recourse to the service of other men, reducing them to slavery. Private property appears: master of slaves and land, man also becomes the proprietor of the woman. This is the “great historical defeat of the female sex”. It is explained by the disruption of the division of labour brought about by the invention of new tools (Beauvoir 88).

Marx explains how the gender-based division of labour due to gender stereotypes changes with time, leading to the victimization and marginalization of women. In the pre-historic period, women were innovative as they engaged in both domestic and productive work that empowered them economically and accorded them an equal status with men who largely carried out risky jobs like hunting wild game and fishing given their macho strength and bravery. In this society, men and women worked as complimentary forces to sustain the family. The advent of private property with time however brought about gender division as men gained economic control over women due to accumulation of wealth from the activities they engaged in in the public sector; that is, hunting, fishing, mining and agriculture. Men became the family bread winners and women were reduced to dependent beings enslaved in the domestic sphere as purely wives and mothers; men became masters over women and this is what Marx refers to the “great historical defeat of the female sex”. This has remained the norm in many modern societies today as men are considered the superior sex in the family, religious and technical grounds.

Engels (1884) further explains that capitalism is indeed to blame for the inferior status accorded to women in the society due to their economic dependence on man, which was not the case in the past when “mother-right” reigned supreme. He asserts that unlike “the old communistic household” where women would manage the household freely, the institution of capitalism changed everything that is, “household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a private service; the wife became the head servant, excluded from

all participation in social production” (39). A woman is stereotyped as a servant in the family and is prohibited from freely engaging in the public sphere which is male dominated. As she stays home to carry out her domestic duties, the man goes out to work and accumulates more private property in the process. Consequently, man who has the economic power becomes master over her. Engels relates this phenomenon to the modern society where capitalism has resulted in the falsified existence of women:

In the great majority of cases today, at least in the possessing classes, the husband is obliged to earn a living and support his family, and that in itself gives him a position of supremacy, without any need for special legal titles and privileges. Within the family, he is the bourgeois and the wife represents the proletariat (39).

Engels relates man to the “bourgeois” to emphasise his superiority over woman in the family; a title he earns because of being the sole family breadwinner, unlike the woman who is equated with the “proletariat”; the oppressed and inferior one. In the capitalist mode of production, the rich privileged class; the ‘bourgeois’ exploit the poor working class; the ‘proletariat’ in order to accumulate wealth. Similarly, at the family level, man who is the head of the family oppresses his wife by enslaving her to domestic chores and sexual exploitation in order to live comfortably. A woman is reduced to a servant in her marital home while the man is the master. All in all, capitalism creates a class system between the two sexes in the family as man gains a higher status than woman due to the economic power bestowed on him by the given system.

Hurst (2010) concurs with Engel’s view above as he explains how the emergence of the capitalist mode of production brought about a chasm between the ‘public’ and ‘private’ sphere thus making male sovereignty almost inescapable. He argues that:

A capitalist society is based on some capitalistic values such as production in mass quantities, a separate workplace and a fixed period of working time. As a result, separation of work place and home is needed. As men work outside, they gain more economic and political power. Women, because of their high involvement at home, become economically dependent on men. Thus in society, the status of women is lowered. In this way, gender inequality gets established (Hossain et al. 14).

According to Hurst, gender inequality and consequently stereotypes is a result of capitalism; a mode of production which empowers men economically as they dominate the public sector while the women suffer bondage in the domestic sphere and thus acquire an inferior status. Marxist feminists argue that “the capitalistic mode of production almost forced women to remain inside

their homes (the private spheres) to take care of the families so that men can work” (Hossain et al. 14). This cripples women economically and keeps them dependent on men.

Beauvoir (1949) also argues that the public sphere is indeed male dominated and that any “male –office” is forbidden to women for they are not intelligent enough. Consequently, any married woman that defies this ‘natural law’ of capitalism by choosing to directly get involved in the public sphere is bound to suffer discrimination and oppression. Such a woman, Beauvoir satirically remarks:

does not manage her capital; although she has rights to it, she does not have the responsibility for it; it does not provide any subsistence to her action ...she has no concrete grasp on the world. Even her children belong to the father rather than to her, as in the time of Eumenides: she “gives” them to her spouse, whose authority is far greater than hers and who is the real master of her posterity; ... (142).

Women are perceived as intellectually weak beings that have no idea about how the world operates, therefore their husbands help them to manage their capital lest they squander it by engaging in useless ventures. Married women thus do not benefit from their hard earned money and this is exploitation of the highest order. The woman works and the man spends! It is laughable! The female’s mental incapacity and inferiority to man is further presented in the following quotation: “We have seen that two essential traits characterize a woman biologically: her grasp on the world is narrower than man’s; and she is more closely subjugated to the species” (Beauvoir 87). Bluntly spoken, a woman is a naturally foolish being that needs guidance from the wise “species”; that is ‘man’ in order to survive in this complicated world. But who complicates the world? Because of being stupid, the female sex is dominated by man. Beauvoir explains the phenomenon of the “grasp on the world” thus:

Throughout human history, grasp on the world is not defined by the naked body; the hand, with its prehensile thumb, moves beyond itself toward instruments that increase its power; from prehistory’s earliest documents, man is always seen as armed. In the past, when it was a question of carrying heavy clubs and of keeping wild beasts at bay, woman’s physical weakness constituted a flagrant inferiority; if the instrument requires slightly more strength than the woman can muster, it is enough to make her seem radically powerless (87).

Ironically, for ages, “grasp on the world” is equated to physical strength. Because women are deemed weak, they are branded intellectually lacking as well. Men boast about their bravery and

resultantly assumed mental power over women which are merely stereotypes. In actual sense, some women possess such masculine traits while some men are physically weak. Such gender stereotypes are misleading.

Fagunwa, Temitope (2020) in the essay, “*A Marxian Analysis on the Bond Between Capitalism and Oppression of Nigerian Women Since Colonial Times*” concurs with the scholarly views above on the oppression of women in his assertion that in the late 18th Century:

the demand for labour was predicated on sexuality as men became the most sought after. The roles capitalism fashioned out for English women during the earliest phase therefore were that meant for ‘house wives and mothers’. Under capitalism patriarchy, the role of women increasingly became ‘bearing and rearing’ the next generation of laborers to support capitalism. With this trend, the labour of women became the cheapest commodity” (59).

He adds that, “The subservient and servicing roles of women under this system were in fact validated religiously and culturally. Because the labor of women under capitalism hinges on the maintenance of the primary labour force, it is therefore not incorrect to argue that the system sustains itself through the unpaid labour of women. The unpaid labour of women exists in two places, both at the household and factory levels” (59-60). He further postulates that with capitalism came gender roles that are “rooted in the ideals of extreme sexual division of labour. The male sex was delegated the position of the sole breadwinner and the female sex was relegated to the position of child bearers and child rearers. Although both men and women have rights to control and to own means of production, men dominate. Consequently, because of its sexist nature, capitalism is structured in such a way that a vast majority of women, in whatever society, are to be made socially inferior” (60). Fagunwa thus argues that through capitalism, women are associated with the domestic role of “reproduction” which entails giving birth and raising children whereas the men are accorded the duty of “production” economically. This places men in a favourable position given their economic empowerment. Women on the other hand are left with limited choices hence, depend on men for survival. This makes them vulnerable to exploitation by men.

All in all, it is such oppressive tendencies towards women that gave rise to feminism, a woman centered doctrine that postulates that, “women should share equally in society’s opportunities

and scarce resources” (Delaney 2005:202). For Marxist feminists, empowerment and equality for women cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalism. It can only be achieved by dismantling the capitalist system in which much of women’s labour is uncompensated. Marx for instance asserts that:

The change in a historical epoch can always be determined by the progress of women towards freedom, because in relation of woman to man, of the weak to the strong, the victory of human nature over brutality is most evident. The degree of emancipation of woman is the natural measure of general emancipation (Engels 259).

To eliminate gender stereotypes and achieve gender equality, a woman; who is the victim here, should be freed from male domination. A woman should be granted the opportunity to freely participate in the public sector and gain economic power as well. Women and men should work together as complementary forces in the society. Marx concludes that emancipation of women is the only gate-pass to a classless society.

1.9 Research Methodology

The research was based on the qualitative approach which put emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of the communities of the given texts in regards to gender. This approach enabled the researcher to compare gender portrayal in the selected texts in terms of portrayal of gender and choice of language. This involved textual analysis of characterization, character roles and male-female power relations in the selected male and female authored texts to discover whether the sex of the author impacts on their depiction of gender.

This research was purely library-based. The researcher engaged in close reading of given texts and relevant scholarly information regarding portrayal of gender. Guided by a set of research questions, data collection and analysis of data was chronologically done. The information was got from Makerere and Kyambogo University libraries plus authentic on-line libraries, FEMRITE Resource Centre Kampala (Kira), the internet, relevant journals, book reviews and articles. The scholarly analysis of this data provided very significant findings for the study. Both primary and secondary sources of data were thoroughly utilized for the success of this research, that is, these were noted down for close analysis.

Gender depiction in five primary texts by selected African authors was the pivot of this study. These include: Oyono's *Houseboy*, Ocwinyo's *Footprints of the Outsider*, Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter*, Karoro's *The Invisible Weevil* and Sinyangwe's *A Cowrie of Hope*. These were chosen on account that they represent three regions of the African continent: the West, the East and Southern Africa; thereby presenting these different voices, views and depiction of gender from the selected literary works thus proving that the soiled female gender portrayal by the male authors throughout the continent is quite similar. Besides, the selected texts widely express the varying gender views in the colonial, post-colonial and contemporary era as they are published between 1956 and 2002; a period when gender awareness was prevalent and the oppressed gender was advocating for a room of their own. The researcher chose three male authored texts and two female written texts with intent to dwell on a deep comparative analysis of gender depiction. The first two male literary texts, *Houseboy* and *Footprints of the Outsider*, are juxtaposed with the two female authored texts, *The First Daughter* and *The Invisible Weevil*. Gender portrayal in the last male authored text, *A Cowrie of Hope*, is discussed in comparison with the representation of gender in the other selected male authored texts to ascertain whether the feminists' view that male writers portray women in a biased way is true. The researcher closely read for proper mastery of content and analysis. Focus shall be on the authors' portrayal of characters and language use in the depiction of gender in the given texts. The findings shall be noted down systematically. As per the language use by the authors, the researcher particularly identified and noted down specific words used to describe or identify gender, for instance; nouns, noun phrases, adjectives, vernacular words and even action verbs. These were tabulated under given sub-headings after the analysis of character portrayal in the selected texts.

Analysis of the data was done after collection of data from the raw data sources. Editing, correction and classification of this data was done thoroughly for purposes of clarity. This data was presented in form of logically and chronologically organized notes with clear illustrations and support details. The information was then categorized accordingly under given chapters, headings and sub-titles. The language used to describe the characters shall be tabulated as earlier noted. The relevant methods of presenting this data shall be summarizing, paraphrasing and quoting scholarly views /arguments about the given topic directly. The general conclusion which forms chapter six of this study, shall be drawn from this study.

1.10 Definition of Terms

- Femrite:** The Uganda Women Writers Association founded in 1996 by Mary Karoro Okurut and Gorette Kyomuhendo. It is based in Kampala, Uganda and aims at promoting female authorship.
- Gender:** Personal behavior / character and social positions that society attaches to being male or female. In this study, I uphold the argument that whereas one's gender is socially-constructed, one's sex is biologically-determined.
- Feminist:** A person who supports the belief that, women should have the same rights and opportunities as men.
- Misogyny:** Hatred/ contempt for or strong prejudice against women or girls.
- Male Vilification:** Severe ridicule/ contempt of the males in the society.
- Patriarchal society:** A social setting ruled or controlled by men; giving power and importance only to men.
- Phallogocentric:** Having a belief that the phallus/penis is a symbol of authority or male dominance / superiority in the social order.
- Stereotype:** An over-generalized belief about a particular category of people or a set of ideas that people have about specific groups of people for example gender stereotypes.
- Masculinity and femininity:** Social expectations/ qualities of manliness and womanhood
- Marxist feminism:** A literary theory that focuses on the ways in which women could be oppressed through systems of capitalism and the individual ownership of private property
- Print media:** Means of mass communication in the form of printed publications such as newspapers, magazines, scholarly Journals, flyers and newsletters.

Gynocentric: Focusing on women or supporting women

Misandrist: A woman who passionately hates men

Sexism: Any arbitrary stereotyping of persons, male or female, on the basis of their sex.

CHAPTER TWO

GENDER STEREOTYPES, OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN AND LANGUAGE USED TO PORTRAY GENDER IN THE SELECTED MALE AND FEMALE WRITTEN WORKS

2.0 Introduction

Chapter two offers a critical comparative analysis of the gender stereotypes and objectification of women in the selected male-authored texts—Oyono's *Houseboy* and Ocwinyo's *Footprints of the Outsider* versus the selected female-authored texts—Okurut's *The Invisible Weevil* and Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter*. The given authors' language use in gender portrayal is carefully woven within the various paragraphs in this chapter. This was done to find out if the given authors' sex impacts on their depiction of gender. The representation of gender in the two male-authored texts above is also juxtaposed with Binwell Sinyangwe's gender portrayal in *A Cowrie of Hope*. The intention is to find out how Binwell Sinyangwe, a male author perceives the role of women in society in contrast to the other selected male authors in this study. The researcher also intends to find out whether the feminists' view that male authors generally portray women stereotypically holds water. Poulain de la Barre is known for the famous remark: "Everything that men have written about women should be viewed with suspicion, because they are both judge ..." quoted in (Beauvoir 1949). In other words, the depiction of females by male authors is questionable because many a time, it is meant to subordinate women in order to uphold male superiority. This study seeks to ascertain the actuality of this view.

As per the language use, focus was put on how the given authors define male and female characters in their texts basing on the nouns, noun phrases, adjectives and adverbs used to identify gender. The analysis of gender portrayal and language use is presented under two specific objectives: Gender Stereotypes and Objectification of women as discussed below:

2.1 Gender Stereotypes

2.1.0 The Stereotyping of Women by the Selected Male Authors

The female characters, unlike their counterparts, the male, are generally portrayed as the inferior sex in *Houseboy* and *Footprints of the Outsider*. As a matter of fact, they are accorded trivial roles as minor characters playing second fiddle to their male counterparts, stressing their insignificance, in the respective societies they live in, as discussed under the subtitles below.

2.1.1 Weak, Submissive and Dependent

Ferdinand Oyono, a male author selected for this study, presents his female characters as weak, submissive and brutalized in *Houseboy*. The female characters give in to the demands of the men in their lives. Toundi's mother, for instance, suffers physical and psychological torture that her husband, Toundi's father subjects her to. She is depicted as a weak and helpless being in the face of brutality. Toundi reveals that he and his mother are victims of domestic violence. He says, "My father however was not a stranger and I was well acquainted with what he could do with a stick. Whenever he went for either my mother or me, it always took us a week to recover" (10). This brutal and beastly act by Toundi's father exposes the vulnerability of women in the patriarchal society. They cannot do anything to free themselves from the violence meted on them and neither can they be of help to their own children when the man/head of the home chooses to unleash his anger upon them. Mother and child therefore live in fear of the man of the house. The latter is filled with pride following the terror he creates to his household for such is considered manly. Toundi's mother, despite this painful experience never has the courage to fight back because she is a woman that is helpless and dependent on the husband. She simply accepts her fate.

Another incident of female weakness and submission is seen through the character of the women from the Sixa. These are "delivered" from their polygamous marriages by Fr. Vandemayar so that they get "salvation" someday. It is ironical, however, that their deliverer subjects them to heavy work for the wellbeing of the whites. Besides, their freedom is infringed as they are kept as boarders (confined). Toundi pities them when he thinks aloud, "If they knew the work there is waiting for them here, they would have stayed behind with their husband" (15). These women are brainwashed and forced to submit to the will of the hypocritical Father Vandemayar of

Dangan Catholic Parish little knowing about the heavy workload they are yet to be subjected to. They are also sexually abused by Martin, the catechist in that parish.

In addition to the above, the nouns ‘girl or woman’ are considered synonymous with weakness or fearfulness in this text. When Toundi is mercilessly thrashed by his father for his greediness, he tries his best not to cry to avoid attracting the neighbours. He says, “My friends would have thought me a girl. I would have lost my place in the group of ‘boys-who-are-soon to be-men’” (11). This misogynist attitude of making the noun ‘girl’ derogatory is unjust. It is stereotypical to believe that girls or females are weak beings. It is even worse when weak males are referred to as girls as it is the implied case by Oyono in his text, *‘Houseboy’*. This stresses the contempt that Oyono holds towards the female sex.

Julius Ocwinyo also follows this trend when he portrays women as submissive beings; beings that can hardly survive by themselves. This is because majority of the females are economically handicapped and are thus forced to look up to the men in their lives for a livelihood. Many women therefore view marriage as their ultimate goal for it is in this institution that they hope to have their needs met.

A case in point is Pascolina, an uneducated woman whose fears and inner conflict, the narrator exposes to us. As a young woman, she worries a lot about her choice of a husband and marriage generally. She feels she is not good enough for her suitor, Adoli Awal; a highly educated man with countless educated girlfriends, and wonders if any other man will marry her if she rejects Adoli’s proposal. Her lack of self-esteem affects her decision on the choice of a spouse as the Omniscient narrator reveals that, “... if she did not marry Mike Adoli Awal, who would marry her? It was better to marry a bad man than to have no husband at all!” (100). This is proof that many young women give in to societal pressure and therefore would rather end up with “a bad husband” than remain single and suffer public ridicule or become social misfits. This is because society has made it known that an unmarried woman is a shame and thus deserves no respect but rather contempt in the society. Women are basically meant for marriage and that is it. Failure to do so at the prescribed/ expected age makes them social misfits which is absurdly not the case with the male sex. Pascolina decides to get married to Adoli despite the fact she is aware of his being sexually immoral. It is no wonder Adoli becomes a shameless womanizer after their

marriage and Pascolina is forced to put up with this unbecoming behaviour of her husband for the sake of keeping her marriage intact. Absurdly, even in this modern era, many women just like Pascolina are pushed into marriages for fear of public rebuke.

Furthermore, the submissive and dependent nature of women is portrayed through Pascolina's mother's advice to her daughter, Pascolina. We see her in a flashback trying to arrest her daughter's fears of marrying a womanizer as she advises Pascolina that it doesn't matter whether Adoli Awal, her husband takes a second wife provided he does not put her in her house. She also informs Pascolina that she is aware of her husband, Pascolina's father's affair with a Muruli woman but does not care for she has never met the latter, and that is what is expected from a married woman. Absurdly, Pascolina's mother's attitude is one of a loser and she expects her daughter to do likewise. She endures her husband's infidelity and claims it doesn't matter so long as she has not met the co-wife. This woman ought to stand up for her rights and protect her marriage from encroachers if it were not for the patriarchal culture which imprisons women to passivity and all sorts of humiliating experiences as it is the case with Pascolina's mother. It is unfortunate that she desires to see her daughter suffer the same fate. She ignorantly urges her daughter to be calm and submissive to her husband and let him have his way because that is what is expected anyway. She confidently informs her that most men are unfaithful and therefore such a 'trivial' matter should not make her throw her marriage to the dogs. As fate would have it, after Pascolina's marriage to Adoli, the latter's "forays among the women folk, young and old, married and unmarried, had become part of the local folklore". Being a woman though and given her mother's advice above, Pascolina turns a blind eye and a deaf ear to her husband's mischievous deeds for the sake of protecting her marriage.

Another female character that is presented as dependent on the male sex is identified as Min Apici translated as 'the mother of Apici'. She is the wife to Jasper Munu, a chauvinistic, drunken, reckless and irresponsible man. She endures all sorts of abuses by Munu who hardly provides for her and the children. She generally is in a sorry state; her appearance and dress code say it all as the Omniscient narrator reveals: "[The] green-and-white print dress was matted with days-old dirt. A tear ran down the skirt of the dress from around her hip to the hem. Beneath the tear was a half-slip that originally was yellow but that had become brownish through age and washing with insufficient soap. There was another tear at the bodice through which the wrinkled

nipple of her left breast showed” (115) This vivid description portrays a weather beaten, and disillusioned young woman that is resigned to poverty. She is poverty itself since her clothing can hardly cover her nakedness. It is sad that she cannot afford soap to do her laundry effectively yet she sticks to her unworthy marriage. Where can she go in such a state anyway? On a fateful day when their child falls ill, she is forced to search for her husband in a bid to get money for treatment only to find him at Namus’ Bar Restaurant chomping away on a roasted chicken back of a big cock yet back home there is no food for her and the children. Munu refuses to give her money to treat the child claiming he does not have. Min Apici suffers because she is not financially independent while the husband spends his money selfishly on himself.

Dependence on men is not limited to Min Apici only as several other female characters follow suit. Bitoroci and her daughter, Saida Acola for instance, cannot escape mention as far as the aspect of female dependence on men is concerned. We see both of them admitting to marrying for convenience and not love. They give up on their lovers and opt for husbands that are capable of taking good care of them by providing for them; wealthy husbands. Bitoroci for instance proudly informs her daughter, Saida that at nineteen, she got married to the forty-eight-year-old Jago Olima, a man with four wives because of his affluence. She resultantly advises the daughter to also opt for a rich man that can take care of her. Saida Acola gives in to her mother’s pressure and rejects the love of her life; Patrick Amunu, a poor and jobless young man then. She instead gets married to Olwit, the most successful young man in Teboke at that time. Despite being an educated lady, she opts to be a housewife and fully depends on the husband financially for this is what the society expects from her anyway.

2.1.2 Immoral/ Unscrupulous

Ferdinand Oyono, a selected male writer for this study, presents his female characters as shameless beings, for some are prostitutes, cheats or rather thieves whereas others are adulterous as presented in the following paragraphs;

In the text, prostitution is a habit of several native women whom Toundi, the protagonist, identifies as “mammies” who are hired from the location by the houseboys of European men for sexual activities. The fully described prostitutes however, include Sophie and Kalisia.

Sophie is the mistress of the Agricultural Engineer, M. Magnol. She is portrayed as a very shameless woman given her seductive nature and use of obscene language when communicating to Toundi, the man with whom she shares a hut during a visit to the bush by her lover and Toundi's boss, the Commandant. She tells the uninterested Toundi about her sexual experiences with her boyfriend, M. Magnol thus, "First he started calling me names of things to eat. He always does that when he wanted to be mouthing me or when he's moaning, on the job. He calls me "my cabbage" "my chicken" (43). Such information ought to be kept a secret by any woman with a brain. It is unfortunate though that the irrational and shameless Sophie finds it convenient to disclose this to Toundi.

Sophie's shameless character is also portrayed when she tries to seduce Toundi despite being in a relationship with another man. She mocks him for failing to take advantage of the fact that they are sharing a room through the night. She ironically states that Toundi's manhood is dysfunctional that is, "his knife is not very sharp, he prefers to keep it in its sheath" (43). She also refers to Toundi as a "dog" that "can die of hunger beside his master's meat" (44). By so saying, she insinuates that Toundi is afraid of sharing a sexual moment with her due to his fear of her white lover, M. Magnol.

Oyono also portrays Sophie as a shameless cheat and thief thus drawing away the pity the reader would feel for her for being a helpless sexually exploited woman. Sophie, on a fateful day informs Toundi of her intention to steal from her lover whom she does not genuinely love. She derogatively describes him as an "uncircumcised sod" and remarks that she does not have any affection for the white man because whites haven't got what black women can fall in love with. She reveals that she is only waiting for an opportunity to grab the lover's money and run off to Spanish Guinea to start a new life. This ill intention depicts her as a hypocrite since pretentiously keeps her sexual relationship with the Agricultural Engineer so as to steal from him. No wonder she fulfills this desire by escaping with her lover's workers' salaries later in the novel and Toundi becomes the victim as he is accused and assaulted for participating in this crime.

The shamelessness that Oyono accords to women does not apply to Sophie only as another female character, Kalisia too, exhibits this trait. Kalisia is Madame's chambermaid and a distant relative of Baklu, the laundry man at the Commandant's residence whereas Madame is the Commandant's wife. Baklu reveals that Kalisia has lived with many men. Through the Omniscient narrator, we also learn that: "Kalisia had had enough of whites and she lived for a long time with one of the coast Negroes you know, the ones with salty skins. Then she left him. She lived with other white men, other blacks, and other men who were not quite black and not quite white. Then she came back to Dangan like a bird comes to earth when it is tired of flying in the air..." (91). Kalisia thus creates for herself a reputation of being a prostitute, she is even said to have abandoned a white man that was ready to marry her despite her colour, leaving the poor man heartbroken. "The white man cried and moved heaven and earth to find her again" (91) in vain. It is important to note that in some instances like the above; Oyono presents female characters as evil while the males are their victims. This applies to the previous paragraph as well in which Toundi is victimized for Sophie's theft.

Kalisia's shameless behavior is further shown in her quest for the truth about Madame's lover. Due to her suspicion that Toundi could be Madame's lover, she teases him but does it disrespectfully as in the dialogue below,

"You rascal, you rogue, you sly devil," she shouted, "Slender hips like you've got are often the nest for a great big snake". She pinched my buttocks. "Don't think Madame doesn't know that as well!" She made a grab at my sexual parts and gave a little hoarse cry. "See, I was right," she said. "That's already had a taste of white flesh, I know. It's you. It's you that's Madame's man. I knew right away. You only have to look at her eyes when she talks to you" (95).

When she notices that Toundi is angry, she apologizes but soon asks him a disgusting question, "How many times do you do it a week?" (95). This dialogue foregrounds Kalisia's immoral thoughts and actions. She is so much interested in 'dirty talk'. She surely has no shame whatsoever. What a terrible depiction of a woman! Toundi on the other hand is portrayed as a man of high moral standing given his self-control. Oyono surely is a misogynist.

Another female character that is portrayed as shameless by Ferdinand Oyono, is Madame Suzy, the wife of the commandant. It is true that racism is satirized in this novel, *Houseboy* as the white

race claims superiority over the black race. It is also important to note that Madame is a white woman however; her 'superior' colour does not save her from the fate of being female. Despite being white, she is a woman and thus is as shameless as the other female characters presented in the text. First and foremost, Madame is a married woman however, she engages in an extra marital affair with M. Moreau, the prison Director when her husband goes on a tour. On several occasions, she invites M. Moreau to her house and ends up defiling her marital bed when she sleeps with him. On a particular incident when she instructs Toundi to clean her room having knocked down a bottle by mistake, the latter in the process of sweeping under the bed brings out "not only broken glass but also some little rubber bags" (86) which he curiously turns over and over. Madame on noticing the bags rushes to Toundi and quickly tries to push them back under the bed with her foot only to tread on one of them forcing out a little liquid that squirts on the floor. Embarrassed by this, she vehemently orders Toundi to leave the room. Toundi later learns from his workmates, Baklu and the Cook that the rubber bags are contraceptives. Baklu and the Cook laugh out loud because they know that Madame uses those contraceptives with her lover, M. Moreau who is the Prison Director at Dangan. They poke fun at her shameless and promiscuous behaviour. It is however worth noting that both Madame and M. Moreau are adulterous however, all the condemnation is directed towards the female alone. Since these love birds use Toundi as their go between and carelessly go about holding hands, all the houseboys in Dangan soon get to know about their adulterous acts but interestingly, point fingers at Madame for that is Oyono's intention – to degrade womanhood. M. Moreaus' houseboy for instance, in regards to this affair, satirically remarks that women are so shameless to the extent that, "Even the wife of a great chief like the Commandant lets herself to be taken on the seat of her husband's car down some Dangan lane". In other words, in his opinion, it is unbelievable that a woman can cheat on a wealthy and respectable man. That is how unfaithful women are! Through the narrator, we also learn that "there was not a single soul unaware that the wife of the commandant was deceiving her husband..." (71). Nothing however is said about the man, M. Moreau yet he too is a married man. Wasn't he deceiving his wife?

Oyono further gives the female sex a big blow when he presents Madame, his main female character not only as shameless but also as a foolish and lazy being. Madame hands over her sanitary towels to the laundry man to wash which becomes a serious point of contention. Baklu,

the laundry man pokes fun at her by carrying the towels humorously to the kitchen while roaring with laughter. The cook reveals to Baklu, “Everyone I have ever worked for has handed over these things to the laundry man as if he wasn’t a man at all...these women have no shame...” (81). Baklu on the other hand feels that the word “shame” is an understatement and thus refers to white women as “corpses”. He adds that they “are only good in bed and can’t even wash their pants or their sanitary towels” (81). This emphasises how unintelligent and lazy white women are!

It is also shameless of Madame to celebrate Toundi’s arrest callously just because she feels that she has been relieved of the eyes that would sting her conscious by reminding her of her infidelity. Madame “skips like a little child” (106) in her flower garden when Toundi is arrested. That is her way of expressing her delight for the burden that has been lifted off her shoulder. While in prison, Toundi receives reports from his visitors, the cook and Kalisia that Madame is very happy since he left the residence and all seems well for the couple. Madame’s failure to defend Toundi contributes to his untimely death by the end of the novel. She thus exhibits the highest level of heartlessness.

Julius Ocwinyo, another male writer selected for this study, like Oyono also portrays women as immoral and materialistic in his text, *Footprints of the Outsider*. From the onset of the novel, Ocwinyo presents female characters as promiscuous beings. Ikangi’s daughters for instance, are said to be ‘*olaya*’, girls of loose morals. This is later proven in the novel through the shameless behaviour of Irene Namu, one of Ikangi’s daughters that owns a bar in Teboke. The narrator reveals that,

Apart from the food and drinks, one of the attractions of Namu’s bar-restaurant was Namu herself, she was widely known for her inability to say no to a man--- so long as he had some little class and the right kind of money. Her helpers in the bar--- restaurant, three local young women called Olympia, Keren and Aguret, seemed to have caught her attitude like an infection. But these helpers went for a lot less. A little drink here, a little food there and they were yours for the evening, or for the whole night (118).

This proves that Namu and her helpers are prostitutes. They exchange their bodies for material gains like money, and edible items as presented above. Ocwinyo focuses his satirical stance on

these women and ignores the fact that these women carry out this trade with men who similarly, ought to be condemned equally for this vice.

Another female character that is presented as a shameless and immoral being is Alcinora, the mother of the protagonist of the novel, Abudu Olwit. She is described as “*an alaya*” translated as prostitute. The vice is permanently planted in her. She is so shameless that at one point, she is caught red handed by her son, Abudu Olwit having rites of Aphrodite with a man in her hut on a hot afternoon. On this fateful day, Olwit, a senior two-student then had been sent away from school for school fees:

Only to find a man lying on his mother’s belly and grunting like a pig, the door to his mother’s sleeping hut not even locked but even a little ajar so that all he had to do was push it and go in and find them at it. Not even waiting for night to fall but doing it in broad daylight with sun heat beating up out of the ground outside his mother’s hut and they at it inside, sweating it out in the cool inside of the hut (25).

This is so embarrassing a situation. It is however ironic that Olwit, a child, feels sick of his mother’s disgraceful act yet the latter seems remorseless. Olwit is forced to put things right by hitting the male intruder with “the little *nget* hoe” that was lying beside the door. The “strange man gushing blood” finds his way out of the hut and runs for his dear life as Olwit angrily goes after him. Alcinora’s immoral lifestyle impacts negatively on her child, Olwit’s growth but she is too irresponsible to realise it. Olwit suffers humiliation by the Teboke folk, both young and old. Olwit is referred to as “*atin alaya*” translated as a prostitute’s child. His fellow children make fun of him and disassociate from him for to them, he is an outcast. They “would spit on the ground very emphatically after addressing him thus.” Alcinora however, is not bothered by the psychological torture her child is subjected to due to her scandalous behavior. She would drink herself stupid with her male friends and disgrace herself at the market on some nights after selling *arege*, an alcoholic drink. On a fateful night at the market, having drunk a lot of *arege*, she started “singing at the top of her lungs” and dancing “like one possessed by the spirit of a soldier shot dead in battle”. The following day, she realized she had lost all the money she had earned from the little *arege* she had sold and worse still, “forgot all that she had used for selling her *arege* at the market---glasses, tumblers, plastic cups, bottles and a plastic funnel”. How stupid!

Ocwinyo further murders Alcinora's character by heavily deploying biting satire and humour as he vividly describes her reaction having spent a cold night out due to drunkenness. Alcinora had slept "on the dew-covered verge of a path running through *Atengtyena* swamp". When she realizes it, she suddenly worries that she may have been taken advantage of sexually. The narrator reveals that, "She felt her womanhood with her left hand. There was nothing the matter with it. Suddenly, ... She fled.... She stopped briefly, drew up the flapping skirt of the gomesi and smelt it. It stank of drunken urine..." (23). Alcinora's belated concern about being raped is laughable and this is exactly what the author intends to mock, for she is a woman of loose morals. The author makes fun of the foolishness and pretence of women. It is unfair that he paints Alcinora as a woman whose moral stand is irreparable yet we see her getting embarrassed about her actions, an act that proves that she regrets her foolish behavior and has some conscience. Alcinora is thus portrayed as a useless being; one who has no hope of redemption given her stained character. There is nothing at all that is admirable about this female character and this is unrealistic.

The male characters on the other hand, despite some stains in their behaviour, have a lot to be proud of. A case in point is Mike Adoli Awal, the Member of Parliament. His sexual exploits are unbecoming but he holds a position of responsibility in the community something that many folk desire to achieve. Another male character that is worth critiquing on moral grounds is the drunkard man who is said "to have been so drunk that if he had touched his anus, he would mistake it for a mere scar". Even then, he has something worthy of praise about him. He is an ex-soldier and thus had selflessly contributed to the wellbeing of the country, Teboke inclusive before. All this points to the fact that Ocwinyo is bent on saving the image of men through his positive portrayal of male characters unlike the female sex that he deems unworthy and evil as seen through the character of Alcinora.

Ocwinyo further explores this theme of immorality of women by creating Bitoroci, a very abusive, unsocial and proud woman in Teboke. When she learns about her daughter, Saida Acola's affair with a schoolmate known as Patrick Amunu, a young man from a poverty stricken homestead, she decides to go to the latter's home and warn him to keep off her daughter. She finds Amunu's mother, Katrina at home and the two women soon engage in a bitter exchange over the matter of their children's affair. Bitoroci bitterly tells her counterpart, "Your son may

sleep with my daughter now but he will not marry her. After all, of all the people you slept with only one married you. And you chose the worst of the lot. Perhaps because you are so ugly” (76). Having been insulted so much, Katrina angrily pokes back at Bitoroci, “Look who is talking about ugliness,” she countered. “I wonder whether Jago Olima married you with his eyes closed, what with your stiff and skinny neck and dry twiggy legs. No wonder no single man would take you, so you had to settle for an old married man” (7). The insults then go on and on for some time till Katrina chases Bitoroci from her compound “wielding a thick wooden pestle” above her head with both hands and hurls it at her. Bitoroci survives narrowly though. Ocwinyo however successfully exposes the bitterness and immorality of these female characters.

The shamelessness of women is not limited only to the illiterate like Bitoroci, Katrina and the like, it spills over to the educated women as well. Ocwinyo through the Omniscient narrator brands all the working class women, save for teachers as promiscuous and therefore, unmarriageable. The narrator reveals that:

Most of the men ... believed nurses were generally easy, unstable and arrogant women who were not good for marriage. Was it not a common saying that a nurse's eyes were as many as those of a spanner --- that their eyes could be interested in many different men at the same time? Nurses were supposed to have been spoiled by rich patients and doctors who frequently gave them money and slept with them. Only a fool would marry a nurse. If someone wanted to marry a career woman, then he should pick a teacher. Teachers had a lot of discipline, they were stable and humble. (99-100).

This stereotyping of female nurses is uncalled for, for character is not influenced by one's profession or job. Ideally, not all nurses are short of morals and neither are all teachers morally upright. Such stereotypes were probably meant to discourage females from taking on courses in the field of health or science generally, which are considered masculine courses and focus on teaching --- a profession that is despised by many given the meagre salary and a calling considered to be feminine. Men are highly intimidated by educated women and therefore decampaign education of women in all ways including preference for the illiterate or those with low levels of education since they are submissive, voiceless and easy to control.

In relation to the above, John Stuart Mill (1869); a philosopher postulates that male attitude toward the education of women is disingenuous. He believed that they were simply dishonest

apologies for what amounted to slavery. In *“The Subjection of Women”*, he argues that all men desire to have women that willingly submit to their will and for that reason, they set up laws and customs that enslave the minds of women. They even “turned the whole face of education to expect their purpose” by dictating what subjects a woman ought take in school and also branding the ‘over-learned’ as disrespectful and not good for marriage. It is not surprising therefore that in the text, *“Footprints of the Outsider,”* we do not see women exploring the field of education successfully or taking on leadership roles in Teboke due to the discouraging remarks previously mentioned. Actually, some educated women choose to sit at home to focus on their marital duties for that is what society expects from them anyway. A case in point is Saida Acola, Abudu Olwit’s wife who studied in the Uganda College of Commerce and was awarded a Diploma in Marketing. Despite being a professional, Acola opts to be a housewife and solely depends on her husband as per societal expectation. A woman’s place is at her husband’s house as seen through other female characters like Bitoroci and Katrina as well.

In contrast, it is only men, particularly those that received fairly good education that hold positions of responsibility in Teboke. Abudu Olwit for instance, having studied Economics at Makerere is later posted to Alaro Prison Farm which he manages appropriately. He soon becomes the proud owner of a “pick – up and two mini – buses that served as taxis in the corner Kamdini – Kigumba route.” The people of Alaro consider him very wealthy and Saida, his wife openly brags about his achievements. Another successful man is Patrick Amunu who trains as a Doctor in Israel and becomes a respected paediatrician. The other men are politicians like Mike Adoli Awal who is even a womanizer, among others. All these are celebrated as successful people but they are all men. Where are the women?

2.1.3 Materialistic

Charles Amone (2013) states in his article “Culture and Girl-child Education in Northern Uganda”,

Culturally, it is believed and maintained that a girl child and woman do not own property. This leaves them powerless and vulnerable to the forces of the desire for material things that they cannot afford, this is because they themselves are looked at as commodities hence are in most cases unable to control their own situations and end up being victims to circumstances (577).

In other words, some girls or children are forced into prostitution to obtain their needs where as others engage in cross generational and unwanted relationships for the sake of material comfort. Society thus unfairly brands them materialistic as if it is a crime to desire a good life. This is true about Julius Ocwinyo's female characters as discussed below:

Bitoroci, the mother of Saida Acola for instance is depicted as a very materialistic woman. At nineteen, she gets married to Jago Olima, a forty-eight-year old man because he is wealthy. She bluntly advises her daughter, "I did not marry your father because I loved him. In our time, we did not marry because of love. Nobody even talked about love then. I do not even understand the nature of this thing you call love. In our time... you chose a man because of his family... It was considered stupid for a girl to choose a man whose parents did not possess any animal wealth, for what would they use to pay your bride wealth? Bush rats?" (132). She also persuades Saida to believe that the happiest homes are those where there is plenty to eat, wear and show off about. She also informs her that she rejected Albino Ocen, her twenty-four-year-old lover because he was poor. She then disgustingly adds that the latter lately makes "car- tyre sandals" to earn a living and then pauses a rhetoric question to Saida, "Would you have been proud to have someone who makes car tyre sandals as your father?" Bitoroci's contempt for poor men and her choice of a cross generational relationship is proof that she is indeed a shameless materialistic woman and it is unfortunate that she takes pride.

The height of materialism of women is emphasized through the misleading advice Bitoroci offers to her daughter, Saida Acola over the choice of a marriage partner. She emphasizes that it is wise to choose a rich husband in order to live comfortably and make other women envious. She desires her daughter to live like a princess and only an affluent man can afford to offer her that. In her opinion, "her daughter Saida Acola was not going to marry someone who possessed neither car nor cows, someone who could neither build a *Mabati* house nor buy her, Bitoroci expensive *Ikoyi* and *gomici*. If any poor man was intrepid enough to seek her daughter's hand in marriage, she would put him firmly in his place." (73) This points out to Bitoroci's greed for wealth and a sophisticated lifestyle for herself and daughter. Her determination to keep men that aren't of her taste off her daughter despite the fact that her daughter may be genuinely in love with them foregrounds her as a selfish woman as well. She bitterly demands Patrick Amunu, the son to "Ipapalo", a pawpaw seller in Teboke to leave her daughter alone and blatantly stresses

that, “No daughter of mine is going to marry the son of a man who is good only at hawking pawpaws and who does not possess even a single cow, and lives in a smelly, run-down, grass-thatched house!” (76). Amunu is demeaned and indeed gives up on Saida. When he later becomes a successful paediatrician, Bitoroci “never quite forgave herself for treating the young man the way she did” (77) especially given the fact that he turns out to be wealthier than Abudu Olwit, her daughter’s husband. If it were possible, she would end her daughter’s marriage to Oliwt and give her away to Amunu. Saida too regrets her decision to marry Olwit but it is too late. Bitoroci’s egocentricity and materialistic nature makes her deny her daughter a happy love relationship with Amunu.

Ocwinyo also presents university girls as very materialistic beings. Through a flashback, we learn of a very embarrassing moment for Olwit way back at Makerere University during the Freshers’ ball. He had approached, “two tight-trousered girls chatting with each other and asked one to dance. The girl had not even bothered to look at his face. She had glanced at his cheap prefect shoes and gabardine trousers and sniggered, and had continued the conversation with her friend” (71) forcing Olwit to walk away fully shamed by the incident. The girl in question definitely despises Olwit due to his poverty-stricken dress state which is clearly presented through his unattractive dress code. The author further confirms the materialistic nature of university girls when through the third person Omniscient narrator he adds that,

With money one could take a girl out. With money one would take a girl out and buy her chicken and chips, and a couple of beers. Without money one pretended to have little interest in the girls yet one ogled at the girl’s beautiful legs. And if one caught an accidental glimpse of inner university-girl thigh, it almost drove one crazy (71).

Girls, particularly university girls are portrayed as cheap beings whose hearts are won over with simple materials like chips, chicken and money.

Materialism of the female sex is also portrayed through Ms. Housekeeping, a hotel cleaner in Lusaka, Zambia who seduces the libidinous Adoli Awal with the intention of extracting large sums of money from him. Adoli Awal, A Member of Parliament of Ayer Constituency in Uganda, who is on a business trip with fellow members of the Broad-based National Assembly and books into a hotel where he meets Ms. Housekeeping. He gets attracted to her because she is

a woman with the kind of figure that he craved, "... tall, plumpish, with a wasp-like waist. She also had a fascinating face- long, narrow, dreamy, lynx-like eyes". Despite being a married man, Adoli always eyed Ms. Housekeeping the way a kite would eye a chick" (103). Having seduced her in vain, he succeeds when he tempts her with "money--- a flurry of dollar bills" (103). Her greed for money gives her away. She soon returns to Adoli's room to negotiate and she settles for thirty US dollars, cash before delivery. "Just before Adoli could do anything, a tall, burly security man bumped into the room and Miss Housekeeping claimed Adoli was trying to rape her" (103). It dawns on Adoli that this is actually a set up. He has to put up with two blinding slaps and part with six hundred US dollars". This consequently leaves him dejected and at loss for words. Through Miss Housekeeping, he learns that women are so money-minded and can go to any length to satisfy this insatiable desire, a trait that Ocwinyo purposefully puts across. A responsible and genuine woman would ignore Adoli's advances and focus on her work but such women are non – existent as far the text *Footprints of the Outsider* is concerned.

Comparatively, Binwell Sinyangwe a male writer selected for this study, unlike his counterparts, Oyono and Ocwinyo who associate femininity with weakness, submissiveness and voicelessness as discussed in the previous paragraphs, deviates from the norm by portraying female characters fairly. In his text, *A Cowrie of Hope*, Sinyangwe presents female characters as industrious, responsible, brave and supportive to each other despite the tough economic situation of the nineties in Zambia. This is elaborated under the given sub titles below:

2.1.4 Industrious, Responsible and Independent:

Binwell Sinyangwe unlike the other male writers chosen for this study creates a female protagonist, Belita Bowa also known as Nasula. Nasula means 'mother of Sula'. Nasula is a very responsible and industrious character. Nasula single handedly raises her daughter despite the terrible economic situation of the 90s and despite being vulnerable due to male chauvinism in her society. After the death of her husband, Winelo Chiswebe, she is thrown out of her house in Kalingalinga and all that rightfully belongs to her is grabbed by her selfish and greedy in laws. This is because Nasula had refused to buy the idea of accepting to be inherited by her late husband's brother, Isaki Chiswebe as per the cultural demands because "she knew Isaki and his ways in things of the flesh very well. She also knew the Chiswebe family too well to remain married to one of its members" (08), that is; Isaki is morally loose and his family is

chauvinistic. Nasula refuses to condemn herself to living in misery with such an unloving man and to risk her health given the reckless lifestyle of Isaki with women. She thus chooses “to perish with her poverty rather than accept a forced marriage and the wealth her dead husband had left her. She would not marry a man as lecherous as Isaki Chiswebe who already had three wives and had divorced the gods knew how many times before” (16). This is responsibility to self, a trait that is very admirable. Nasula painfully but with dignity walks out of her home to face the unknown, her baby in hand. She does not abandon the innocent child despite the fact that she has no means, not even a house to rest her head. She chooses the difficult but dignified path of fending for herself and daughter by starting from scratch. She for instance “spends nights at the bus station with the child before she found money for her travel and returned to the village” (10). Not even homelessness makes her regret her decision but rather, the more challenges she faces, the more determined she gets.

We further see her responsible nature when after a number of years, she swallows her pride and goes to Mangano, a very distant village, to seek money for her daughter, Sula’s schooling from her estranged in laws. Nasula had not wanted to bend this low. She desired to work tooth and nail to raise her child single handedly but at the moment her hands were tied. For this reason, “she would try anything and everything for the sake of her child’s future, with faith in gods” (16) even if it meant begging the Chiswebes. This sacrificial nature of Nasula is worth noting. She decides to set off the following day as early as possible since she has to cross so many villages to reach her destination. She starts her journey very early in the morning and filled with enthusiasm but is affected by the rough terrain and the scorching midday sun. With time, she was “tired, hungry and thirsty. Her step was slower and weaker. Still, with the tenacity of a cheetah and the determination of a tortoise, Nasula tackled the distance steadily, surely, alone” (19). She accepts to go through this suffering for her daughter’s sake. The narrator reveals that:

The child had completed grade nine at Senga Hill Basic School and had passed. She could now go on to grade ten at a distant boarding secondary school, St. Theresa Girls in Kasama. She needed one hundred thousand *kwacha* for the child’s fares, school fees and other requirements. But she, her mother and only living parent, did not have any money, not even one coin, anywhere in the world (04).

Nasula is well aware that she is the only hope for Sula and as a parent must do all in her means to raise the required money. At Mangano, she unfortunately finds the situation deplorable as Isaki is bedridden and the Chiswebes have lost their glorious past. Seeing Isaki's bony body, she knows for sure that he is a victim of the dreadful and "new unmentionable disease of the world that came of the taste of flesh" (27) that is, HIV/AIDS. She concludes that had she been attracted to the wealth Winelo left behind and accepted to marry Isaki, she too would have been a victim too just like the latter's second and third wives. Her daughter Sula would then be a total orphan and suffer immensely. Nasula is thus grateful to the gods for the right decision she made of rejecting Isaki's proposal hence protecting the future of both her daughter and herself.

In addition to the above, Nasula's responsible nature is also seen when she spends sleepless nights thinking of what to do to support her daughter in school. Her inner peace is eaten up when she is struck by the bitter reality that her journey to Mangano is fruitless and thus her child's future is at stake. We learn that "Late into the night, she talked to herself, mournfully regretting having insisted on coming to Mangano, bitterly blaming herself for failing to provide for the child..." (31). Only a loving and responsible parent can be weighed down by the desire to cater for their child's welfare. Nasula decides that she should return to Swelini immediately and "see what other ideas the gods might breathe into her. There was no time to waste" (32). This shows her determination to raise funds for Sula's schooling as soon as possible. The girl must go to school. The day after Isaki's funeral, she decides to return home to Swelini to her daughter. She informs her parents in law that "she had left Sula alone and without much food; and that the time to find money for the child's schooling was nearly over ... she bade them goodnight before going to sleep" and began her journey the following day at dawn. The concern that she exhibits about her child's welfare and schooling is a sure sign of responsibility.

Furthermore, as a responsible mother, Nasula cautions her daughter, Sula to keep off undesirable behavior and also applauds her where need be. She desires her daughter to grow up as a morally upright young woman and thus guides her accordingly. Nasula for instance advises Sula "to be a house with a lock without a key" and adds that "when time ripens, the spirits will nod and the gods will provide the key and tell you to open the door" (34). This implies that Sula should avoid sexual immorality, and only wait patiently till marriage. Nasula emphasizes this because she resents the idea of her daughter being a victim of the dreadful HIV/AIDS, a disease that had

claimed many a life in the 90s including Sula's uncle Isaki Chiswebe. She thus counsels her daughter to be very cautious and patient especially now that she is a teenager and had already confided in her "about Polo son of Maselino Kapapi" (33) who had expressed interest in marrying her in future. Nasula warns her that such playful talk may be misleading especially to a young girl like her. She further advises her that "the world has teeth and tells (her) to be with legs crossed wherever (she) is" (33). Her message to Sula is that she shouldn't be involved in sexual matters yet for she is still young and there is a bright future for her ahead if only she makes the right choices in life. In other instances, Nasula proudly praises Sula for being a good child that takes her education serious unlike the other school going children of her age who are too demanding and unserious. She also urges Sula to always confide in her because she is her mother. This platform of communication that Nasula creates keeps the mother-daughter bond strong and admirable.

Sinyangwe also depicts Nasula as an industrious character. She works tooth and nail to provide for Sula and even educates her to grade nine without the help of anyone, not even her wealthy but irresponsible in laws. After the death of her husband Winelo Chiswebe, Nasula goes back to her home village in Swelini to start a new life with her only daughter. The state of being poor, widowed, orphaned and a woman does not kill her spirit of striving to provide for her baby girl. Upon arrival, the headman and village elders give her a piece of land on which to build a home and farm. Here, she starts:

her lonely struggle for survival, tilling the land in her own field and in those of other people. She worked in their fields and did other forms of piece work, such as cutting thatching grass for food, money, clothes and the other essentials of life. Often, due to pressure for what to eat and to repay debts with, she had little time to work in her own field (51).

Nasula thus starts life from scratch having been disowned by her in-laws and deprived of "everything the dead man had left behind" (16) for her and the child. Somehow, she manages to raise her baby girl and educate her up to grade nine. It takes hard work and much sacrifice to face all the hardships of poverty, loneliness and aloneness which define Nasula.

We also see this industriousness and responsibility when Nasula takes the risk of borrowing fertilizer and maize seed from Pupila despite the unjust conditions he sets up for her to pay back. This is because she needs to raise one hundred thousand *Kwacha* to send Sula to "a bigger and

more senior school, as there was no grade ten, eleven and twelve at Senga Hill Basic School” (38). Pupila unlike Nasula manages to borrow from the fertilizer agent because he qualifies so he accepts to lend her some of his fertilizer and seed “at a repayment that would be more than what the agent would ask for from (him) at harvesting time” (38). Resultantly,

Together and alone with her daughter, she toiled and toiled. With attention to every detail of timing, application and tending her field, she managed to plant all the seed, apply fertilizer and weed it. But the rains were not enough. The idea had been to harvest eleven bags of maize, give five and a half to Pupila, use half a bag, and keep five for selling in April, at a time when there would be a serious shortage of maize, and just a month before Sula would be due to leave for school, at not less than twenty thousand *kwacha* a bag (39).

Absurdly, despite all the hard work, the harvest turns out to be very bad and she loses almost the entire harvest to Pupila. Nasula then resorts to piece work but her labour is not paid for fairly as those she works for choose to pay her in kind and not in monetary terms as agreed upon. Several factors work as a deterrent to Nasula’s struggle for economic empowerment and these include, “the premature death of her husband, the inexistence of heritage from her parents’ side, the dispossession by her in-laws and the poor output of her agricultural harvest” (Agussey 78). Nevertheless, Nasula does not give up on hard work.

Nasula further exhibits the trait of responsibility when she persists to make enough money by hook or crook, and empower her daughter through education. This is because she has tasted the bitter fruits of being uneducated and dependent on a man for everything. She attributes her early marriage to lack of education and therefore, doesn’t want this to be her daughter’s portion. Though illiterate, she is enlightened and thus determined to have her daughter complete schooling and be independent and confident just like the wonderful ladies she admired years back at Kalingalinga compound of her marital home in city. She informs her daughter, whose hope of returning to school is bleak given their financial problems, about the value of education thus,

“You must go to school. You don’t know what suffering I have gone through because apart from being poor and a woman, my parents did not send me to school. I don’t want you to suffer the way I have suffered. I want you to grow up to stand on your own feet and not look to marriage or men for salvation. Marriage and men are not salvation but the ruin of any woman who can’t stand on her own feet. I want you to go far with your education so that you can support yourself, earn a good living and be free and independent in your life. You must go to school!” (37).

Nasula desperately wants her daughter to study because she appreciates the immense value of education despite being illiterate. Aguessey (2014) asserts that Nasula is surely right as “education offers better life, improved health care, skilled workforce, better employment opportunities, high salaries, increased savings and greater opportunities for the future” (78). It is this hope in education being an emancipatory tool for the girl-child that drives Nasula to work so hard to raise the necessary funds. Her responsibility towards her daughter is admirable indeed.

Sinyangwe does not limit responsibility and industriousness to Nasula, the protagonist but rather creates other female characters too that exhibit the same spirit for instance Sula Chiswebe. Sula the only daughter of Nasula and the late Winelo Chiswebe is depicted as a very hardworking and responsible girl. In fact, the author describes her as “too good natured, well mannered, intelligent and hardworking” given the commitment with which she does her house chores without being instructed to. Despite being a child, she doesn’t wait for the mother to remind her to do the chores. She responsibly cleans the house, fetches water and collects fire wood, pounds cassava, accompanies the mother to the garden, cooks food and serves it to the mother. Nasula is touched by her young daughters’ level of responsibility. She is proud to have Sula and does not worry much about the young one’s welfare when the need to travel arises. Nasula leaves the home content that on her return, she will find everything in order. Immediately Nasula returns from Mangano for instance, “Sula, without being told or asking, had bustled about and made her *nshima* and served it to her with beans and *pupwe*. These were the ways of Sula, the ways of hard work, initiative and responsibility to herself and other people” (35). The following morning when Nasula wakes up after a long refreshing rest, she finds Sula pounding cassava and joins her. She’s amazed by her daughter’s level of responsibility.

Sula’s responsible nature is also seen in the fact that she understands her mother’s situation. The author reveals that when Sula starts school, Nasula worries that she may fail to provide for her because she will wish to have what her classmates have but to Nasula’s shock, “Seven years had passed and her daughter had completed her primary school education without any problem coming Nasula’s way. Throughout all these years, Nasula received only praise for her daughter’s performance at school” (73). Besides, unlike other children, she does not pressurize her mother to provide beyond her means. The author states that Sula “never complained about what she wore or took to school” (73). In fact, she simply expresses gratitude to be in school and refuses

to be discouraged by fellow students who tease her because of her “awkward clothes and possessions” (74). She does not fight about it but rather endures the humiliation for she knows that she is poor and helpless. When her mother asks her about it, she confirms it thus, “they laugh at me and joke about my clothes, my school bag and other things, even my food. But I don’t cry or try to fight anyone” (75) and adds that, “You told me that I should only worry about my lessons and nothing else; that I should think of where I come from and remember that we are poor people with no one to turn to. So, I just look at them and try to learn” (76). This calm and wise reaction in the face of humiliation is a sure sign that Sula is an obedient and responsible child. It is also worth noting that not even “the severity of their poverty or the reality that she had no father, and that she was a girl, not a boy” (72) kills her motivation to keep studying hard. Through this statement, Sinyangwe exposes the vulnerability of the girl-child in a male-dominated society. They are denied opportunities in life and are disregarded. Sula however remains committed to her studies; an act that shows that a bright future awaits her if only she gets the necessary support.

We further see this hard work and commitment by Sula in her academic achievements. The narrator states that, “Soon after she had begun school, words started coming home that she was an intelligent, determined girl who did not miss classes, was interested in learning and punctual” (73). With this commitment, it is not surprising that her academic achievement is remarkable as stated below:

The remarks were always very good, right up to the senior years of her primary schooling. Her position in class never went below fourth. In her last year, she came first in both the first and the second terms. In the final examinations, she did so well that her result was the best in the school. She was one of only four pupils who made it in secondary school (77).

It is this hard work of Sula that prompts Nasula to go out of her way to “raise the one hundred thousand *kwacha* that was needed to send Sula to grade ten at St. Theresa Girls Secondary School” (53). Nalukwi encourages Nasula not to give up on educating Sula since the child is academic oriented. She enviously remarks that, “a child like this is a future with which not everyone is blessed. The gods and the spirits will help you” (54). She very is proud of Sula’s hard work and academic achievement.

2.1.5 Independent

Despite the text being set in the 90's, a period where a woman hardly had any significant place in the African society, Zambia inclusive, Binwell Sinyangwe presents a few female characters as extraordinarily independent and admirable due to the fact that they are emancipated. These are the women that often visit kalingalinga compound in Lusaka where Nasula lives with her husband. Nasula deeply admires them and desires to see her own Sula become like them. Nasula remembers them as women of:

... good education and good jobs in offices who came to kalingalinga shanty compounds, where she lived with Winelo, to talk to the women of the compound about the freedom of women. What they said about the importance of knowing how to read and write and of having a good education, what they said about the rights of women, and the need for a woman to stand on her own.

How they unmasked a man and reduced the devil to dust. How they cried for awareness and hated the strength and power of a woman. These young women, sweet, sparkling creatures of the gods. They were freedom itself, light and hope. In them she saw Sula her daughter and in Sula she saw them (05).

Binwell Sinyangwe uses these women as his mouth piece in his call for women emancipation through education. Education opens doors of opportunities for women and even aids them to gain economic independence from men, thereby reducing their chances of being marginalized. Sinyangwe also ensures that his protagonist, Nasula is so touched by the message of the value of educating the girl child that she at least ensures that her only daughter doesn't miss out on this opportunity despite the fact that she, Nasula is illiterate. Nasula believes that she is suffering because she did not get the chance to study and thus vows to do everything humanly possible to support her girl's academic journey. She appreciates the fact that women emancipation can only be achieved through education and hence works towards that for daughter's sake. Sula must be like those women who used to visit her compound in Kalingalinga; free from oppression by a man and independent.

2.1.6 Brave

Whereas Oyono and Ocwinyo depict females as weak, timid and voiceless and associate bravery with musculinity, Sinyangwe in "*A Cowrie of Hope*" differs from this ideology as he attaches the trait of bravery to his female characters as well. He presents his female protagonist, Nasula as a

courageous being in the face of adversity, something that is hard to come by in the other male-authored novels. This portrayal is discussed below:

Nasula, despite being a woman and poor, tries to challenge her chauvinistic husband, Winelo Chiswebe when her pride gets badly wounded by his arrogance. She chooses to speak her mind without fear by expressing her utmost desire to return to her village rather than continue yielding to his abuses. When he dares her to look for the money to pay for her transport, Nasula fearlessly does so by trying to seek employment in the city, but her effort is sabotaged due to the false allegation by her husband that she is becoming “flesh for the street” (08). Tired of Winelo’s insults and humiliation, Nasula boldly tells him, “I am poor and a woman, but you do not stop being a human being when you are a poor woman” (07). This is a reminder to Winelo that poverty or being a woman doesn’t make anyone less human. She too therefore deserves respect. Later in the novel, when accused of pride, Nasula fearlessly informs her husband, “Pride is the only thing I own in the world. What shall become of me if I lose even my pride?” (07). Nasula’s ability to respond to her husband’s insensitive remarks is an act of bravery. This dialogue also presents the fact that a woman is a victim of subjugation in this patriarchal imaginary setting in Zambia. Their efforts to break free and gain independence are often frustrated by the chauvinistic men in their lives for instance fathers, brothers and husbands. This keeps them dependent on the men just like it is the case with Nasula, and furthers their marginalisation.

We also see this bravery when Nasula makes up her mind to go to Mangano, a long distance away from Swelini, and demand for money for Sula’s schooling from her estranged in laws. The narrator presents this thus,

She had decided and she was ready to fight. She would swallow her pride and brave the tide. She would go ahead and confront the Chiswebes and make them do that which they were obliged to do: produce money for the schooling of their granddaughter and niece, Sula (17).

Indeed, she embarks on the journey to Mangano having convinced herself that her estranged in-laws ought to raise the money because it is they that retained all that was left behind for the child by her late husband, Winelo. She is not afraid of the distance and neither does she worry about the loneliness of the route to Mangano. The narrator describes her fearlessness thus:

The woman walked. She walked and walked, along a meandering footpath. Grains of sand... the forest on both sides was dense, full of virginity, and a still silence as uncanny as that of the land of the dead. In that ghostly womb of untampered nature, the woman walked the distance to Mangano. Alone, unescorted by man. Nasula was courage. Days had injured her to many things and turned her into hard wood (14).

Nasula braves the scary and seemingly deserted route to Mangano without paying attention to the “menacing noise” but rather focusing “on the purpose of her journey” (14) which is to get money for Sula’s schooling. Her courage at this point knows no bounds.

In addition to the above, this bravery of Nasula is also exhibited when she decides to hunt down Gode Silavwe; the notorious thief of her only bag of beans at Kamwala market in Lusaka. The notorious criminal had made off with her only bag of beans, her only hope to send her only hope, Sula to school. Despite the warning from concerned people at the market about the likely impact of trying to find Gode, Nasula is “determined to fight for the welfare of her only child; to hunt for the man who had stolen her bag of beans” (112). She is not afraid of confronting Gode provided she gets the money for her bag of beans or the bag itself. On arrival at Kamwala market, an old man that recognizes her warns her to stop searching for Gode, a very dangerous man that may harm her. He tells her, “A man who does what that man did to an innocent woman like you is not a person to go hunting for. He will just take out a gun and shoot you, or run over you with his car” (114). Despite being defenceless, Nasula chooses not to take heed. Instead, she “reassured herself that she would hunt for the man to the end of the world”. Not even death is a threat to her, she is ready to face it all. The narrator further expounds on this bravery thus:

What did it matter if Gode was death itself? The man had stolen her only hope of salvation, which lay in her daughter’s schooling. She must look for him and she would pursue him to her death, if that was what he wanted. The pain of her loss called to her and she would rise to its call (115).

The determination that Nasula is clothed in at this point in the story is admirable. All the reader can wish her now is the best of luck. What determination! What courage!

This bravery of Nasula is further expounded on when she finally encounters Gode, having spent an entire week searching for him in every nook and cranny. She was weak, tired and hungry since her only meal for the entire week had been a cup of black tea and a bun each day. When she finally sees Gode, her eyes dance with excitement and she, despite being weak, courageously walks up to him and asks him, “Have I not found you?” she said courageously.

“You thought I would not find you, but I have found you. Have I not found for?” (124). This bold interrogation of Gode at first sight presents her as a no-nonsense woman. She expects Gode to know her and thus is not ready to entertain any pretence from him. In fact, the latter frets a bit but denies any knowledge of Nasula. This prompts her to further interrogate him thus:

“Do you ask me that? Are you not Gode Silavwe and am I not the woman whose bag of beans you took without paying for it? Was it not last week when you did that at Kamwala market? Why do you pretend and ask who I am and if I know you? Do you think people haven’t told me about you and your ways?” (125).

The serious questions above jog Gode’s memory but he feigns ignorance of her which angers Nasula more. At this point, Nasula shuts him up vehemently and boldly demands for what he stole from her thus:

“Don’t ask me questions whose answers you know yourself. Just give me my bag of beans or the money for it. Don’t trouble me. I am just a poor woman and you have already punished me enough.” She now stood with her hands akimbo, her eyes flaming with rage, poised for a physical confrontation if things came to that. The reality of her own frailty and the evident wealth and strength of the man did not exist for her in the swirl of her anger and desperation (125).

Note that her demands are precise and concise. The vivid description portrays her readiness to fight if need arises, despite her being weak due to hunger and fatigue. She carries the bravery of a lion and worries not about Gode being stronger or wealthier. The Struggle between her and Gode attracts a police official and the matter is settled at the station. She fearlessly reports the case and persistently fights till justice is served. Her bravery and determination pay her off handsomely.

Furthermore, Nasula’s fierceness is shown when she runs out of patience, grabs Gode’s jacket, burries her head in his belly and bitterly demands, “Give me my bag of beans or the money for it! Or you will have to kill me here and now!” She is not afraid of the man’s likely looming reaction and neither is she bothered about the cold stares of the crowd that is growing bigger and bigger to witness their scuffle. Gode violently pushes her away and tries to get into his vehicle with intent to escape from Nasula. Despite the heavy fall and shock, Nasula, with even more determination manages to grab the handle of the driver’s door momentarily as the car is almost set for motion. She shouts desperately, “*Yantu mwe*, this man is a thief...” (127), while banging the roof of the car. The callous Gode jerks the car into motion with Nasula tightly holding the

rear door which tightly opens and then closes with a bang due to the too much force. When Nasula sees “the wide black belt hanging from under the bottom edge of the rear door” (127), she grabs it with her left hand and sticks to it as if her entire life depends on it. Gode attempts to drive the car which pulls “at her with a sudden and violent force. She fell down with equal suddenness and violence, her citenge and tropical sandals dropping off her like beans from a dry pod that had split open after being struck against a hard stick” (127). The deafening noise from the crowd does not kill Nasula’s persistence. Instead, she clings to the seat-belt more firmly with both hands with her eyes tightly closed to await the worst. It is at this point that a young police officer comes to her rescue. Nasula at this stage is so courageous that not even the fear of death can break her determination. Everybody at the crime scene, including the kind policeman marvels at her bravery.

At the police station, we see yet another fearless side of Nasula when she refuses to be a victim of corruption. Having noticed foul play between the policeman in charge of her case and Gode Silavwe, the fire of bitterness and determination deep within her burns more furiously. She decides that she must see the “big boss” of that police station come rain come shine. She cannot give up on her bag of beans, not after what she has gone through. Like a possessed person, she heads for the stairs to the shock of the policeman at the reception. The pleas of the policeman chasing after her and commanding her to stop fall on deaf ears. She runs further and further until she luckily bumps into the “big boss” (134) that she desperately needs to talk to “The boss of everyone. The one at the top most” (134), like she states it. This turns out to be Samson Luhila; the Officer-in-Charge of Lusaka police station. Luckily for her, Mr. Luhila is a genuine and considerate officer. She narrates her ordeal to him amidst tears. The latter is touched by Nasula’s suffering and decides to get to the bottom of it all. Given his authority, he has Gode Silavwe brought back to the station, the latter is asked to pay Nasula “One hundred and fifty thousand *kwacha*” (140) instead of the one hundred and twenty thousand for her troubles. He is then “locked up” (142) while the corrupt officer is “suspended” (143) from the job indefinitely. This marks the end of Nasula’s nightmares. Her bravery and determination pay her off handsomely. She walks out of the police station triumphantly and heads to “Kamwala shopping center” (144) to buy the school requirements, the hunger, the weakness and anger are all worn out at this point of her life. She cannot wait to return to her daughter. Later when she narrates her ordeal to her best friend “Nalukwi and her husband” (147) the two are awed by her bravery. Because of this

bravery, her only daughter Sula, her Cowrie of Hope can eventually embark on the “journey to Kasama for St. Theresa Secondary School” (149) and become independent like the ladies she always admired at Kalingalinga compound. Nasula manages to achieve this because of her the value of women emancipation at Kalingalinga compound. Nasula’s love for Sula is so selfless, so touching, so warm, and so fierce as she boldly fights whatever tries to sabotage her girl’s schooling. How sweet!

2.1.7 Supportive

Sinyangwe through his female character, Nalukwi emphasizes the value of women being a support system to one another in order survive the tough times and to beat the challenging/repressive patriarchal system. Nalukwi, Nasula’s best friend is a very supportive character. She is a true description of a friend indeed given the fact that she stands with Nasula, her younger mate through thick and thin. She is a cowrie of hope to Nasula on many occasions. When the latter is thrown out of her husband’s house in Kalingalinga and forced to “spend nights at the bus station with the child” (10) because she is penniless, Nalukwi takes her to her home and looks after her for two months till they get the bus fare for her to return to Swelini.

In another instance, after the death of Winelo Chiswebe, Nalukwi stands in the gap of Nasula’s relatives since the latter has no one else to turn to. The narrator states that:

“Nalukwi had acted as someone who was her own relative during and after the funeral. She had sat and stood next to her through it all, consoling and holding her in place. When the Chiswebe family and relatives arrived at the funeral house and no one came from Nasula’s side, as she had no one in the world to do so, Nalukwi organized her own friends, relatives and village friends to stand by Nasula and represent her to the family of the deceased and answer their incessant queries and deeds. Nalukwi herself spoke for her in everything. She saw to it that Nasula was not harassed into talking unnecessarily, that she spoke only to her and through her most of the time, and that no one was allowed to speak directly to Nasula except through her or with her permission. Without her, her tenacity and strength, Nasula would have been harangued to her own death by the Chiswebe family over the death of Winelo Chiswebe” (43).

Such compassion that Nalukwi holds dearly for her younger friend is not easy to come by. Nasula is lucky to have her and is grateful to the gods for her. To Nasula, Nalukwi is “a miracle woman” who “turned things that were heavier than a rock into adventures, each lighter than a dry leaf” (43). This is because she always provides solutions to Nasula’s problems and gives her

hope when she needs it. Nalukwi is a great friend indeed. Sinyangwe uses this powerful connection between the two women to emphasise that women ought to work together in order to break free from male domination and the repressive patriarchal norms.

Furthermore, Nalukwi's supportive character is exhibited when she decides to check on Nasula in Swelini where she had gone to visit her in-laws. The two women enjoy a cordial reunion after quite a long time of being apart. She informs her younger troubled friend, Nasula that a bag of beans can help raise the 100,000 *kwacha* that she desperately needs for her daughter's schooling if they take it to Lusaka. She goes ahead to inform her that Sula can borrow the measuring galand from her father in-law, Yowani Sikulumbi. She helps in measuring the beans and is genuinely happy for the friend when they fill an entire bag and more. She helps her to get the acceptable sack for packing the beans, travels with her to Lusaka, finds her a safe place to spend the night at Kamwala market, confirms with the old man from Solwezi about the price of beans and encourages Nasula to relax. She also gives her beddings to use for the night and returns the following morning to check on the friend. When she learns about the misfortune that had befallen Nasula that morning, she condoles with her and curses the thief. She tries to find information about the con man and together, they try to search in vain. Due to Nalukwi's amiable nature, Nasula is lucky to be offered transport money by the old man from Solwezi who had successfully sold all his bags of beans. Nalukwi instructs her son the following morning to accompany Nasula to the bus park, pay the fare and return home only if the bus has left. These actions depict Nalukwi as a faithful and concerned friend to Nasula. Her affection gives Nasula hope since she knows that she has a true friend. Through this portrayal, Sinyangwe suggests that women should adopt teamwork as a means to gain financial breakthrough and other opportunities in life.

2.2 Portrayal of Women by female Authors

In comparison to the biased portrayal of women by Ferdinand Oyono(1956) and Julius Ocwinyo(2002), the selected female authors; Goretti Kyomuhendo(1996) and Mary Karooro Okurut(1998) create admirable female protagonists. The latter's intention is to paint a fair picture of the female sex that has been distorted in the given male authored texts as discussed in the previous paragraphs. To emphasise the need for women empowerment, these authors also present a clearcut distinction in the traits, choices and actions of the emancipated women versus

the illiterate and traditional ones who adore and faithfully uphold the suppressive patriarchal norms little knowing that they are the victims. 'Nkwanzi and Mama' in *The Invisible Weevil* and 'Kasemiire and Mrs. Mutyaba' in *The First Daughter* are representatives of the educated class of women. They are portrayed as brave, industrious and intelligent. These try to challenge the patriarchal structures that suppress women. 'Kaaka and Senga' in *The Invisible Weevil* and 'Abwooli, Mukaaka and Ateenyi' in *The First Daughter* symbolise the illiterate women on the other hand. These are presented as submissive, weak and dependent. Some of them even aid in upholding patriarchy through their views and mode of child upbringing. In their texts, these authors advocate for education of all women as a major emancipatory tool. Below is their portrayal of educated and illiterate women respectively:

2.2.1 Brave

Mary Karooro Okurut presents her major female characters as brave. They boldly face their oppressors and also fight for what they believe in. Some even take part in the guerilla wars actively to overthrow the oppressive regimes. Nkwanzi's bravery for instance is seen when she tells the chauvinistic teacher hired by her father to guide her brother and her on career choice that she wants to become a lawyer despite his long lecture to her about choosing subjects that will make her a good wife. The teacher impatiently dictates that she must take home economics in order to be a good cook, literature in English so as to speak good English as a wife to a "big man" and Divinity, for a good wife ought to be religious. He angrily tells her that being a lawyer is not a good idea for it will make her to argue with her husband yet he is the head of the home. When he realizes that Nkwanzi is not satisfied with his guidance, he decides to ignore her and focuses on Tingo, the latter's brother, whom he tells to do "tough subjects" (92) in order to be a permanent secretary or a minister. When Tingo brags to Nkwanzi about it, she tells him that she is not willing to be a big man's wife and depend on him that rather she wants to use her knowledge to work and be independent and that is why she is studying. She wants to be a big woman. Indeed, Nkwanzi lives to see her dream come true when she goes ahead to choose a combination of her choice and later becomes a successful lawyer. She is promoted to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs later in her career path thereby burying the chauvinistic view the teacher proudly put forward about her future.

That aside, Nkwanzu again exhibits a high level of bravery when she risks to meet Rex at Nile Mansions with intent to rescue her fiance, Genesis who is in custody of Rex at the torture house in Nile Mansions. Rex promises to set Genesis free if Nkwanzu accepts to sleep with him. Having been assured of her lover's safety, she painfully but courageously follows the lustful Rex to the presidential suite where they are to spend the night. Rex invites her to join him for a drink since the apartment is filled with all sorts of drinks. With "forced cheerfulness", (188) Nkwanzu accepts the offer. Soon Rex becomes drunk having "mixed all manner of drinks and gulped them down". (188) He drunkenly calls on Nkwanzu to join him in bed. He manages to take off her pants and excitedly gets ready for business. Nkwanzu suddenly and fearlessly:

Raised her knee and jammed it between his legs. She squeezed, squeezed against the organ of his seed. Shocked surprise mingled with pain sprung into his eyes. And then in an agonized, strangled voice, he cried out "maama" and clutched at his now shrunk manhood before he doubled over and spewed all the contents of his stomach on the presidential bed. Quickly she jumped from the bed and put on her shoes. She cast a look at the form groaning with pain, unable to utter a word. The form, coiled like a fetus, would probably not be able to walk or do anything for the next two days (188).

Only a brave woman can dare to put up a fight of a kind to their oppressor. This defence tactic is taught to her by her aunt, Senga years back and it surely helps her survive this ordeal. Nkwanzu hurries out of the presidential suite with an air of triumph around her, having successfully punished Rex, the "serpent" (188) that was determined to sexually exploit her. The author refers to Rex as a serpent to emphasise the evil nature of men.

In another incident, we see Nkwanzu standing her ground again in the face of oppression. She boldly refuses to sleep with Genesis, her husband without protection, having discovered that he is sexually loose yet HIV/AIDS is spreading randomly at that time. Genesis tries to impose authority over Nkwanzu whom he views as merely a woman by demanding that she submits to him since he is the man of the house. Nkwanzu however is not moved by his threats and thus refuses to yield, she boldly tells him "No condom no sex and that is that" (224). When the husband insists on his conjugal rights, Nkwanzu tries to make him wear a condom and hence receives a thorough beating. Despite this, Nkwanzu refuses to give in to her husband's demand for sex without protection. No wonder, it is only the husband, a morally loose man that ends up being eaten up the callous invisible weevil, AIDS. Nkwanzu is safe because she chose to be

brave enough to secure her life. Elsewhere, when Nkwanzu is raped by Rex, she closes her eyes to what many traditional women like Senga, consider shameful and boldly reports the case to police. Rex is arrested for justice to prevail. Her brave decision is a result of Mama's reminder to her, that is: "...remember, you and I should show the way. We must be role models for the youth, we must fight traditions which doom women to passivity. We must fight against outmoded ideas and prejudices so that the young can follow suit" (206).

Earlier, when she is still a young girl at secondary school, we see the seeds of bravery within Nkwanzu when she advises her pregnant school mate, Goora to disclose the person responsible for her predicament. She openly tells her that Equation, the defiler does not deserve any lenience but rather, "he should be exposed and his certificate torn! Why should he go on working when your life's ruined?" (83). Goora however is not brave enough to follow Nkwanzu's advice. No wonder she ends up ruining her entire future due to her silence. Nkwanzu also detests the act of pregnant girls being expelled out of school whereas their peers/male counterparts remain in school undisturbed. She says to Goora, "In fact if I had authority, even school boys who make their fellow school girls pregnant would be taken out of school until the girl delivers. It's unfair that such boys should stay in school while the girls are expelled" (85). This open mindedness of Nkwanzu is proof that she is brave enough to fight the oppressive patriarchal tendencies. She desires to make social changes that can protect the girl-child from oppression at a very young age. This radical nature of Nkwanzu is what Okurut desires to see all girls take on.

Another brave character is Mama, a primary school teacher who chooses to take part in the guerilla activities to fight the oppressive regime of president Opolo, the Congress Party leader. Mama teaches during day and in the evening, she takes to selling crude spirits in Katanga so as to spy on the government soldiers who are her regular customers. The foolish and unsuspecting soldiers drink stupidly and spill all the secrets of the government thus giving mama a stronghold to launch an attack. Despite the fact that Opolo's second regime is characterized by massive and indiscriminate killings of political opponents, Mama risks her life by taking on the leadership of the women's wing of the guerillas in the bush. After a long time of fighting, they emerge successful. When their commander, president Kazi is sworn in, "The people looked with awe at the women soldiers, smartly clad in their uniforms with Ak 47 slung on their shoulders. The women combatants were something like a tourist attraction. The eighth wonder of the world, for

never in the history of the country had women become combatants” (191). These women are held in high regard by all and sundry for their bravery to save the nation. They thus prove to all that women too can remarkably contribute to building of the nation when given the chance. Okurut through this communicates that women, when given the chance can do anything and do it excellently as seen through Mama’s wits in managing the women’s wing.

In *The First Daughter*, we see bravery through Kasemiire who confronts her fears and does not give up on life in the face of adversity. When she realizes that she is pregnant, she does not panic but rather calmly awaits the terrible reaction of her parents; particularly from her father. While her mother can hardly relax due to Kasemiire’s constant illness, the latter “knew what was wrong with her. She was pregnant. The realization did not shock her and she wondered why. She had missed her two previous menstruation periods, but she had not worried...” (49). Her calmness is a little strange especially given the fact that she is convinced that her father can easily kill her due to this mistake; only a brave girl can be this calm. When her father eventually gets wind of her pregnancy, he madly thrashes her but Kaase yields to all the blows. She is branded a whore and even “disinherited” by her father but this does not drive her to even think of committing suicide or giving up on life. Her father further torments her psychologically by spitting in disgust whenever he sees her.

To add salt to injury, her lover, Steven does not keep his promise of taking her with him however, Kasemiire painfully but courageously accepts her sad fate. She does not even attempt to abort her baby but rather carries it till she bears a son that she names Raymond, fondly referred to as Remmy. As soon as Remmy starts to sit, Kasemiire resolves to doing all sorts of odd jobs to raise her child single handedly. She makes pancakes which her sisters sell in the neighboring schools in order to earn a little money to fend for her baby.

In another incident, Kasemiire’s bravery is evident when she beats up her elder brother, Mugabi for unjustly completing all the water that is meant for their bath. Her mother, Abwooli, shocked by this unnatural deed, beats her up as well and warns her never to fight with a man no matter the circumstances.

In addition to the above, kasemiire also exhibits bravery when she accepts to go the city with Mrs. Mutyaba; an activist and visitor in her village who offers to support her. Kasemiire buries

her fears for the sake of her son, Remmy and goes with her. There, she resolves to work very hard so that she does not disappoint her boss. She saves money and sends to her mother in the village to cater for the family.

Kasemiire's bravery is further exhibited in her determination to fight Mr. Mutyaba who attempts to exploit her sexually when his wife is on a business trip. Despite being young and physically weak unlike her adversary, Kasemiire with all her might pushes the naked rapist off her, jumps out of bed in shock and runs out of the bedroom for her safety. In so doing, she avoids being a victim to the lust of men for the second time. She saves her dignity as well.

We also see her courage when she later faces Steven Kirungi, her former lover and openly condemns him for abandoning her eight years ago. She fearlessly pours out her heart and wrath on him. The latter is forced to apologise countless times and explain his side of the story. Above all, Kasemiire exhibits the highest level of bravery when she forgives Steven Kirungi and later her father, Kyamanya and also Mrs. Mutyaba who are all responsible for her suffering at a certain point in life. She also opens her heart to love Steven Kirungi again, something that requires a lot of courage. Kasemiire's bravery generally enables her to go through hurdles of life patiently and she eventually emerges successful.

The illiterate women on the other hand are portrayed as submissive and superstitious. They accept to be victims of male brutality and believe they are the inferior sex. Mukaaka for instance believes that a woman's place is in her husband's home and therefore education of women is a waste of time. She expresses displeasure in Kasemiire's education for this matter. This is because she is a victim of the patriarchal laws of her time. Ateenyi, Kyamaanywa's second wife is very submissive to her husband. She allows to be beaten to pulp by her aggressive husband just because she had visited her parents without his permission. She also dances to his tune in the hope of being forgiven. In *The Invisible Weevil*, Senga, a traditional woman condemns all acts of women emancipation which she considers insanity. When Nkwanzu, a victim of rape decides to report the case to police, Senga collapses because never in her life has she witnessed such mental derangement, that drives a woman to publicly disgrace herself and entire family by reporting such a shameful act done to her by Rex. It is such backward patriarchal beliefs that keep women doomed to passivity and subjugation by the men in their lives. Gorette Kyomuhendo and Mary Karooro Okurut condemn such oppressive customs vehemently.

2.2.2 Intelligent

Women are presented as very intelligent beings unlike the male characters. Nkwanzu, for instance, makes it through O' level unlike her brother Tingo: "Tingo did not perform well and ended up in a technical school studying carpentry" (93). Nkwanzu on the other hand joins a school in Kampala for her A' level and later Makerere University where she graduates with the Bachelors in law. Her intelligence enables her to be promoted to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Tingo ironically does not make it despite his rude remark to Nkwanzu years back when the latter would encourage him to comb his hair before going to school. He would tell Nkwanzu, "I have no time to comb. I'm too busy reading" and Nkwanzu responded; "I'm also a candidate but I comb my hair daily". Tingo then proudly added, "That's you, as for me, I am busy" (63). It is laughable that the busy one does not pass the exams. Atim, a female and Nkwanzu's boon companion at Makerere University also graduates with Bachelors in Education and starts teaching in a secondary school in Kampala, thanks to her intelligence and industry.

Nkwanzu and Atim also exhibit a high level of intelligence when they warn Genesis that it is not a good idea to have Rex, his supposed close friend, as his campaign manager. They see through Rex and hate his evil look. They both strongly feel that he is a hypocrite but Genesis will not hear any of that from them because they are merely women. Eventually, Rex sabotages Genesis' campaigns and wins over all the voters to himself. In so doing, Karoro foregrounds a message that men ought to pay heed to their wives' or women's advice for they too are intelligent and foresighted.

Nkwanzu's intelligence is also shown in the many instances when she questions the baseless stereotypical patriarchal customs. Such include the custom that does not allow women to eat the tongue of the cow, the custom that only women ought to be virgins before marriage, the custom that some subjects are not good for girls because they are meant to be good wives, the custom that it is the duty of the woman to please her husband and not vice versa among others.

Intelligence is a trait that is not limited to Nkwanzu only, Mama too is a very intelligent woman in the novel. She advises Nkwanzu against taking on a new marital name after her marriage to Genesis for this would put her in an inferior position unlike her husband. Such names include "*Bacureera*, the name means a calm, quiet, humble, woman", (210) which is given to Nkwanzu. Other names of a kind include "*Bubukaara* meaning, the calm one, *Bafungura*, the one who

always provides a refreshment, *Bayoroba*, the soft one, *Batatsya*, the one who welcomes all” (210) and many other others. Mama insists that such names “doom women to passivity” (210) and urges Nkwanzu not to accept any of them.

Mama’s intelligence is also seen in the way she coordinates the guerilla activities against “Duduma’s insane regime” (142). She recruits people from all walks of life wisely into the intellectual group and ensures that their real identities are concealed for their safety and for the safety of the entire group. Genesis, Nkwanzu’s boyfriend, is a member of the group. His name is “Baba Candle” and he is a Cura in State Research Headquarters where he “gathers a lot of information and has saved many lives” (145). Mzee, his close friend is dubbed Samba. He looks like a madman and basically goes to a rubbish pit near the barracks state house research office to get information. When Nkwanzu and Atim are taken to Mama, she initiates them into the group. Nkwanzu is baptized “Udongo” while Atim is named “Nguvu”. They are both tasked to write “anti-government literature and throw it in parts of the country and post it to all government departments to cause panic in government” (147-148). Nkwanzu and Atim carryout their assigned duties as expected. With Mama’s good leadership and joint effort of the guerillas (both male and female) in the bush, Duduma’s oppressive regime is toppled eventually.

Goretti Kyomuhendo, like Mary Karooro Okurut also depicts female characters as wise and very hard working unlike the male characters. Kasemiire for instance, who is the protagonist is said to be brilliant unlike her brother, Mugabi whose laziness their father, Kyamanywa detests. Kamanywa “felt that the girl was a special one, she was a very responsible young girl, and beautiful.....”. She always supervised her sisters as they got along with their domestic chores. Her parents were both very proud of her, Later, when the national results of Primary seven are released, unlike her elder brother Mugabi, Kasemiire “had passed highly the Primary Leaving Examinations” thus making her father very proud. Ngonzi, Kasemiire’s mother had great expectations of her daughter: “She knew that Kasemiire would be a great lady one day, and she could only achieve this if she got more education” (11). Her parents both believe in her. This is why her father sends her to Duhaga Secondary School, an act that does not please his fellow men who believe that the education of girls is a waste of time.

Kasemiire’s intelligence is further exhibited through her academic journey in secondary school. The narrator reveals that Kasemiire “was always among the top students in her class. Now a sub

–candidate” (39), she worked even harder. Her interests in her studies “went beyond the requirement of exams”. Back in the dormitory, given her responsible nature, Kasemiire was elected “the House Captain” and thus was free to “choose any room she wanted” (29). Later while in senior four, she was elected the head girl of Duhaga Secondary School because of her admirable traits of hard work and intelligence. In second term of s.4, Kasemiire emerged the best in her class in the mock examination. It is absurd that such a beauty with brains was almost going to be a waste because of one silly but human mistake of getting pregnant at school.

The intelligence of Kasemiire is further depicted when she gets a second chance to return to school, after a long time of suffering and humiliation due to her early pregnancy. She seeks refuge in a church after being kicked out of the house by her caretaker, Mrs. Mutyaba for allegedly seducing the latter’s husband. At church, she meets a kind nun; Gertrude who introduces her to a White Father that is in charge of orphans. Kasemiire regards the chance granted to her to go back to school as a blessing and vows to work tirelessly to make it in life come rain, come shine. Kasemiire is tasked to “work with the sisters in the cleaning of the church, teaching young children the catechism and carrying out other duties in order to earn her school fees and up-keep. She would only study in the afternoons” (118). Even then, Kasemiire passed the ordinal level highly after studying for only third term of senior four. In senior six, Kasemiire having been relieved of some of her duties and allowed her to study even in the mornings chooses to focus even more on her studies. The lifestyle at church had even drawn her closer to God so she could pray often for a good future. It is no wonder that she passed well the final exam and “was admitted to Makerere University for a Law Course” (119).

2.2.3 Gossipers

Goretti Kyomuhendo, however, generally depicts the illiterate women as a bunch of gossipers with an immeasurable love for idle talk every time they get an opportunity. November, the season of catching grasshoppers is one of such opportune moments since it is solely the duty of mothers and their daughters. “During this season, all secrets were let out, women discussed their husbands freely and everybody’s tongue became loose; rivals shouted at one another openly,” (4) the author reveals. Below is one of their scandalous conversations:

“Have you heard of the recent scandal in the village?” another woman asked Kasemiire’s mother.

“No, what is it now?”

“You mean the scandal where Mrs. Byaruhanga was caught red-handed with another man?” another woman shouted from the extreme end of the hill.

“Ha ha ha,” the woman who had asked Kasemiire’s mother laughed.

“Did you also hear about what Mr. Byaruhanga did?” she shouted back.

“Yes,” an older woman who had sneaked up to them replied.

“He demanded that the man who had been caught committing adultery with his wife repent and apologise publicly.”

“But the man himself was married,” another woman interjected. “So when his wife learnt of the scandal, she left him.”

“Who was the man, by the way? The older woman asked.

“Rwakaikara!” the women replied in unison.

“Holy Virgin!” the older woman exclaimed, making the sign of the cross

Many times, “such a respectable man! Who could have thought ...”(4)

Another woman interrupts the old woman’s speech expressing shock on Rwakaikara being described as respectable. She claims the latter even “tried to tickle” her ribs (3) yet she is a married woman and that he does not spare young girls either. They all laugh in mockery. Goretti shames the man further through the older woman’s terrible suggestion that Rwakaikara’s “thing should be cut off and thrown to the dogs to feed on” (3) since he indiscriminately encroaches on the innocent girls as well. The conversation above solely attacks Rwakaikara’s sexual immorality. Goretti does not mock his partner in crime, Mrs. Byaruhanga at all which is evidence of her prejudice towards the male sex. The former Mrs. Byaruhanga, on hearing the scandalous talk bitterly attacks the woman who started the entire gossip thus: “Why don’t you want to discuss your own affairs?” she asked her bitterly, “Wasn’t your own daughter caught in a banana plantation fornicating with a boy from the next village?” (4). The attacked goes silent as the other women roar with ecstasy and show disgust for such uncouth girls. The gossip then goes on and on.

When Ateenyi, Kyamanywa’s second wife, falsely accuses Abwooli, Ksaemiire’s mother of killing her baby, the gossip that follows this scandal becomes unbearable for Abwooli. The accusations severely affect her social life as she starts “avoiding public places” having been branded a witch, not only by her husband but also by the entire village folk. The poor woman’s reputation is totally destroyed.

The idle habit of gossiping by the rural women is further portrayed when Kasemiire's uncle, Kaliisa dies. Since the death is deemed strange, the women cooking at the funeral gossip loudly about what they believe killed the late. Kasemiire listens to them in shock as they come up with all sorts of theories to lay the blame on the late man's wife. They conclude that the late had been bewitched by the wife due to his adulterous tendency. Kasemiire however finds it illogical for a woman to murder the father of her children and tries to convince them about it. The women however, disregard her point of view claiming she is still young to understand certain things. Dissatisfied with the claims, Kasemiire asks her grandmother, Mukaaka for her opinion on the matter. The latter apprises her that that is the fate of all married women. A married woman "can be accused of anything" (77). Kasemiire then understands that her aunty is really innocent. Through this kind of idle talk, women character assassinate both men and women. The author seems to suggest that the only way to eliminate such useless talk is through emancipation of women; an act that would keep them busy and not give them room to poke their noses into other people's personal lives.

2.2.4 Superstitious

Kyomuhendo also portrays the local rural women in her text as superstitious beings. These women hold dearly all sorts of superstitions. A case in point is Kasemiire's morally-loose cousin who mocks her for getting pregnant while at school yet she would have avoided it by consulting her. She confidently tells Kasemiire that all one has to do is to: "just visit any Mubiito's house and look for *engabi's* (antelope) skin hanging in the doorway; pluck out some few hairs and sew them at the hem of your petticoat; make sure that you wear that petticoat whenever you meet with a man" and adds, "Secondly, always drink a cupful of very strong tea leaves whenever you are in your periods". Kasemiire however, does not see any connection between the recommendations and the reproductive system but she also wonders why at twenty-two, this cousin of hers hasn't conceived despite her sexually loose character.

Another superstitious character presented in the text is Kasemiire's mother, Abwooli. Ignorant of her teenage daughter, Kasemiire's pregnancy, she holds onto the belief that her Kasemiire is suffering from a strange illness that is characterized by vomiting and constant headache. She fearfully remarks that "Batoro girls are fond of bewitching clever students" and thus resolves to

get Kasemiire very strong herbs in vain. She even suspects Kasemiire's aunty of poisoning her daughter due to jealousy since her own daughter had been forced into marriage and not granted the opportunity to go to secondary school. As a remedy, she collects "the vomit and put it under a certain plant called *omuko*. It was believed that if the vomit contained poison, the plant would immediately wither. But the plant did not dry up" (49-50). Her superstition blinds her from noticing that her daughter is actually not sick but pregnant. Superstitions prevent people from facing reality and Kyomuhendo blames this on illiteracy of women.

Another superstitious character in the text is Mukaaka, Kasemiire's grandmother. She sadly narrates to Kasemiire the strange fate of her late husband, the only child to his parents. She claims that her late husband died because he threw away the piece of cloth that the medicine man had tied around his loins at bath, thus throwing away his protection. Mukaaka goes ahead to lament that this defiant act of her husband claimed the lives of their first and second born children and eventually resulted into his mysterious death by a strange monster. The old woman broods in her sadness and wishes the situation were different. These superstitions however are baseless and Kyomuhendo blames the ignorance of women for this. She advocates for education of women to help eliminate such superstitious beliefs.

All in all, Mary Karoro Okurut and Gorreti Kyomuhendo both portray female characters positively however, the illiterate women are depicted as enslaved by the suppressive patriarchal customs that limit their actions and views about life. The emancipated women for instance Nkwanzi, Atim, Mama, Kasemiire are portrayed as brave, industrious, independent and intelligent. On the contrary, the illiterate ones for example Senga, Kaaka, Mukaaka, Abwooli among others, uphold patriarchal customs which propagate passivity and subjugation of women. These are depicted as submissive, gossipers, dependent and poverty stricken. They are shocked by the determination of the educated women to fight injustice and view their actions as insane and unnatural for instance Nkwanzi's decision to report Rex to the police having been raped and Kasemiire's fight with the brother, Mugabi in *The Invisible Weevil* and *The First Daughter* respectively. Both the educated and illiterate women however are victims of sexual assault and domestic violence just because they are women. Okurut and Kyomuhendo advocate for empowerment of women through education so that they gain economic independence and

consequently, the men will appreciate their value and respect them hence reducing violence against them in homes.

2.3. Portrayal of Male Characters by the Selected Male Authors

Oyono and Ocwinyo present men in their texts positively compared to the women whose image is utterly degraded as discussed earlier. They generally present men as the protagonists hence, the pivot of action in their texts and in addition to that, attach all the major roles to them for they are men. The men run the society and rule over women who consequently, depend on them for a living. They are depicted as responsible, industrious and brave. Below is a detailed positive portrayal of men in the given texts under relevant sub titles:

2.3.1 Responsible, Industrious and independent

Ferdinand Oyono in *Houseboy*, presents Father Gilbert, the white priest that is in charge of Dangan Parish as a responsible and industrious man. Toundi, his houseboy and the narrator proudly refers to Father Gilbert as his master and benefactor. This description emphasizes the priest's significance to the latter's life. Toundi goes ahead to narrate how dedicated this man of God is in carrying out his missionary activities. Father Gilbert goes down to the villages, from "hut to hut trying to make converts for the new religion". He attracts little black boys by throwing to them "sugar lumps". Toundi reveals that he "was in a gang of heathen boys who followed the missionary about" in Fia. Father Gilbert manages to win over Toundi and goes with him to the Saint Peters Catholic Mission in Dangan. While at the Mission, Toundi reveals that "Every Thursday Father Gilbert used to go into Dangan so that he could collect the mail for the Mission, personally". This is proof of his commitment to his priestly duties. It is no wonder that he dies on duty and gains himself the title, "the martyr" having died on African soil, far away from his family. His body is found "bloody and crashed on his motorcycle, by the side of a branch from the giant cotton tree that the natives call "the hammer of the Whites".

Father Vandermyer, Father Gilbert's assistant is also presented as very hard working. He too goes to the villages described as "the bush" to get more converts. Many a time, he returns with women who he successfully takes away from their "polygamous husband". He preaches to them about monogamy as Christianity dictates. These women live at the Sixa — a boarding school

after being converted to Christianity. They contribute a whole lot to the Mission through their labour. Father Vandermayer is also the “censor for the houseboys and the faithful of the parish”.

The Commandant, the chief of the white population in Dangan is also depicted as an industrious man. He oversees all the activities in Dangan since he is the head of all Europeans therein. Toundi refers to him as a “great chief”. The Commandant visits M. Salvain, the headteacher of the Dangan School to find out about its progress. He later inspects the school. He is also often away on tours to the bush to ensure that all is well. Toundi says his master “is indefatigable” for his dedication to work is exceptional. It is this busy schedule of his that his unsupportive and unfaithful wife, Suzy takes advantage of and cheats on him.

M. Salvain, the headmaster of the public school in Dangan, is yet another very committed character. When he gets to Dangan, he works tooth and nail to resurrect the school which is on the verge of collapsing. He expels all the elderly children and African instructors whose uncouth habits had turned the school into a brothel. The students were louts and were failing their certificates continuously. Among his discoveries having gone through the school registers, the youngest pupil to get his certificate was seventeen. M. Salvain further tells his boss, the commandant, “I made up an infants’ class; there hadn’t been such a class here before I came and I made this class of children between two years old and six”. He frankly adds that young African children are “as intelligent as” the French children. He also informs his boss that he is about to complete “an educational experiment that is quite unprecedented” and promises to send him a report about it soon. All this is proof of his undivided dedication to the education sector in Dangan.

Hard work is not limited to white men only as Toundi, the native houseboy of Father Gilbert exhibits this trait. While at the Mission in Dangan, Toundi wakes up “every morning at five O’clock and even earlier sometimes...”. He serves up to three or four masses every day to the extent that the skin on his knees” is now as hard as “crocodile skin”. Later, when the new Commandant takes him on as his houseboy after Father Gilbert’s death, he wakes up at first cockcrow, arrives at the residence at six O’clock from the location where he lives and takes off his apron at midnight every day. He serves the Commandant diligently amidst physical abuses

like sudden kicks, his fingers being trodden on and verbal insults. He serves his master beer, food, prepares his bath water, cleans the house and lights the pressure lamps every evening among other duties.

Julius Ocwinyo like Ferdinand Oyono creates industrious and hardworking male characters in his text, *Footprints of the Outsider*. Abudu Olwit, the protagonist in this text is portrayed thus despite being born under poverty-stricken circumstances in Teboke to a morally loose mother and thus being a laughing stock owing to the dubiety of his paternity. Olwit struggles throughout his journey of education with the support of his maternal uncle, Odwong. On many occasions, he engages in rigorous farming in order to make some money by selling his produce to pay his tuition while at Amuka College. Later, when he joins Makerere University, his hard work enables him to achieve a Second-Class Economics degree. After a few years of work as a licenced teacher, Abudu is appointed to Assistant Superintendent of Prisons and later, the Officer-in-Charge – OC—of Alaro Prison Farm at only thirty-six years of age (68) owing to his hardwork. It is at Alaro Prison Farm that he amasses wealth and gains fame among his people. Indeed his hard work pays him off as the saying goes.

Another very hardworking character presented in the text is Okullu Ipapalo, the pawpaw seller in Teboke. Okullu, Katarina's husband and the father to Patrick Amunu gains himself the nickname *Ipapalo* due to his persistent and passionate hawking of pawpaws locally known as "*Ipapalo*". The narrator vividly states that Ipapalo "would ride on his old Gazelle bicycle through Teboke Trading Centre bellowing '*Ipapalo!... Ipapalo!... Ipapalo!*.' and go on to extol the virtues of his Ipapalo" in a bid to attract customers and earn some money to take care of his family. He is despised and insulted by Bitoroci whose daughter is interested in Patrick Amunu, Ipapalo's son, as earlier noted however, this drives him to work even harder to keep his son, Amunu in secondary school. It is no wonder that his sweat is not in vain, as Patrick Amunu, his son goes on to train as a doctor in Israel and becomes a respected paediatrician in Teboke to the shock of Bitoroci. Okullu is thus applauded for this. We however do not come across any female character that is this responsible and worthy of such applause. One wonders if such women are really non-existent as Ocwinyo portrays it in the text.

The other hardworking character that is worth mentioning is Odwong, Olwit's maternal uncle who sees the latter through school and also offers constructive criticism to the young man. He engages in fishing to educate his nephew. He carries out this trade passionately while singing a praise – chant for Olwit to work hard and make him proud for he toils a lot to raise the latter's tuition by "killing big fish" in the swamp. This determination that he exhibits greatly impacts on Olwit's success in school and life generally. He is that kind of uncle that any child would love to have. It is a shame that Olwit's mother, Alcinora fails to properly take on her role as a parent and instead her brother does the needful and thus takes all the credit when the young man prospers. Ocwinyo in so doing presents the female sex as irresponsible and incapable of raising their own children without the support of a man.

We further see the element of hard work through yet another male character, Father Guglielmo Varasco, a white Catholic priest in the text. Despite his unbecoming habit of grabbing natives' land, he is presented as industrious by Julius Ocwinyo. Father Varasco is the parish priest of Teboke Catholic Mission and is responsible for its transformation from a sub parish to a Mission. During his six-year stay in Teboke, the narrator points out that Father Varasco ably "established an orchard, a poultry unit, a crop farm, a grinding mill and an old people's home" and these tremendously impact on the lives of the people of Teboke. He thus deserves an applause for this.

Besides representing men as industrious as discussed above, Ferdinand Oyono and Julius Ocwinyo in *Houseboy* and *Footprints of the Outsider* respectively, create male characters that take on all the leadership roles spiritually, politically, economically and socially in their communities as discussed below.

Spiritually, it is only the men that draw souls to Christ through instruction and conversion of sinners. They do this in their different capacities as priests or catechists. The clergy include Father Gilbert and Father Vandermayer, the white priests, in *Houseboy*, who live at Saint Peters Catholic Mission in Dangan. These lead Mass in church every Sunday and urge the Christians to be prayerful. They also convert as many non-believers as possible among the natives for instance the women of the *Sixa* who are got from their polygamous marriages and also Toundi whose ancestors are cannibals. The catechists on the other hand are African instructors of this new religion and they are answerable to the white priests. They too are male for example Martin, the

head catechist and catechist Obebe. One wonders whether the females are not good enough for such 'godly' duties.

Similarly, Julius Ocwinyo presents only the male characters as worthy to preach the word of God as we don't see any female taking on such a role. These religious leaders include bishops, priests and catechists. Fr. Vittorino Corti of the Verona Fathers is the founder of Apicil Mission and later "the second Bishop of Lango – Acholi diocese, to which Teboke belonged. Fr Guglielmo Varasco is the Parish Priest of Teboke Catholic Mission and is succeeded by "an aging priest, sixty-five-year-old Marcellino Luigi" six years later. Fr McCormarck is the in – charge of Namilyango College where Abudu Olwit is admitted for High School. We also come across Catechist Dempeterio Arim, a tall young man adores his profession of winning souls for Christ and leads "the Catechumens through catechism with speed and gusto". There is no female whatsoever. Could it be that females are evil or not holy enough to preach the good news?

Politically, the commandant, Robert, a male character is the head of all the white population in Dangan. He thus commands respect from all, that is, both the natives and the white settlers. As the administrator, he lives in the Residence and all Europeans respectfully send him gifts when they return from the bush (village). The Prison Director for instance sends him two chickens and a basket of eggs through a prisoner, when he returns from his tour. The commandant is respected by the clergy as well. On one of his visits to the Saint Peters Church, the narrator notes that Father Vandermayer comes out to meet him and bows "with that peculiar gracefulness of the clergy that the laymen can never imitate". When he visits the Salvains, he is treated like a king. The native chiefs of Dangan, Akoma and Mengueme, also pay their respect to the Commandant. When granted the opportunity to hold the Commandant's hand, Akoma is said to have "grasped it with both hands and swung it from side to side. Every time the Commandant asked him a question he said, 'Yes, yes'" and clucked like a hen". This is his way of showing allegiance to the Commandant. Mengueme, the chief of the Yanyans also visits and welcomes the Commandant accordingly.

It is important to note that the African leaders or chiefs are all male as well. These include like stated the previous paragraph, Akoma, chief of SOS who reigns over ten thousand subjects and is the only one of the Dangan chiefs that has been to France and has alliances with the Europeans in

form of five gold rings. He is proud of his title, ‘‘ The king of the rings’’ and arrogantly refers to himself as the king of wives to emphasise his ‘prestigious’ polygamous nature. He has three wives and is a psychopant of the white man. Mengueme on the other hand, is the chief of the Yanyans and is highly respected among his people. He has never been over-sees but is wise. Unlike Akoma, he does not find pleasure in dancing to the tunes of the white man. This makes him a genuine leader to his people. Note that there are no female chiefs.

Julius Ocwinyo, like his male counterpart Oyono also portrays only the male characters as political rulers at the grass root levels and nationally. The village elders for instance, whose major duty is to settle disputes in the community are only male, and so are the local chiefs like Rwot Awal, a county chief. At the national level, all parliamentarians in the text and aspirants for parliamentary seats are male. A case in point is Honourable Adoli Awal, the Member of Parliament of Apac district. While serving as a junior minister in Uchebi’s government, He travels to different parts of the world on official duty for instance, he goes to Lusaka, Zambia with some of his fellow members of the Broadbased National Assembly to discuss highly diplomatic issues. We later see Abudu Olwit and Luka Apel, both male expressing interest in contesting for the Ayer constituency parliamentary seat against Adoli Awal, the incumbent. The compaigns turn out to be bloody due to the heated competition between Adoli and Awal. That aside, it is worth noting that the presidents of the country are all male. In the text, we come across President Bwete who is ousted by Major General Idi who later loses to the former. President Bwete’s second reign is ended by General Ragamoi whose regime is short-lived. President Uchebi takes over from him. Generally, we don’t come across any female character that is an official leader and neither do they have any ambition of a kind. This is unrealistic.

Furthermore, it is only the male characters that are presented as professionals in the various economic sectors for instance education, health, agriculture among others, in the selected male written texts. In *Houseboy* for instance, M, Magnol is the agricultural engineer, M. Moreau is the prison director, M. Jacques Salvain is the headmaster of the government school in Dangan, the white doctor is male and so is the African doctor. M. Fernand is the man that disinfects Dangan with DDT. All in all, male characters carry out their various professional duties while the females are merely housewives as earlier discussed.

Likewise, in *Footprints of the Outsider*, several men are presented as successful in their professions and on economic grounds. Abudu Olwit for instance faithfully serves as a Prisons Director and later Officer- in- Charge of Alaro Prison Farm where his fame and wealth grow by heaps and bounds. He allots himself a large chunk of farmland at Alaro and puts aside one “red Massey Ferguson tractor for his personal use”. Much of his chores are done by the prisoners at the farm for instance fetching water, collecting firewood among others. Patrick Amunu is a successful paediatrician in Teboke after his training in Israel. Doctor Aligijana is another successful character that is worth mentioning. Female characters on the other hand are generally presented as housewives. The few that attempt to make money do petty jobs like selling of *arege*, a local brew like it is the case with Alcinora. She however is not wise enough to save the little that she earns as she squanders it by buying *arege* for her lovers. Irene Namu on the other hand opens up a bar and sadly turns out to be the major attraction in it given her voluptuous body. She along with her barmaids trade their bodies for money. How absurd! Even the educated females have no ambition at all for instance Saida Acola. Despite being a professional marketeer, she abandons her career and dedicates her life to keeping her marital home for that is what is expected of a woman. This is probably what the author regards an ideal wife and mother through such portrayal.

Socially, law and order is kept entirely by the male characters in Oyonos’s *Houseboy*. M. Moreau for instance is in charge of the prison in Dangan. He deals with hardened criminals and is feared by all natives in Dangan. The Africans call him “The White Elephant” given his “broad shoulders and the fact that everyone, the commandant inclusive ‘feels a certain respect’ for him. The narrator states, “Of all the whites in Dangan, M. Moreau is the one who is really a man among men”. It is however, absurd that the criminals are often African natives. While on duty, the prison director for instance, deals with two Africans suspected of stealing from M. Janopoulos by having them stripped to the waist and handcuffed. A rope round their necks is tied to the pole in the Flogging Yard, so that they cannot turn their necks towards the blows by the the hippopotamus – hide whip. This points to the view that M. Moureau is intolerant of ‘criminals’. His suspects are often sent to the “Black man’s Grave” that is the hospital, where they spend a few days painfully dying. Natives thus try as much as possible to keep away from trouble for they are the target.

Gullet is another male character in the above mentioned text, that keeps law and order in Dangan. He is the Chief of Police and often carries out raids in the location (the African dwelling) in search for criminals. It is he who arrests Toundi from the Residence and hands him over to Mendim Me tit, the Chief Native Constable for 'safe keeping' till the Prison director returns from his tour. Gullet later raids Toundi's sister's home in search for Sophie whom he believes is hiding there having stolen her lover; the agricultural engineer's money. When they fail to get evidence against Toundi, the latter is unfairly criminalised for being Sophie's partner in crime and the endless and severe beatings he is subjected to cost him his life by the end of the novel. As far as keeping order is concerned, it is important to note that the male natives take on lower titles for instance they are constables and orderlies like Mendim Me tit and Ndjangoula and they are answerable to their white bosses. Females are considered incapable of carrying out such duties and thus we don't see them anywhere in that field.

All in all, in both male authored texts therefore, Oyono and Ocwinoyo largely depict male characters as responsible beings that hold various admirable positions of responsibilities politically, religiously, socially and economically.

2.3.2 Brave

In *Houseboy* by Ferdinand Oyono and *Footprints of the Outsider* by Julius Ocwinoyo, bravery is associated with masculinity as the authors stress this through the various male characters in these texts.

Ferdinand Oyono for instance creates a very brave and fearless character, Mekongo who is described as a one-legged army veteran. The latter proudly narrates to a group of Africans gathered round a fire in a hut in the location about his bravery while at war in the white man's country. He says, "I've left a leg there and I've no regrets". He reveals to them that his battalion fought in Libya fearlessly and stresses that his comrades "were white men, real white men" (57-58) which impresses his audience and they listen to his tale enthusiastically.

Similarly, Abudu Olwit in *Footprints of the Outsider* by Julius Ocwinoyo is depicted as a fearless character. He exhibits a high level of bravery when he makes up his mind to contest for the Ayer

Constituency parliamentary seat despite the threats from the “veteran politician and incumbent, Mike Adoli Awal”. Adoli bitterly refers to Olwit as “a little child with snot in his nose” and warns him to keep off politics. Adoli’s envy of Olwit’s growing fame in Ayer constituency drives him to have the latter arrested on false allegations that Olwit is a rebel. His arrest breaks down his mothers, Alcinora and Bitoroci who rush to a diviner, Eripadica for help. His wife, Saida Acola cries a lot wondering what her husband’s fate would be. This weakness is typical of the female sex. On the other hand, while in prison, Olwit courageously decides that he will use his ‘nascent popularity in Teboke and Alemi into formidable political capital” and vows to “give a big shake to the parliamentary seat to which Adoli Awal seemed to have become so deeply accustomed, which he seemed to believe was by birthright”. This daring nature of Olwit does not go down well with the Honourable Adoli Awal who chooses to attack his opponent during their last campaign meeting at Alemi by hinting on the former’s “uncertain paternity” and his mother, Alcinora’s immorality. This angers the crowd and sparks off violence which results in many casualties and even death. Adoli Awal’s mother, Imat Geto for instance is murdered and the campaign is marred.

Fr Guglielmo Varasco is yet another fearless character in the novel, *Footprints of the Outsider* as he risks his life to save Mike Adoli Awal who is on the run after the first fall of President Bwete. In the height of violence as political opponents are being murdered by General Idi’s men after the latter’s occupancy of State House, Adoli seeks solace in the Catholic priest. Fr. Varasco ‘drove Mike Adoli – Awal in his grey Peugeot 404 pick – up through the Uganda – Kenyan border and deposited him at a Catholic Mission in Eldoret’. To successfully carry out this mission, Adoli – Awal disguises as Fr. Paul Githongo, a Kenyan National working at Mbuya Catholic Mission in Kampala. This indeed enables him to safely go through the various check points along with his guide, the priest.

It is also worth noting that in the text, only male characters are portrayed as military leaders, army veterans and soldiers. In short, female characters are not brave enough to partake of this. A case in point is General Idi who is responsible for President Bwete’s first fall and later General Ragamoi who destroys Bwete’s second regime. President Uchebi also goes to war in order to oust the president and take over State House. Amidst these coups, many lose their lives and numerous property is destroyed, while the military leaders enjoy the pleasure of taking on the

highest leadership roles in their regimes, thanks to their bravery and ambition. This however is not characteristic of the females who are presented as timid, unambitious and unimportant thus theirs is a peripheral role. Besides the presidents mentioned above who take on power after staging wars, we also come across soldiers mentioned in the novel. A case in point is Laban Oculi, a young soldier who is proud of his exploits as a corporal in Burma, having “fought with valour and beast – like ferocity”. All these suggest that men are so courageous; not even death can get into their way of achieving what they desire.

2.4 Portrayal of Men by Selected Female Authors

Unlike the selected male authors’ utterly positive portrayal of men as discussed in the previous chapter above, the chosen female authors, Mary Karooro Okurut and Gorette Kyomuhendo in *The Invisible Weevil* and *The First Daughter* respectively, demonise all men, as they represent them as lustful, chauvinistic, violent, greedy and hypocritical as discussed below;

2.4.1 Lustful

Mary Karooro Okurut depicts men as lustful and sex maniacs. The male characters in her text, *The Invisible Weevil* are beastly beings that can hardly control their libido. Consequently, they view all females as nothing but sex objects for their pleasure. Their lust drives them to commit terrible sins against humanity, that is; rape and defilement. Women and children therefore live in fear or rather dread men, for they feel insecure. Such men include Zabulooni, Rex, the Mafutamingi also identified as Jack, and soldiers that usher in the different governments. Nkwanzu’s aunt, that is; Senga cautions the former after she’s seen her first moon (menstrual period) to beware of men lest she becomes a victim. She tells her, “Men and boys are crafty. They can trick a young girl like you. Worse still, they can try to rape you” (57) and then goes ahead to give her relevant techniques for self-defense in the event that she is cornered by a rapist. Senga laments that “rape is becoming too common these days” and exhibits utter disgust for men who exploit women sexually.

Particular male figures like Zabulooni, the cleaner at Duhaga Secondary School where Nkwanzu studies, further confirms the lustful nature of men. In Zabulooni’s confession in church, he reveals that he is a victim of the “sin of lust” (77). He informs the congregation that “On Wednesday, the devil tempted me and I slept with the cook’s wife” (77). He adds that in the

previous day, he was tempted to sleep with chicken and goes on ranting about his lust till the head teacher intercepts him, for fear that the school girls are too young to take in Zabulooni's nonsense. This confession presents men as shameless sex maniacs in that they can sleep with anything including animals to satisfy their libido. This act of bestiality among men is also presented in Tingo's letter to his sister, Nkwanzu about his sad or rather deplorable experience of bullying at St. Peter's High school. He tells the latter about an event where the bullies at his school "got hold of one of the pigs. They then forced the small boy to have sex with it" (70) and enjoyed the spectacle. The author through this flashback suggests that the craziness of the men about sex is natural; that is, even as children, they think in the line of sex.

The lustful nature of men is not limited to the illiterate Zabulooni only as Equation, the scripture union leader and also a chemistry teacher at Duhaga Secondary School where Nkwanzu studies, carries this ugly trait. Equation takes advantage of Goora, a naïve school girl to fulfill his sexual desires. He defiles and impregnates her as Goora confides in her close friend, Nkwanzu about it. Goora tells Nkwanzu: "Yes, it is Equation who did it. You know how poor I am at chemistry. He told me to go to his house some months ago so that he could teach me chemistry. Then he did it. I could not stop him because he is a teacher. He said if I screamed, he would kill me". (83) This presents men as egocentric beings who can do anything to satisfy their libidinous nature. Poor Goora conceals her offender and faces her predicament single handedly for fear of being killed. Equation "had cured his lustful equation" for a few minutes and Goora's life would not be the same again. This is unjust. When Goora resolves to escape from school to run away from this predicament, she faces another sex maniac, that is, the school watchman who demands to sleep with her in exchange for her freedom. Who will save the girl child from this fate? Goora eventually becomes a victim of forced marriage to save her parents' reputation. She is a "Fallen Woman" (Hardy 1981), a woman with no pride whatsoever.

The other lustful male character presented in *The Invisible weevil* is the Mafutamingi (Jack) who visits Nkwanzu at Makerere University claiming to be her father's friend. He takes to her a "mobile canteen" that is, suitcases filled with expensive clothes and foodstuff but with dark intentions of sleeping with her in return. Nkwanzu reluctantly accepts the gifts and also agrees to accompany him to Grand Imperial Hotel where the latter confesses his love for her and bluntly demands for sex. He takes Nkwanzu to his home, and into his "massive bedroom" Pulls her

towards the bed and tries to “undress her” (130). His rape attempt is unsuccessful though as Nkwanzu stabs “his hand with the empindu” (130), a sharp instrument used for weaving baskets, an instrument that her aunt, Senga advised her to equip herself with at all times for safety from rapists. The shameless polygamous Mafutamingi resorts to hurling all sorts of insults at her and demands that she should return all that he had bought for her the following day as if Nkwanzu had asked for any of those gifts in the first place. Nkwanzu thus narrowly survives being raped by the Mafutamingi. Despite having wives in the home, he looks out for young girls to sleep with for pleasure. What a shame!

The lustful tendencies of men are also further depicted by soldiers in prisons where “sex orgies are the order of the day. They have sex with women, bayonet them and drink their blood” (134). This is monstrous! Such immoral acts are characteristic of Duduma’s dictatorial regime. Besides, the author adds that “A soldier only has to lust for somebody’s wife or girlfriend to have their men killed” (134). This is suggestive of the view that men are beastly even to their own kind; that is, fellow men which is absurd. This lustful tendency of soldiers is also further hinted on when president Duduma orders the army to ambush Makerere University so as to teach the learned a lesson. While there, “Many of the soldiers who had been gulping down all types of alcohol, and smoking marijuana now started fondling the girls...the worst crime against humanity seemed about to take place” (142). All students, male and female fear what is about to befall the females but luckily enough, the commander orders them to retreat following president Duduma’s orders. The unintended rescue of the girl child by this order makes all learners sigh in relief.

Rex, a friend to Genesis who is Nkwanzu’s boyfriend at Makerere University, is yet another lustful character presented in the novel, *The Invisible Weevil*. In a dialogue with Genesis, he asserts that men are naturally lustful. He says to Genesis, whose girlfriend Nkwanzu has been taken out by Jack, the Mafutamingi, a wealthy but illiterate man, “You think a man can take a girl, they sleep in the same bed and nothing happens” (118). This points to the impatience men have in regards to sex related matters. Besides, he, Rex clouded with lust for Nkwanzu “wriggles his waist obscenely on Genesis’ bed at the thought of Nkwanzu sleeping with him” (118). Rex also sleeps with prostitutes in Katanga and Matovu while at Makerere University, just for fun. He even introduces the heartbroken Genesis to his immoral lifestyle convincing the latter that

“them dames down there sure know how to console a jilted fellow or any fellow in trouble” (119). Genesis falls for this and ends up spending a night with Brown, a prostitute. In addition to this, Rex nurses his lust for Genesis’ girlfriend, Nkwanzu till later in the novel when he cannot take it anymore. Having betrayed Genesis, whom he was working for as the campaign manager, he tells Nkwanzu to leave Genesis, a loser and accept his love. He says to the former, “You have become like a project to me, I must get you,” and then assures her, “I will get you one day. It does not matter how long it takes” (173). This shows that Rex is determined to quench his lust by having Nkwanzu, and only time will tell.

Rex’s lustful nature is further depicted when he visits Nkwanzu, his object of interest in the absence of Genesis, the latter’s boyfriend. Genesis had gone to the bush to join the guerilla war against the ruling government in which Rex is now a minister. Nkwanzu worries about Rex’s gaze at her which is described thus: “He looked at her penetratingly, naked lust in his eyes. She felt disgusted and showed it, His expression changed instantly and he looked murderous and she felt a shiver of apprehension run through her” (183). Besides his lust for Nkwanzu, it is a shame that Rex, a national leader also sleeps with innocent school girls for pleasure. In another incident, the narrator reveals that Rex simply orders for the young girls and his guards deliver them at Nile Mansions, where he lives, just like the way one delivers goods to a buyer. The Poor girls tell Nkwanzu, “We were at school when we got a message that we were to come and meet a minister. So, we were brought here”. When Nkwanzu demands to know what happened, the girls tearfully reveal to her that “the minister took us to his bed inside there and has been doing shameful things to both of us”. Rex is indeed a devil in human form given such evil deeds by him. When Genesis is arrested and detained at “Nile Mansions”, a torture place for political opponents of the ruling government, Rex gladly informs Nkwanzu about it and demands that she should meet him in “room 109” at the Nile Mansions if she desires to save Genesis’ life. At the mansion, Rex shamelessly asks the helpless Nkwanzu, “Are you spending the night here for the release of Genesis?” (185). It is sad that Nkwanzu is pushed to the wall and hence coerced to give up her dignity for Genesis’ sake. She accepts to sleep with Rex painfully. The latter excitedly tells her, “Come my dear, I want to feel your body next to mine...somehow, he had managed to take off her pants....” (188). Blinded by lust, Rex only sees Nkwanzu as a sex object. The latter however manages to escape this ordeal by fighting her way out at the opportune moment. This is not the case years later on her wedding day when Rex, uninvited quietly enters Nkwanzu’s room

and finds her naked, smearing herself with oil absent mindedly in preparation for church. Rex is taken up by her stunning beauty: “My God!” he whispered to himself as he gulped down the saliva that filled his mouth.... She looks like a Greek goddess!” With such lustful thoughts, he suddenly grabs the unsuspecting Nkwanzu, and “Within a split second, he opened his fly, his huge manhood sprung out like a venomous reptile” and he rapes Nkwanzu. Rex feels triumphant after this beastly act for finally, his lust has been quenched. Nkwanzu is left in tears having lost her virginity painfully on her wedding day. Her fantasy of making Genesis proud of her chastity vanishes in thin air.

Genesis, Nkwanzu’s boyfriend too is presented as a lustful character in the text just like majority of the men. He views his lover, Nkwanzu as a sex object and tries to suit himself. When the two lovebirds are taken up by the moment cuddle briefly one day, Genesis tries to take off Nkwanzu’s knickers. The latter is quick to realize that she is about to be a prey and immediately puts an end to it, making Genesis feel dejected. Nkwanzu stresses the need for chastity before marriage which Genesis views as a source of torment for him. He soon gets fed up of Nkwanzu’s ‘saintly’ behavior of intentionally starving him and finds himself “a ravishing beauty” (32) to quench his lust. Later after their marriage, When Nkwanzu is appointed Deputy of Foreign Affairs, Genesis exhibits lust by impatiently taking on another woman for fun since his wife is often busy. In other words, Genesis cheats on his wife Nkwanzu in order to satisfy his lust. He takes the woman along with him on business trips. It is not surprising that he eventually contracts the deadly disease, HIV/AIDS, which claims his life.

Similarly, in *The First Daughter* by Gorette Kyomuhendo, men are generally depicted as lustful and shameless rapists. This applies to both the educated and illiterate men. Gorette seems to suggest that it is simply their nature.

A case in point is Kyamanywa, identified as “the hunter” in a flashback of Ngonzi’s youth. Ngonzi, is actually Abwooli, Kasemiire’s mother. Kyamanywa is portrayed as a very lustful man towards Ngonzi, a random girl that seeks refuge in his hut. Having rescued Ngonzi from his blood-thirsty hounds and also provided shelter for her from the heavy downpour, he shamelessly tells her, “I want to make love to you, Ngonzi” yet they hardly know one another. He basically sees her as a sex object and thus desires to use her for his pleasure.

Rwakaikara is yet another lustful being in the text *The First Daughter*. Goretti, through a group of female gossipers catching grasshoppers totally stains the image of men in the scandalous talk about Rwakaikara, a married man that has an affair with Mrs. Byaruhanga, also a married woman. Despite the fact that they are both sinners, Goretti focuses her sarcastic stance on Rwakaikara, the man through the conversation below:

“Who was the man, by the way?” the older woman asked.

“Rwakaikara!” the women replied in unison.

“Holy virgin!” the older woman exclaimed, making the sign of the cross many times, “such a respectable man! Who could have thought that...”

But another woman cut her off. “Rwakaikara!” she said surprised, “you just don’t know him. The other day he was winking at me and he even tried to tickle my ribs! Imagine me, a married woman and...in fact nothing in a skirt can by pass him. That is why the young nicknamed him ‘ka-skirt’!”

All the women burst out in laughter.

“You mean that he even goes for younger girls?” the older woman asked in surprise. “His thing should be cut off and thrown to the dogs to feed on,” she said (3).

Through this dialogue, Goretti portrays men as shameless beings whose sexual appetite is insatiable. Rwakaikara, a ‘respectable’ man runs after anyone in a skirt, be it young or old, married or unmarried. A man of his stature ought not to be acting disgustingly. His unbecoming behavior earns him the nickname, ‘ka-skirt’ and for that reason he is not deserving of any respect whatsoever. The author strips him of all dignity by depicting him as a shameless he-goat, and serial cheat through the given dialogue whereas the woman, the former Mrs. Byaruhanga, is shielded. The women hardly say anything about her. To Goretti, the author, she is just a victim.

Mr. Mutyaba is another lustful character that cannot escape mention. Despite being educated, he is a shameless rapist. When his wife, Mrs. Mutyaba is away on a business trip, he tries to sexually assault Kasemiire, a girl that respectfully sees a fatherly figure in him. This shameless hyena walks in the unsuspecting Kasemiire’s bedroom “stark naked” late in the night and tries to force himself on her. The houseboy, who is awoken by Kasemiire’s cry for help does not do the needful on seeing his “naked master” sitting on the bed. Instead, “a broad smile crossed his face and then with a knowing smile, he closed the door and walked away silently”. Through this, Goretti seems to suggest that men support fellow men to propagate evil against women and in so doing, she demonises all men. After surviving this ordeal, Kasemiire realizes why Mr. Mutyaba had been very harsh towards his own son, Michael who had a crush on her. The evil-minded man

had actually “wanted her for himself” (92), a young girl fit to be his own daughter. This is lamentable! Later in the story, we learn through his wife, Mrs. Mutyaba that he abandons the family and marries another woman, one that is much younger and probably ready to yield to his monstrous sexual appetite.

Kyamanywa, Kasemiire’s father is further depicted as a lustful being. His lust drives him to abandon his two wives and children and elope with a much older but wealthy woman. This relationship does not work out as the author reveals how emaciated and disillusioned he becomes. He is saved from this ordeal by his daughter, Kasemiire however, not long after Abwooli’s death, he entangles himself in another scandalous affair with an eighteen-year-old newly-wed bride. The husband of the run-away wife in retaliation sets Kyamanywa’s hut ablaze consequently causing the death of Katutu’s youngest child. The victim here once more is a woman, that is, Katutu whose father’s shameless sexual exploits cost her her son’s life. Gorette suggests that Kyamanywa is a remorseless and irredeemable loser.

2.4.2 Chauvinistic

Majority of the men, irrespective of their age or education status, in Karooro’s *The invisible weevil* are chauvinists. They believe that the position of a woman is below a man and therefore try even to effect this in their actions and speech. In a dialogue with Nkwanzu, Kaaka reveals to the latter the suppressive tendencies of the men way back during her childhood; that is, both men and women would work tirelessly in the gardens but on returning home, “The women would then start to cook while the men went to drink” (13). Since to these men, the place of the woman is in the kitchen, the men would relax and wait for meals despite both being exhausted. In addition to this injustice to women, “There was a custom that if one’s brother came to visit, the one visited would leave his bed and wife for his visiting brother. All the visitor had to do was plant his spear in front of the hut where the woman he wanted was” (13). Kaaka informs Nkwanzu that the woman in question had no right to refuse whatsoever because that was supposed to be her duty”. Of course, Nkwanzu is shocked by this custom which sexually enslaves women just because they are women. The male visitors on the other hand, because they are men would simply single out their objects of pleasure and expect total submission from them because they are inferior beings.

Besides, the men's chauvinistic character is propagated through culture which dictates that it is only men (fathers) who decide on the spouses for their daughters, as well as the bride price. The women are kept in the periphery for they are not intelligent enough to get involved in mature talk.. Kaaka tells Nkwazi that whenever her father and husband to be, Runamba talked in the evenings, her mother would only-eavesdrop as she went on with her daily work, that is, domestic chores. Runamba's chauvinistic attitude is portrayed when he explains his reasons for loving Kaaka to her thus: "I have watched the way you keep your eyes down like a good girl who does not love men. You are also shy, which is what a good girl should be. I have listened to your gentle and soft voice, the voice of a truly good woman" (16). His description of a 'good' Woman is suggestive of the view that women should not be confident but rather let men (their husbands) have their way because they are the men. A woman who acts otherwise is considered rebellious and not good for marriage. Runamba then adds that "I have decided to take you to my home, so that you can cook for me, warm my bed and produce many sons for me" (16). and such is what is traditionally expected from a woman. Her space ought to only be the private domain, the marital home where her duty is to take care of the husband, bear babies and also obey him unquestionably. Such stereotypes continue to accord women a trivial position in society. Later when the two lovers are married, Kaaka reveals that she produced five children and "All of them were girls" (17) to the shock of her in laws. These put pressure on her husband, Runamba to get another wife since Kaaka was producing "what they called only vegetables for boys" (17). This foregrounds their prejudice and sexist attitude; reducing fellow human beings to 'vegetables' just because they are of the opposite sex. This is absurd.

The text also reveals that male chauvinism stems right from childhood as the boys have a strong feeling that they are the superior sex and thus terrorise the girls as a mark of their power over them. Nkwazi, and her close friend, Goora other girls inclusive are harassed by the boys in their village who lay "ambush for them. The boys would put a long stick across the road and dare the girls to jump over it. If a girl dared do so, they would beat her up" (38). As such, the girls in Nkwazi's village lived in fear of boys and often ran away from them for safety, but in vain. Chauvinism in the text is also propagated by the culture which emphasizes sexual purity of only women before marriage. Ssenga, Nkwazi's paternal aunt, cautions her daughter to keep her "thighs tight" (58) especially now that she has seen her first menstrual blood. She warns her of the repercussions of not being a virgin on the first night with her husband. She tells her that a

virgin bleeds on her first night with a man and is therefore revered for that but “if there is no blood on the sheet, then your husband will cut a big circle in it. He will come out with it and everybody will see a big hole in the middle of your womanhood. It means men have bored a big hole in the middle through you....” (59). This is a humiliating deed to the females. Nkwanzisi wonders if this virginity syndrome applies to the male sex as well. She naively asks her Senga, “What about my husband? How will I know and let people know whether he has kept himself intact and there’s no hole in his manhood?” (59). She is disappointed to learn from Senga that men are exceptional for they ought to practice sex before marriage, so as to master the art. Such a culture which favors men over women is utterly unjust.

Tingo, Nkwanzisi’s brother is also depicted as chauvinistic. Tingo proudly remarks that he is a man unlike Nkwanzisi because he is not cautioned or talked to about being a man. He tells Nkwanzisi, “nobody came to talk to me when I became a man. I knew it. I didn’t need anybody to tell me” (59-60). He says so to mock Nkwanzisi who claims she is a woman having been engaged in a long talk with Senga, their paternal aunt, about being a woman. It is funny that women are taught by their Sengas how to be women yet men are not. The men do not need to be taught how to be men because they are men; that is, independent, intelligent and superior to women. Tingo’s chauvinistic character is also depicted when he openly declares to the family, “I’m a senior one boy now and everybody should hearken to my call” (64). He commands respect and submission from all because he is a big boy. When he returns home for holiday, his mother, Maama treats him with much respect unlike Nkwanzisi just because he is a man. “They sat in the kitchen, on a mat as usual, but Tingo was given a chair and a table to sit on. He was now a senior boy” (73). This marks the difference between women and men, between the inferior and superior beings. Being offered a chair by Maama is a mark of Tingo’s superiority and generally men’s superiority over women.

Another chauvinistic character worth discussing is Goora’s father. The latter is very rude to his family members to the extent that they live in fear of him. He strikes terror in his family especially when Goora is returned home having been found pregnant. He angrily picks up the stick used to control Kajeru, the stubborn cow, and beats up everything that comes his way: “Chicken, the cat, the goats, everything” (87). He goes ahead and senselessly beats up Goora, “raining blows on any and every part of” (87) her body. Dissatisfied with this madness/violence,

he hurls all sorts of insults at Goora, her mother and sisters. He brands them harlots and vows never again to support education of any of his daughters. He says vehemently, “And from today, no girl from this home will go back to school. No v...a shall step in school again”. To add salt to injury, he chases all of them from home and they are coerced to seek refuge at their uncle’s home. This reaction by Goora’s father is overboard or uncalled of. It is so insensitive.

Another chauvinistic man that is presented in the novel, *The First Daughter*, is Goora’s husband, the man that accepts to marry Goora despite her pregnancy. Having been handed over by her father, Goora painfully follows her husband to her new home “half walking, half running” as she cannot keep up with his pace. After a long trek, they arrive at 4:00am and he orders his wife to open the door. Goora is shocked to realize that the man commands his wife to create space for him and his new bride by asking the children to squeeze together. He orders Goora to sleep and soon his hands roughly move between Goora’s legs. He throws her legs apart and rides an iron horse with her. Goora gives in to his demands despite her distaste for him because she is helpless. The following morning, he orders Goora to follow him to the garden having thrown a hoe to her. Goora thus becomes “an addition to the free labour in his house. Labour that neither complains nor is paid...the unpaid labourers” (90). Note that Goora’s husband simply commands his wives and his will is done. Poor women! They endure the disrespect and oppression by their husband. Goora loses her independence and entire future when she is reduced to a slave in her marriage, a sexual and economic slave.

Chauvinism is not limited to the traditional and illiterate men in the novel only as the educated men too, partake of it. The teacher hired by Nkwanzis’ father to offer career guidance to her and her brother, Tingo is depicted as chauvinistic. He literary demands Nkwanzis to opt for History, Divinity and Home economics at A ‘level because they are subjects that will make her a ‘good wife’ (91) to a big man, and discourages her from taking on subjects that are not good for a girl. He tells Nkwanzis, “The future for any good girl lies in a good marriage. You must be a good wife. Therefore, the subjects you offer should shape you, mold you into a good wife” (90). Like all chauvinistic men, he only sees Nkwanzis as nothing else but a marriage material for that is the fate of all women. When Nkwanzis reveals to him that she desires to be a lawyer, the teacher is shocked and warns her that such a course would only cause instability in her home for she will always argue with the husband. On the other hand, he encourages Tingo, Nkwanzis’ brother to

do what he calls “tough subjects” (92), that is, Commerce, Economics and Political science in order to become a permanent secretary or minister. This excites Tingo who then mocks the sister. Nkwanzu insists that she too wants to be “a big woman!” (92) and Tingo, chauvinistic as he is, appraises her that she will be one through being a “big man’s wife” (92). This only proves that a woman can only be successful “big” through getting married to a successful man and not through by her own efforts. Such attitudes keep women in a subjugated position compared to their male counterparts.

Another chauvinistic man presented in the novel is Runamba. Runamba, the father to Genesis generally considers women and children inferior beings. When in a rift with his son, Genesis Rwenzigye due to the latter’s choice of joining the new political party, Runamba demands that Genesis drops his decision lest he be disowned. He gets mad at his wife too when she supports their son’s decision. When people around try to calm him down, he vehemently shouts, “Shut up! Shut up, everybody! I’m a man with two testicles and my word’s law. Rwenzigye and his mother must leave my house now if you people don’t want to see blood” (170). Because he is a man, that gives him the right to dictate what his family members should do or not do. He bitterly remarks, “A woman to question my authority! I will not hear of it. A woman listens to her husband and goes wherever he goes” (170) like a robot that is unfeeling and unintelligent. Runamba condemns kaaka for supporting what he considers his son’s disobedience and thus demands that she too should leave his house for failing to be submissive as expected.

Genesis, Nkwanzu’s husband is also depicted as a chauvinistic character. He is disappointed to hear that Nkwanzu is virgin no more on their wedding day, having been raped by Rex. He takes a donkey’s years to accept Nkwanzu as a wife for she is sexually impure. Genesis is wounded because he feels cheated having desired to sleep with Nkwanzu ages ago but the latter denied him the opportunity. He forgets that he too is not a virgin and for his case, the decision is advertent. With much difficulty, he tells Nkwanzu to dress up for their wedding. This chauvinistic tendency is further portrayed when he cheats on Nkwanzu and expects her to yield to his demands for sex when he returns home. Nkwanzu, aware of the strange sexually transmitted disease that is claiming lives, insists on the use of protection. This angers Genesis who reminds her that she ought to accept him the way he is, whether healthy or sick for that is her duty as a wife (224). This view by Genesis also portrays him as egocentric; he only cares for his pleasure and

disregards the feelings of Nkwanzi. This is absurd! Genesis' chauvinistic nature is further portrayed later in the novel when he becomes envious and intolerant towards his wife, Nkwanzi because she is a minister. Nkwanzi had been appointed the Deputy of Foreign Affairs and Works. Genesis soon complains about Nkwanzi's busy schedules and irresponsibility towards the family. He resorts to cheating on her. His initial desire is to control or have full control over Nkwanzi as he is the man in the home so, his failure to do so drives him to go to other women to calm his frustration. In another incident, when he demands for sex and Nkwanzi tries to put a condom on him, he beats her up and bluntly tells her, "You think because you are a minister you are everything? I'm the head of this house" (225) to emphasise his superiority over her.

Goretti Kyomuhendo like Mary Karooro Okurut, creates male characters that are chauvinistic in her novel, *The First Daughter*. Kyamanywa, the father of Kasemiire, the protagonist in the novel, for instance, is depicted as a chauvinist. The narrator reveals that Kyamanywa:

Believed that women were put on this earth solely for the men's
Pleasure and therefore held a very low opinion of them. His principle
Was that a man should acquire as many women as he wished so long
as he could maintain them. Women and children have no say in
Bunyoro's custom and he always made sure that this custom was strictly
observed in his household (6).

This explains his disrespect for the female sex since he considers himself superior whereas the opposite sex is inferior. He expects "total obedience and his word was always final, never to be questioned" (6). Kyamanywa thus rules his household with an iron hand to ensure that his will is done. Once, when his second wife, Ateenyi disobeys him by visiting her parents against his will, Kyamanywa severely beats her up to teach her to respect her husband. Such uncouth and inhumane treatment of women is what Goretti condemns bitterly. Being chauvinistic, Kyamanywa also feels that he has the right to have as many women as possible regardless of what his first wife feels about it. Through the omniscient narrator, we learn that Kyamanywa is polygamous and thus has many children. Kasemiire's mother for instance "had five children; and was now pregnant. Her step mother had four children and rumour had it that her father had befriended another woman from the next village, and that if he successfully married off Kasemiire to a rich man, he would use the bride price to secure himself a third wife!" (17-18). It does not matter what his wives and children feel about it so long as it gives him pleasure. This is

how egocentric men are according to the author. Besides being polygamous, Kyamanywa disregards women. He tells his wife shamelessly; “Women and children are a yardstick to measure a man’s wealth”. This points to the view that he doesn’t see women as fellow human beings but mere material objects of pride to a man. It is no wonder that “Banyoro men marry as many wives as they please” in order to earn reverence in the society.

We also see Kyamanywa’s chauvinism when he resolves single handedly to chase away his first wife, Abwooli from his home following a baseless accusation of the latter by Ateenyi, his second wife. He refuses to listen to advice from any one on that matter, not even from his own mother Mukaaka, after all she also belongs to the damned species; women. He disrespectfully commands his mother, “Old woman, don’t you dare meddle in my own affairs!” (23). Kyamanywa undermines his mother’s opinion because she is a woman and ought not to argue with or oppose him. Later, when Kyamanywa discovers the truth that Abwooli is actually innocent, he fails to apologise to her for fear of being thought weak and womanly as the narrator reveals: “He so much wanted to explain and apologise to his first wife, but he knew that it would be a sign of weakness, so he just kept quiet” (24).

Furthermore, Kyamanywa’s drunken friends are also very chauvinistic. While at their drinking joint, they discuss a number of factors pertaining the position of a woman in the society. This is because they are disappointed in their friend, Kyamanywa who has decided to educate that ‘unworthy sex’. Below is the dialogue they engage in:

“You know, Kyamanywa, the only damn thing I have ever seen you do is sending your daughters to school.” Kyamanywa only smiled at the man’s rudeness.

“A woman’s place is in the kitchen,” another man retorted, “Give them education and they will rebel”.

“The weaker sex,” another drunkard observed, “they have to squat down while urinating, be under a man while playing sex and even say, ‘thank you’ afterwards, what a breed!” All the men burst out in laughter; including Kyamanywa.

“Give them education!” the drunkard continued, “which means they will never be able to perform the only thing they are capable of on this earth!”

“What’s that?” Kyamanywa asked inquisitively.

“To be sold off when they are ripe, just as a father would sell a ripe pumpkin...” All the men around the pot of beer agreed emphatically (8).

Goretti uses this group of drunkards to represent the collective contemptuous view of all men that women are sex objects, materials for sale and insubordinate beings to them. It is not a

mistake that these views are put forward by drunkards. The author intends to mock men for carrying on such senseless attitudes which are only expected from drunkards. In summary, chauvinistic men are drunkards!

Another chauvinistic character is Mugabi, Kasemiire's elder brother who is also presented as a lazy and unintelligent boy. It is absurd that despite being siblings, the 'fool' looks at his own sister as a threat to his very existence. When Kasemiire, a senior four candidate at Duhaga Secondary School, conceives, Mugabi jubilates for "a woman was never going to be better off than him" (58). He celebrates his sister's misfortune due to his desire to be considered superior. This is wickedness!

Steven Kirungi, Kasemiire's lover also proves to be chauvinistic though inadvertently by addressing his girlfriend as "pet". He no wonder treats her as a pet, a play thing for his pleasure and later concentrates on his studies leaving the pet to suffer. After all it is a pet and so it has no feelings. Later when he returns to her life, he is at first shocked to see her bitter reaction towards him. He only expects her to embrace and immediately accept him back. HmMMMM!

The other chauvinistic characters are Kasemiire's lovers later in life, that is, while at Makerere University. The first one is "a doctor who kept on arguing that men were supposed to be superior to women in all respects. He based his arguments on biological factors" (101). Kasemiire hated his contempt for the female sex and called it quits. Her second lover, a "financial wizard" (101) was not any different. He argued that "Women should keep behind men because they were the weaker sex; and he said that whatever Kasemiire thought or said, women would remain inferior to men, their level of education or riches" (102). Kasemiire disgusted by his prejudice towards women walked out on him as well despite the fact that he was providing a lot of material and financial help to her. This resistance against oppression of women is what Goretti desires to see all women embracing and it can only be achieved through education, the major tool of women emancipation.

2.4.3 Violent/Callous /Murderous

Mary Karoro Okurut in her novel, *The Invisible Weevil*, presents the male sex, both the young and old, as violent and murderous towards women and even fellow men. The young boys in this text for instance, are shockingly violent creatures. In Nkwanzis' village for instance, boys have a

habit of waylaying girls on their way home and beating them up mercilessly for no reason. On one fateful day, as Goora and Nkwanzu return home from school, they are ambushed by the boys, who rain blows on every part of their bodies. Goora manages to fight back using “her big needle for basket making” (38) but Nkwanzu faces it rough since she does not have any weapon to fight back. The boys enjoy harassing the girls in this manner so that they fear them more since they are male and therefore powerful. The unfortunate bit is that the callous boys are not punished by anyone for their misdeeds. Nkwanzu wonders why girls don’t seem to be left alone in peace. Her fear is a result of the callousness of the many boys and men in her society.

It is not surprising that the elderly men are depicted as violent too. Goora’s father for instance is a very violent man presented in the text, *The Invisible Weevil*. When his daughter is returned home in the company of a teacher, having been found pregnant, he suddenly hits the teacher so hard that the latter staggers into the van forcing the driver to speed off for their dear lives. He then shouts at the revelers in his compound, kicks and breaks the calabashes of beer of the drinkers at his home, gets hold of a stick and beats whatever comes his way, that is; chicken, the cat, the goats. He goes ahead and tears Goora’s uniform and starts “raining blows on any and every part” (87) of her body. He beats up Goora until her body gets numb towards the terrible blows. He also bitterly beats up Goora’s mother when she tries to plead on behalf of her daughter plus her small sisters. He vehemently remarks that “no girl from this home will go back to school” (87). Having made such an insensitive decision, he “chased” all of them from his home. Goora’s father overreacts to the news of Goora’s pregnancy and needlessly terrorises the entire family, revelers and his fellow drinkers that had converged in his home to take ‘tonto’, a local brew made by his wife.

Genesis too, is depicted as a violent man in the novel. When his wife, Nkwanzu is promoted to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, he blames her for abandoning the home and paying more attention to her job and reciprocates by engaging in an affair with another woman. When he returns after misbehaving sexually, he expects Nkwanzu, his wife to allow him touch her despite the mysterious sexually transmitted disease that is dreaded by many for claiming lives during that time (225). Soon, Genesis “started battering her. In his drunken stupors, he would come home and demand for sex. She would feel repulsed but because she wanted to maintain the family for Ihoreere’s sake, she would try to put a condom on him. Then he would rage and hit her” shouting, “You think because you are a minister, you are everything? I’m the head of this

house, he would fume and then commence to hit, scratch and bite her” (225). This beating of women is basically a tool by men to instill fear in their women and express their superiority over them.

We also see the violence of men through the cold nature of the soldiers presented in the text. Given the series of coup de tats in the text, the soldiers involved mercilessly kill many civilians in cold blood and express a high level of lack of remorse. When president Duduma takes over power from Opolo, rampant killings of the suspected opposition members and looting of the property by soldiers becomes the order of the day. Dead bodies are all over the city, that is, Kampala. A soldier rudely dissuades Genesis and Mzee from covering a dead body of a person he brands traitor, and urges them to instead kick the dead bodies. He further cocks his Ak 47 and empties “a whole magazine into the inert body. The body danced to the grotesque disco of the bullets. Its mouth pulled back over its teeth, it seemed to sneer and laugh at the irate soldier” (98). This is totally inhumane as it abuses the rights of the dead; they are stripped of their human dignity. Duduma, the sworn in president after the coup embarks on hunting down all his political opponents. He “began to systematically kill right and left. He started killing the people of the deposed president Opolo’s region” (101). One day, at the barracks, a number of soldiers from Opolo’s region are driven in trucks out of the barracks, taken to Jinja and thrown over the hanging cliffs in the pitch dark night, into Lake Victoria. They die helplessly. Duduma and his soldiers, all male are a team of murderous and callous beings as discussed above. When president Kazi takes over power, the situation does not get any better. His soldiers murder people in cold blood. In a particular incident, soldiers convince their victims to get into an enclosed truck and then set fire below it. The poor victims die of lack of oxygen and high heat while their heartless tormentors enjoy listening to their cries for mercy till they all get silent.

We also see the violence and callousness of men through Rex, the minister in charge of the Nile Mansions, the torture house of political enemies. He issues orders at the torture rooms in Nile Mansion. The prisoners in his care are depicted as weak, thin and emaciated which is proof of the insensitive nature of their captors. In a bid to force them to mention the names of their collaborators, Genesis, along with other prisoners that belong to numerous guerrilla troops are forced into a torture room and ordered by a soldier:

“Place your penises on this board- I say, place them on the board this very minute!” he screamed with fury.” They took out their shriveled things and gingerly placed them on the board. The man picked up the panga and sharpened it against the wall, as if he was getting it ready to slaughter a bull. Urine run freely down the prisoners’ legs. “Now, name your collaborators,” said the man dangling the panga menacingly. As he made to bring it down, the prisoners began to scream out names: “Ssebaddu, Okello, Atuheire...” the list tumbled out. Nkwanzi heard Genesis mention names but they sounded fictitious....

Given the intense fear instilled in the prisoners, they do as they are told. It is absurd that Rex treats fellow men so inhumanely that due to fear and hopelessness, urine flows freely down their legs as though they are children. Having yielded to the executioner’s demands, Rex orders the latter to take down the names mentioned and release the rebels immediately.

Goretti kyomuhendo too like her counterpart, Mary Karooro Okurut depicts men generally as brutal and callous in her novel, *The First Daughter*. They beat up women just to instill fear and command respect from them and also to show their superiority over them. Kasemiire’s mother, in a flashback, reveals how her father murderously beat her up with a thorny branch simply because of his baseless suspicion that the latter was involved in an affair with a man, a hunter. She is not even given the chance to explain anything. Poor Ngonzi faints during the beatings and only feels a little relieved after a week. To add salt to injury, her father sells her off to the hunter at his will.

Kyamanywa, Kasemiire’s father too rules his family with an iron hand. He beats up Ateenyi, his second wife for disobeying him by visiting her parents. Not until she cries out for mercy does he stop the beating. His first wife and children live in fear of him and shockingly for him, that is what it means to be a man. When Kasemiire, his first daughter in secondary school conceives, he senselessly thrashes her until he is restrained by his brother, Kaliisa. He also beats up Abwooli, Kasemiire’s mother and sisters and brands them whores. He further chases them from his hut and warns them not to spend the night in his mother, Mukaaka’s hut either. They all brave the cold night in a banana plantation while the callous Kyamanywa sleeps peacefully in the hut.

The violence of men is also seen through the male bullies at Duhaga Secondary School, that is, Ojuka and his companions. Ojuka, also nicknamed headmaster makes Kasemiire’s life hell on her first day in the dining hall. Having earlier on named her his wife in Senior One West, Ojuka commands her to kiss him. When she walks away in protest, he throws a piece of posho at her

buttocks to the amusement of the other students in the hall. He then walks to her, slaps her severely and shoves her off so roughly that she almost loses her balance. Poor Kasemiire runs out of the hall shaking with anger having been humiliated thus.

2.4.4 Religious Hypocrites

Mary Karooro okurut and Goretti Kyomuhendo depict men as hypocritical beings that hide their evil nature in the shades of religion. This is evident in their texts *The Invisible Weevil* and *The First Daughter* as discussed below respectively;

In *The Invisible Weevil*, Matayo, a herdsman in the household of Nkwanzu's parents is portrayed as a religious hypocrite. He defiles Nkwanzu, a very young child in the guise of being under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This devil in sheep skin pretends to be prayerful and thus wins the trust of Nkwanzu's parents, as the children are left to freely follow him around. On a fateful day, he influences Nkwanzu to follow him to the bush. While there, having made her to chew a herb that puts her in a daze, Matayo starts stroking the helpless child's private parts dubbed "shameful" (33). He further takes 'out a hard object from his centre' (33) that is, his manhood and shamelessly starts striking it against Nkwanzu's thighs till he feels sexually satisfied. In another incident, while sitting in a dark corner in the kitchen with the other family members available, the shameless he goat calls out to Nkwanzu to join him so that they lead the others in the great hymn:

Jesus I still recall the day I committed my life into your hands.
You became my personal savior therefore let me praise you.
Oh happy day
Oh happy day
When Jesus washed my sins away (34).

Meanwhile, the pretentious dare devil once again strokes the baby's 'shameful' at first slowly, then vigorously till he has his fill. This unrepentant defiler does this act over and over again till he eventually gets overpowered by his lust to know her in the Biblical sense. The Omniscient narrator reveals that "One night, he did not only stroke her shameful but also tried to push a hard object there which gave her so much pain" (35). Nkwanzu's mother notices the weird way her daughter moves and decides to check her 'shameful' only to confirm her fear. The following

morning, Nkwazi is rushed to the hospital and shockingly is diagnosed with gonorrhoea. The beast is arrested.

Equation, a chemistry teacher at Duhaga Secondary School where Nkwazi and her friend, Goora study, is also portrayed as a religious hypocrite. He too, like Matayo, hides his lustful character by presenting himself in the public eye as a very religious person. Students, fellow teachers and even administrators are impressed by his soothing voice as he leads the scripture union at school. Goora, one of his students is so touched by Equation's Godly nature that she trusts and obeys everything and anything that he instructs her to do little knowing that the latter is a snake. On a fateful day when he instructs her to go to his house to be coached in Chemistry, he defiles her and threatens to kill her if she dares to inform anyone about the incident. Goora fearfully and painfully endures the impact of this sexual act to keep alive. She does not have the courage to expose Equation's evil nature to the school authorities for fear of being hurt by the former. She only discloses her predicament to her best friend, Nkwazi but refuses to follow her advice of exposing Equation.

2.5 Objectification of Women.

The male authored texts chosen for this study that is, *Houseboy* by Ferdinand Oyono and *Footprints of the Outsider* by Julius Ocwinyo highly depict women as objects, that is sex and material objects as discussed in the following paragraphs respectively;

2.5.1 Sex Objects

Female characters in *Houseboy* irrespective of the race (white and black) are represented as sex objects. This is evident in the fact that Oyono puts much emphasis on the vivid description of his female characters' bodies other than their mental faculties or intelligence. He for instance through his protagonist, Toundi describes Madame Suzy, the commandant's wife as "pretty", having very "white teeth" a "wasp-like waist, "soft, tiny and limp hands" (47) to mention but a few. He later focuses on her dressing as she tours her new house. Toundi says that she was wearing a pair of black slacks which showed off her fine figure. It is so unfortunate that Oyono seems to suggest that a woman's presence can only be noticed by the shape of her body or through her dressing. This is further expressed through a flashback in which a vivid description

of Madame's attractive dress on her first Saturday at Dangan, during her welcome party at the Residence is made. Toundi reveals that,

Madame was dressed all in white like a newly opened flower. For a while it is the centre and the whole world flutters its wings around it. The commandant moved about with that trace of self-satisfaction that belongs to a man who knows he has married a beautiful wife (48).

Madame is the centre of attraction at this point because of her beauty and elegance. Her husband on the other hand is said to proudly move for he owns this beauty which every man at this point desires to have. Madame is his "wife". Toundi also adds that "the men were all in admiration" (48) of Madame's physical appearance. All this stresses how exciting a woman's body is to the male population. The "owner" of a woman with such a shapely body, walks with pride like it is the case with the commandant.

On the contrary, women whose bodies are unattractive are body shamed through vivid description. At the welcome party of Madame Suzy, the other women are of little significance due to their ugly bodies. The narrator describes their bodies derogatively when he says,

The doctor's wife looked as flat as putty flung at a wall. Madame Gullet was stuffed into her slacks like cassava in a banana leaf. The Mesdemoiselles Dubois were alike as a pair of sacks. The wives of the Greeks, usually so talkative, were silent. The American ladies... existed only in their burst of laughter (48).

This is proof that besides their bodies, there isn't any other significant way to identify a woman. They are simply irrational beings whose importance is seen only through their beauty and without this, they are useless beings that deserve no attention at all. Oyono's vivid description of the unattractive women above shows his contempt for ugly women and his stereotypical attitude that a woman ought to be attractive just like Madame. Toundi adds that, "for men, Madame seemed a kind of vision" (48). They had forgotten all the attention they lavished on their wives in the streets of Dangan. There was no attention now except for Madame given her "voluptuous body". The contrast that Oyono employs between Madame and the other white women portrays the other women as worthless laughable beings given their unattractive bodies while Madame on

the other hand is the “perfect” woman and therefore an object of interest to the menfolk in the text.

Madame Suzy is further sexually objectified on her first day at Dangan market where she had gone shopping accompanied by her houseboy, Toundi. Dangan Market is said to be a very lively place especially on Saturday mornings since all natives from the location and from the villages meet there. The natives, particularly the males are excited by Madame’s voluptuous body. As a result, they call out to Toundi making all sorts of comments about Madame’s body. The first man says, “I’m glad I’ve met her before I go to confession”. (53) Another says, “If she had been the one to pour ointment on our Lord’s feet, the Bible story would have been rather different” (53). This is blasphemy! The catechists are said to have followed them (Madame and Toundi) with their eyes. More comments are revealed through the dialogue below;

“See the way those buttocks go!” someone said, “what a figure, what hair?”
“What couldn’t I do with what’s inside those slacks,” said someone else longingly.
“Man, your shorts must be soaked,” a third shouted at me.
“What a shame it’s all reserved for the uncircumcised,” came yet another, pulling a face to show his vexation (54).

The comments above prove that the native men including the catechists lust after Madame. Their disrespectful character towards women is also portrayed for all they have in mind when they see Madame’s body is having sex with her, for that is what a woman is basically meant for in their opinion. Madame to them is so beautiful, so angelic that she could even tempt the Lord if given chance. Such humiliating comments are simply proof of the disrespect the men have for women. They see beautiful women as nothing but sex objects. This is ridiculous!

The sex escapades of Mekongo, an army veteran in the novel, *Houseboy* is also proof that women are sex objects as far as this novel is concerned. Mekongo brags about sleeping with white women and gives Obila, one of his willing listeners, credit for wishing to know whether white women are better than black women. One wonders what these men’s point of contrast is – of course it is sex! What else are women considered to be good for in the novel? Poor women! Mekongo goes ahead with his narration as he tells the men that have reverently converged around him seeking for “wisdom”. He says, “Our ancestors said, “Truth lies beyond the

mountains. You must travel to find it” I have travelled. I have made the great journey you know of. I have slept with white women” (57). He also reveals to them that his sleeping with a white woman was a reward he and his friends lavished themselves with having emerged victorious after the war in Libya. His battalion had been posted to Algiers where they had twenty-days’ leave having been paid handsomely for their bravery at war. He celebrates having had intercourse with a white woman. The colour doesn’t matter, whether black or white, men gladly view women as sex machines meant for their pleasure and they shamelessly brag about their sexual prowess before fellow men. Mekongo further tells his attentive audience,

My comrades were white men, real white men. They said to me, “friend, you come with us, many women in town,” I asked them, “Black women?” They told me, “White women white Madams? I did not know whites and blacks sleep together but when my white friends told me that the Sara’s already had white mistresses I decided to go with them. They took me to a brothel. That is a big house, full of women. In all my life I had never seen such a thing. Women of all colours, all sizes, all ages. Some had hair like the beard on a maize cob, others had hair blacker than tar or redder...A white man with ...told me to choose one of the women who were filling in front of me. I chose a real white woman with hair the colour of a beard on a corn... (57-58).

Mekongo then goes ahead to inform his listeners that after making his choice, he and the woman went into a room that had “mirrors everywhere” (58). The woman began “to laugh and twist her body” (58). The brothel, the mirrors, the woman’s twisting of her body to appease or seduce her new customer, Mekongo as described above is proof that to Oyono, women are prostitutes or sexually immoral. The men thus use this as a privilege to entertain themselves and this is considered manly. In fact, one of the men gathered around Mekongo listening to Mekongo’s “masculine” experience tells Mekongo, “You were lucky to go to the war” (59). Mekongo’s actions are portrayed as wise, brave whereas the female beings in the brothel are all condemned for immorality.

Sophie, the mistress of M. Magnol, the Agricultural Engineer is also presented as a sex object in *Houseboy*. She is described as a very beautiful woman whose mahogany skin gleams like bronze. No wonder the Agricultural engineer falls for her - only because of her irresistible body. It is important to note that he uses her sexually but to his fellow whites, he introduces her as his cook. He is ashamed of her because of her colour or race and hence cannot risk destroying his

reputation before his fellow whites in Dangan. He for instance tells Sophie, "... when you see me with a white lady do not look at me, do not greet me," To him, Sophie is only good for sex not companionship! Sophie laments about this ill treatment by her lover and wonders what special ingredients white women are made of that her lover publicly acknowledges them unlike her. She painfully states that "... my arse is just as delicate as the arses of the ladies they have up in the driver's cabin...." (38). Sophie thus wishes she too would sit with her boyfriend comfortably at the driver's cabin but she is denied this privilege because she is black. It is thus worth noting that black women suffer double jeopardy – first, because they are black and secondly because they are women as seen in Sophie's case.

Another female character that is portrayed as a sex object is Kalisia. She is the chambermaid that the cook brought for Madame. Kalisia's body is described vividly as sexually appealing. The cook tells his fellow workers at the residence that "the whites are all crazy about her behind...those lovely elephant's livers bulging beneath her cloth..." (90) in reference to her buttocks. Baklu, the laundry man after deeper scrutiny of the cook's narration about Kalisia states, "Any man with eyes can hardly see her without..." (91). The dialogue between the cook and Baklu about Kalisia's attractive body is proof that men view women as sex objects. Baklu even insinuates that their boss, the commandant may fall for Kalisia thus creating serious trouble for all of them. Poor Kalisia has turned up at the residence to work and earn a living just like any of them but instead, her intentions are doubted by Baklu just because she is a beautiful woman. One wonders whether it is a crime for a woman to be beautiful!

Kalisia further exposes her helpless sexually objectified state in a dialogue with Toundi on their way to the residence to work one morning. She excuses herself and goes behind the bush then calls out to Toundi, "Go ahead by yourself. I am going to see Monsieur W. C. When you meet him you don't open your hat, you lift your skirt". (101) This portrays her as a vulnerable character, a sex toy for the aforementioned Monsieur although she seems to be going to him at her will.

The female pupils of the Dangan Government School are also presented as sex objects. M. Salvain, the Headmaster of the Dangan Government School in his dialogue with the commandant

informs the latter that when he took charge of the school, most of the pupils had gonorrhoea. He said, “The African instructors and pupils were making the girls in school pregnant. It was like a brothel” (31-32). This shows that girls or women are considered sex toys by the male sex irrespective of their race. The girls whose desires were to attain formal education instead became victims of sexual exploitation.

It is important to note that even Toundi who is portrayed as naïve considers women as pets and sex objects just like the other men. He says passionately, “I like stroking the white girls under the chin with the paten I am holding for them while the priest pops the host into the mouth” (14). Toundi enjoys doing this because to him girls are play toys or sex objects. In another incident, he says, “I saw a pretty girl at the blacks’ communion. I stroked her under the chin with the paten like we do the white girls. She opened one eye, then shut it again. She really must come to communion again” (16). Through this revelation, we learn that it is not only Toundi that has fun stroking the girls’ chin but also all the other altar boys in the catholic mission of Dangan. Girls are generally pets to all of them. This is a dehumanizing act on the female sex.

Through Toundi, we also learn that approximately all European men in Dangan use African women as their sex objects temporarily. Toundi reveals that his master, “the commandant is not like other European men without Madams - who send their boys into the location to hire a ‘mamie’ for them” (46). The white men thus use African women to satisfy their insatiable sexual appetites and then discard them off when they feel like.

Just like Ferdinand Oyono and many other male writers, Julius Ocwinyo too portrays females as sex objects in *Footprints of the Outsider*. In his imaginary setting of Teboke, men view women as sex objects. Ikangi, a mysterious male character whose origin is a contentious matter to the natives in Teboke owns the most beautiful daughters in the area. In fact, they are vividly described as “human lamps” for their presence made a place shine, “even a mere glimpse at them made a man’s eyes light up with lust”. It is important to note that the men’s eyes would light up with lust not love. They are thus not loved but only lusted after.. the narrator further describes their beautiful bodies thus:

Ikangi's daughters had the most delicate limbs in Teboke. Also some of the broadest hips and longest necks, necks which the locals loved to compare with that of the anlem antelope. Their skin was so light that you could almost see the veins underneath them. The only girls of local extraction who were blessed ... but they did not seem to match Ikangi's daughters in grace and elegance ... (5).

Ocwinyo's focus on the physical appearance of Ikangi's daughters seems to be a justification for the unbecoming lustful nature of the Teboke men. He seems to suggest that the men ought to be pitied given the utterly tempting outlook of these girls. Any man in other words would fall for them in the same manner, which is understandable. Can you imagine? Besides, his act of contrasting these girls to those of "local extraction" is intentionally meant to mock the latter. He places them on a weighing scale and decides that they are not beautiful enough. He in so doing stresses his opinion of what a perfect woman ought to look like; that is, they should resemble Ikangi's daughters. It is a woman's beauty that gives her a chance to be the focus of attention by men not intelligence, hardwork or any other virtue. It is about the physical appearance.

This beauty of Ikangi's girls ironically turns out to be a curse given the lines below:

Each time the girls swayed past these men without so much as giving them a smile or a nod of recognition, they felt a little hurt, a little diminished. They thus said all sorts of vile, outrageous things about the girls, while praying all the while that they should get pregnant out of wedlock (6).

Given the fact that women are sex objects, the girls are expected to smile at the men so as to be in their good books. Failure to do so earns them insults and condemnation. Besides, the discomfort these girls encounter as a result of the piercing gaze by the men cannot go without mention. Whenever Ikangi's daughters "swung gracefully past the local men, their eyes dimmed to an inscrutable slate with unseeing...". This is proof that they hungered for the girls and if given chance they would pounce on them like angry lions and do the unimaginable. Poor girls!

Alcinora, the mother of the protagonist-Abudu Olwit is another female character that is portrayed as a sex object. She is unmarried, however, all the men that she gives herself to only use her and dump her. She is a laughing stock in Teboke given the fact that she has slept with all kinds of men irrespective of size, height, colour, tribe among others. It is shameful that she does not even know the father of her only child and thus considers Musa Wangolo, her favorite lover as his

father. Worse still, Alcinora is said to have been a sex tool from a very tender age of thirteen in which she contracted her first infection of syphilis which had now become part of her. More disgusting details are given of Alcinora's loose morals. She is said to have been,

... an "*olaya*", a woman of easy virtue. Men liked comparing her to "*icwica*", the leaves of the pumpkin plant, the cheapest and most easily available food in Lango, food that becomes particularly useful in times of famine. Alcinora was a woman to whom a man turned when there was no other woman available to take (10).

This shows that Alcinora freely offers herself to any man that comes her way. She does not have a tinge of self-respect. It is as though she were created to generously offer sexual services to any man in need no matter who they are or what they look like. Really! How can a woman be this loose? Oyono simply exaggerates Alcinora's immorality to show his utter contempt for the female sex.

Ironically, this sexual objectification is propagated by women themselves. The young girls do not have any one to protect them from this unfair sex abuse by men. It is ironic that women wish to see their fellow younger women treated as sex objects and even encourage men to do so for it is considered manly. Alcinora for instance worries that unlike other young men, her son has not slept with girls in Teboke yet there are plenty of them. She thus has sleepless nights over this and worse still, her fellow women (mothers) ridicule her for failing to make her son a man. Ocwinyo expresses her worry thus,

Other women's sons are hot. They sleep with their sweethearts once and they make them pregnant. Many of my age mates already have grandchildren but I have none. I have kept my ears locked for a long time but I have not heard that my son is going after this one's daughter or that one's. And my fellow women laugh at me. They call my son *apele*, a worthless effeminate apology for a man. What could be wrong with my son? ... Why does my son not plant his seeds in people's daughters like other people's sons so that I can stop being a laughing stock (49).

Through this, it is proven that women are merely fertile grounds for any man to "plant his seeds" and that is how it should be for society dictates so. That is the position of a woman- the thing that offers sexual pleasure to the male sex and bears children for them. The text also emphasizes that many of Olwits's age mates "already have children, some with as many as four

girls.” Alcinora thus is determined to do her best to pressurize her son so that he too does what other men do- having children with as many girls as possible. Alcinora does not put into consideration the feelings of the disadvantaged or victimized girl children who are used and dumped by men. As a woman, she ought to be condemning such selfish and lust driven acts by young men however surprisingly, she supports their immoral actions. Who will save the girl child? In a bid to force her son to take advantage of the village girls just like other people’s sons have done and as per societal norms, Alcinora encourages girls to visit Olwit in his hut but shockingly to her, Olwit looks at them “ like a dog watching an *otule* dance.” He is disinterested in the girls and his mother’s uncalled for effort of finding him suitors. What a disgrace to those girls who willingly follow Alcinora’s advice and are rejected thus! The girls are ready to be used by Abudu Olwit and thus go to him fearlessly, not minding about the repercussions of their seductive stance/ behavior. It is unbelievable that girls offer themselves as sex objects!!

Another incident in which women are portrayed as sex objects is when Abudu Olwit is attracted to Jacinta Apio at first sight due to her smile and attractive body. Olwit is carried away by Jacinta’s physical body which is said to be “soft, mellow ...” and her smile which is said to be “ bewitching like smouldering simsim pods”. she is attractive in her “blue and white print dress and mauve plastic high heeled shoes.” Ocwinyo further humourously describes her movement thus. Apio “walked off, pumping and twisting her buttocks as if she had just discovered that she owns a pair of buttocks.” This points to the fact that she is seducing Olwit intentionally having learnt that he has fallen for her. The females’ attractive bodies are therefore presented as the source of sexual arousal of the male sex. It is because of the feminine body that females are considered sex tools by men. Is it a crime for a woman to own a beautiful and curvaceous body?

By contrast, Jacinta Apio’s friend, Albina is described as “short, stout, flat- headed, rough-skinned ... Albina lurched from side to side when she walked, like someone who had suffered a heavy jigger infestation as a child”. The description of Albina’s body is a total turn off for Olwit unlike Jacinta Apio’s. The author seems to suggest that women ought to be beautiful with seductive bodies just for the pleasure of men. Through this contrast, Ocwinyo portrays his view of what an ideal woman should be, that is the Jacinta Apio kind. Indeed, we see Jacinta enjoying to seduce Olwit, taking advantage of her good looks, and thus putting herself at risk of being

abused sexually. The feminine body ought to be respected by male authors who view it as a means of seduction to the male sex and thus reduce women to sex objects as they are lusted after.

When Jacinta Apio is persuaded to live with Olwit, she indeed becomes a sex tool as revealed in a dialogue between Alcinora and her friend. Jacinta engages in sexual activities with Abudu Olwit yet she is not legally married to him. It is not surprising when later, Abudu shamelessly expresses disinterest in her and demands that the girl should return to her parents. He is a man after all and his desires ought to be respected. Jacinta Apio is a loser eventually for she is forced to return to her people, despite the fact that she had spent quite a considerable time trying to please Olwit as a wife. She is however to blame for brainlessly eloping with a man without the consent of her family. Olwit is a free man to find another woman for fun if he so wishes having pushed Jacinta away.

Women are also depicted as sex objects when their husbands abandon them and opt for younger girls in order to be more sexually fulfilled. In a dialogue between Kelementin, a native of Teboke and Irene Namu, one of the daughters of the mysterious Ikangi, the latter reveals that her mother had been “chased” away by her father who had opted for a “younger woman” for a bride. Namu tells Kelementin that her father is okay, “only he has chased away my mother and married a younger woman.” This is definitely unjust. It is proof that women are indeed considered sex objects by chauvinistic men like Ikangi and therefore, when they have outlived their usefulness, they are discarded off just like it is the case with Abudu Olwit’s heartless rejection of Jacinta Apio as presented in the preceding paragraph. Women are not respected by men at all and unfortunately, they do not fight back for that is unnatural. They quietly persevere maltreatment in the hands of men who do with them as they please and get away with it ... that is expected in a patriarchal society anyway!

In the text, *Footprints of the Outsider*, Julius Ocwinyo depicts poor helpless women as sex objects. The narrator foregrounds that some women are so vulnerable that they would give in to sex with men so as to get food to feed their families during famine and drought. The men who were lucky to have cassava during such hard times “sometimes bartered it for sex with women who had nothing else to offer.” This is really absurd! Women having to bear the humiliation of helplessly sleeping with selfish and lustful men so as to provide for their families lest they all perish due to hunger is unthinkable. Through this portrayal, Ocwinyo seems to stress that the

feminine body is the only redemption for women in times of hardships. Whereas their male counterparts work tooth and nail to make ends meet during such times, women simply undress and trade their bodies, their only treasure, that lustful men angrily crave for.

2.5.2 Material Objects (Property to Men)

Besides being sex objects, women are depicted as material objects as well. They are represented as property or personal belonging to men for they are bought through bride price as Ferdinand Oyono puts it *Houseboy*. Chief Akoma for instance at the welcome ceremony of the commandant at the residence arrives with his “train” which consists of “three wives, a porter to carry his chair...”. He is proud to be described as “Akoma king of rings, king of wives”. His wives are his personal property. The cook on the other hand having lost a reasonable amount of money deducted from his salary by Madame for the broken canter, laments that he will never be able to “buy a wife”. This shows that women are equated to goods on a stall at the market for sale. M. Magnol, the Agricultural Engineer is very protective of Sophie for he considers her his property. He warns Toundi to keep off Sophie and threatens that he will send her to the hospital as soon as they return and Toundi will face the consequences. Sophie thus is reduced to a piece of property and this is very dehumanizing.

Julius Ocwinyo, like Oyono, also portrays the female sex as property to their male counterparts. In the novel, *Footprints of the Outsider*, the narrator reveals that Indian bosses employ men from far off tribes at the ginnery in Teboke because they know how difficult it is for a man “from so far away in the hope of making enough money to be able to afford a wife, or to buy a bicycle...”. A wife thus is reduced to an object for sale and in this case, a quite expensive object for a poor man. Their male companions are the sellers and buyers of females.

This material objectification of women is further emphasized through the envy that men have towards fellow men who have many daughters, particularly beautiful daughters as those are sources of wealth through bride price. In the community of Teboke for instance, fathers with several daughters are said to have enjoyed the benefit of much wealth in form of dowry/traditional marriage and beauty is an added advantage; Ikangi for instance, is such a man that is envied by many men in Teboke given the fact that he has very beautiful daughters— “the kind of

daughters a father would demand a lot of bride wealth for because they were counted among the most beautiful girls in Teboke”. Beauty thus is considered a significant quality for sale; the more beautiful, the more expensive. How absurd!

In addition to the above, women are materially objectified through the fact that the more wives a man has, the more respect he gains from society. Many men in Teboke therefore embrace polygamy in order to earn more respect and reverence. Jago Olima for instance marries five young wives within a period of ten years including the nineteen-year-old Bitoroci whom he marries when he is forty-eight. As a result, he is a proud and respected husband of five women. “He also owned three hundred heads of cattle...”. This diction is suggestive of the fact that Olima’s wives are also simply part of his property and absurdly, they take pride in that. This is exactly what many male authors wish to convey; superiority of men over the female sex through polygamy and Julius Owinyo is not an exception.

We also see this material objectification of women through fathers who are considered to have the utmost right to give out their daughters at will. When Olwit becomes very successful in Teboke, he is highly regarded by many. At only thirty-six years of age, he is the Officer in Charge of Alaro Prison Farm and is a married man. The narrator reveals that many of the locals “would have offered their daughters to become his second or even third wife” so as to partake of Olwit’s wealth. It is so heartbreaking and inhumane that fathers give away their daughters hand in marriage just to satisfy their insatiable greed for wealth without putting into consideration the choice and safety of their daughters. Women ought to be given a chance to make decisions about their spouses. There shouldn’t be any form of manipulation when it comes choice of marriage partners for its they that get married to the men and not their fathers or mothers.

Jacinta Apio, the girl that elopes with Abudu Olwit is one of the female characters that is presented as mere property to her father. Alcinora, Olwit’s mother reveals that she is summoned by the sub county chief and forced to pay Jacinta Apio’s elopement fine, for the latter had been living with Olwit illegally. The fine, she claims, “swept away all her goats yet she wasn’t even pregnant”. Later, when Olwit rejects her and demands that she leaves his home, Jacinta returns to her people and “came back with her father and brothers. They took more of my goats as compensation for the time she wasted here and went back taking her with them” with hope that she will find another suitor from whom they will extract more wealth. Jacinta therefore

inadvertently earns a lot of wealth for her family in form of numerous goats through her elopement with Olwit. The time she spends at Olwit's and the fact that she was involved in sexual activities are not accounted for on her part. All that is wasted. It is only her father and brothers that gain from her misfortune.

The unfair custom of bride price is major means by which women are reduced to objects for sale by their male counterparts. Saida Acola for instance is "bought" expensively by Abudu Olwit in the guise of culture and reputation of her family as in the following lines:

Saida Acola's father, Jago Olima had not minced words about the material value of his daughter. "My son," he had addressed Olwit, leaning back into his comfortable deck chair, "You have come hunting in my home and have speared your quarry. That is fine. But I would like to remind you that my daughter is neither uneducated nor an *akopi*. So before you take her away, we shall expect you to show real appreciation for the way we raised her (83).

It is important to note that the diction used above in reference to the girl child, Saida Acola, that is; "material value", then "quarry" that has been hunted and speared successfully by Olwit. Such suggest that she is an object for sale; an expensive object for that matter but not a human being. Her only crime is being female! Indeed, Olwit purchases 'this object', Saida Acola dearly. Besides the money which is the first instalment of the cash component of the bride wealth, Olwit pays the second cash instalment too. He is then presented with a list of what he is expected to handover to his in-laws before his marriage is considered complete and these include; "Six new *lango* hoe-blades; Two chickens. One twenty-pack carton of Sportsman cigarettes, One twenty-pack carton of Supermatch cigarettes, Two spear-blades, Fifteen cows and Twelve goats" (83). This is crazy! This culture of trading girls before marriage is inhumane. No wonder men who wish to avoid such unbecoming expenses take advantage of naïve girls and dump them thereafter. They are after all unaffordable to many. More so, negotiation is done between the male members of both the bride's and groom's families. The women's role is peripheral. Saida Acola's father demands for fifteen cows and twelve goats but after Olwit and his delegation "negotiating hard", the price is reduced to seven cows and eight goats. So, it is all about the male sex which is very unjust.

2.6 Conclusion

Chapter Two engaged in a thorough study of character portrayal and language used to depict gender in the selected male and female authored texts based on two objectives: Gender Stereotypes and Objectification of Women. This chapter also set out to ascertain whether the sex of the author matters in their representation of gender. This was done by engaging in a cross examination of the depiction of gender in the selected male and female authored texts and the following conclusion was drawn:

Through the male Omniscient narrator and character discourses in *Houseboy* and *Footprints of the Outsider* by Ferdinand Oyono and Julius Ocwinyo respectively, women are presented as immoral, subservient and dependent, unintelligent beings. Women are identified through derogatory terms like “mistress”, “prostitute”, “madame”, “ignorant”, “*alaya*” translated as prostitute, “*min*” translated as mother of, and “*icwica*” translated as pumpkin leaves; the only affordable meal to all and sundry in times of need, which is used to foreground the moral depravity of women. Besides, feminine traits in Ocwinyo (2002) are considered demeaning especially if possessed by a man or a boy child. Olwit’s “shyness and diffidence” are intolerable to his mother, Alcinora. She wonders whether her son will ever “grow into a man”, approach a woman and make her pregnant like his mates. This diction depicts femininity in an utterly negative and demeaning manner, as it denotes physical and emotional weakness, subjugation, lack of wisdom and sexual immorality. These male authors accord females peripheral roles and sexualise them so much given the detailed description of their bodies. This unrealistic portrayal of the female sex is proof beyond doubt that Oyono and Ocwinyo are both misogynists. Comparatively, men are depicted as brave, wise, responsible and industrious using terms like “master”, “mahogany-trunk”, “panther-eye”, “saintly man”, “white elephant”, “great chief” in *Houseboy* and “*Adwong*” a title for respect, “Major General”, “National President”, “Elders”, “strong” in *Footprints of the Outsider*. The male characters and masculinity are thus defined by sexual prowess, bravery, and being rational. The choice of words used to identify men furthers male supremacy.

However, Binwell Sinyangwe in his text, *A Cowrie of Hope*, unlike the selected male authors noted above, breaks away from the norm of marginalizing women in literary work as he creates a strong-willed female protagonist, Nasula who despite being illiterate and a victim of the

patriarchal system succeeds in fulfilling her desire of taking her only daughter, Sula to school. In fact, Aguessey (2014) describes him as “the hen teeth” (74) amongst the male novelists given his fair depiction of women in *A Cowrie of Hope*. He recognizes the value of education as a liberating tool for the female sex. Words like “hardworking”, “courage”, “enlightened”, “determination”, “intelligent”, “helpful” depict female characters positively. Binwell Sinyangwe’s exceptional depiction of the female gender is proof that indeed “some men have shown understanding and sincerity in the need to portray female characters as active heroines in making meaningful contribution to their societies” (Modupe 93).

On the other hand, the selected female characters, Mary Karooro Okurut and Goretti Kyomuhendo as opposed to the chosen male authors, Oyono and Ocwinyo, depict their female characters positively. They assign the female characters major tasks and basically present them as active heroines in the male dominated society as seen through Nkwanzu and Kasemiire respectively. The educated are portrayed as intelligent, brave, industrious and independent and are shown compassion in the face of adversity through the numerous authorial intrusions/comments like “poor”, “helpless” and “tortured body”. Words like “special”, “the best”, “determined”, “intelligent” are used to describe female characters that are educated. Women are also accorded responsibilities like “leader of women’s guerilla wing”, “women combatants”, “lawyer” in *The Invisible Weevil*. The illiterate female characters however, are not condemned for their ignorance but rather pitied and presented as victims since it is not their own making but rather the oppressive patriarchal cultural customs responsible for their unadmirable situation. The authors therefore advocate for education as the major weapon that can uplift these women from the mental and physical enslavement by patriarchy. Comparatively, in the given female-authored texts, the male characters are depicted negatively as monstrous, lustful, hypocritical, vile and greedy using derogative terms like “pig”, “monster”, “weevil”, “devil”, “rapist”, “drunkard”, “brute”, “bitch”, “bastard”, “hostile” among others. In so doing, all men are demonized. This harsh choice of words to define men proves beyond doubt that indeed “... a woman’s resistance often happens through language” (04) as Youngkin (2003) observes. This ‘vengeful’ use of language by the selected authors shrouds all male characters in the given texts with ill traits which is unrealistic since literature is an imitation of society as noted in the earlier. Not all men in the society are as evil as these authors put it. In summary, one can conclude that Mary Karooro Okurut and Goretti Kyomuhendo are misandrists.

CHAPTER THREE

VICTIMISATION OF BOTH SEXES BY MALE AND FEMALE AUTHORS

3.0 Introduction

Schurink et al (1992) define the term victim as “persons who have been subjected to a wide variety of acts or events that have apparently directly or indirectly caused both emotional as well as physical harm which varies in degree from mild to severe” (227-228). They add that

victimization takes place in many forms. It can be direct and clearly interpreted as such by both the victim and the perpetrator or onlookers, and it can sometimes be subtle or disguised where only the victim perceives it as such. In some cases, the victim can be socialized to accept certain circumstances or condone certain behaviour which could be interpreted as victimization by observers or outsiders (227).

Chapter Three explored the various ways in which both male and female characters were victimized in the selected African male and female authored texts. In this chapter, the African cultural set up of patriarchy as presented in the selected texts by both male and female authors is exposed as a source of victimization of both men and women. The female writers portray females as victims of sexual exploitation, male brutality, and the oppressive cultural customs that uphold patriarchy. However, in the process of mocking patriarchy, they inadvertently present some male characters as victims too, of the same system. Similarly, the selected male authored texts in which manliness is valorized through acts of bravery, economic independence, ruthlessness and pride depict some male characters as victims, particularly those that fail to live up to the societal expectations above. Men are victims in that they lose their humanity in a bid to act manly and gain reverence in society; they are forced by situations to hide their emotions and act inhumanely. Below is a detailed discussion of the victimization of both sexes in the selected female and male authored texts respectively. The discussion is in two parts: the first illustrates the victimization of women in both the female and male written works and the second includes the victimization of men by both female and male writers:

3.1 Victimization of Women

Schurink et al (1992) posit that the females are largely victims of sexual harassment due to their “physical attractiveness” (343). In other words, men can hardly contain their lustful feelings

towards women because of their tempting physical outlook. In the selected male and female authored texts, women are largely depicted as victims of sexual exploitation.

3.1.1 Sexual Exploitation

Mary karooro Okurut in *The Invisible Weevil* presents several female characters as victims of sexual exploitation. Nkwanzi, the protagonist for instance is a victim of defilement at a very tender age, by the lustful and shameless Matayo, their trusted family herdsman. The smell of the cow that is emanated from Matayo during the moments when he would take advantage of her is something that creates a lasting impact on Nkwanzi. This ugly experience haunts her so much. During a medical examination of her genitals by a very insensitive male doctor, this fear crops up as in the quotation below where the doctor roughly throws Nkwanzi's legs apart and pushes:

His gloved fingers inside her kooko, suddenly something snapped somewhere inside her. Some kind of mist clouded her eyes and the doctor's face became Matayo's-the herdsman...He was massaging her shamefully and his chest heaved up and down and he snorted and grunted and made the noise of the male cow when it is about to climb the female cow. And sweat ran down his face and saliva dripped from his mouth and mixed with his sweat and he licked the mixture with his tongue which hung out like that of a thirsty dog. Soon, he would get out his hard object and do what he had done to her so many years ago.

Nkwanzi panicked and screamed, "Matayo, stop! You're a devil hiding in Jesus! Maama, Maaaamaa, come!" (55-56).

This sudden and loud screaming shocks the doctor who concludes that Nkwanzi is mentally unstable and therefore ought to be taken to a "mental asylum" (56). It is absurd that despite being a doctor, the latter does not bother to find out the cause of his patient's seemingly 'unstable' state. He instead unjustly jumps to conclusions since the feelings of women do not matter anyway. The doctor little knows that Nkwanzi is dealing with psychological torture due to her terrible childhood experience of defilement by Matayo and therefore needs help. How would he understand? He is a man! This experience keeps recurring to her like a nightmare particularly when she feels insecure before any man. Poor Nkwanzi!

The writer shows that victimization of women by men is not limited to Nkwanzi. Goora too, a boon companion of Nkwanzi from childhood is a victim of defilement by their chemistry teacher nicknamed, Equation while in secondary school. Equation, after satisfying his lust threatens to

kill Goora if she dares disclose to anyone that they engaged in a sexual affair. Shrouded in fear, the latter who is a victim of sexual exploitation is further crucified by society for being a victim. She is humiliated at the school assembly where the headmistress publicly refers to her as “vermin” (86) that needs to be weeded out from the school before she infects the others. She is condemned for being morally corrupt while Equation watches unmoved. Goora helplessly stares at Equation who is pretending to be holier than St. Peter at that instant, but does not have the courage to expose him. As a result of this violation, Goora conceives and is forced to drop out of school. Her defiler however remains unknown to the public and therefore goes unpunished.

Furthermore, the writer exposes further victims of sexual exploitation that Nkwanzu interacts with at Nile Mansions Hotel, on her way to meet Rex. The latter is the Honourable Minister for Turbulence Affairs and was currently holding Genesis, Nkwanzu’s fiancée hostage at Nile Mansions for he had been arrested due to involvement in guerilla activities. Nkwanzu had been coerced to visit Rex at his chambers as a condition for Genesis’ release. In the luxurious room, she finds “two girls who were hardly out of their teens. They were in school uniform and looked as frightened as rabbits” (184). When the security men leave, Nkwanzu inquires from the girls what they are doing in the hotel at that late hour. The school girls tearfully reveal to Nkwanzu that they had been picked from school early that day to come and meet a minister. The minister had then taken both of them to his bed and done “shameful things” (186) to them. Nkwanzu is shocked by this revelation about Rex’s degenerated nature and pities the poor girls. She wonders why the politicians have made it a norm to sexually exploit school girls. According to the account, the ministers simply order their drivers to pick school girls for them to use and then return them later when the former are satisfied. It is absurd that these girls are reduced to sex objects.

The author further emphasizes this victimization by stating that besides violation of their virginity, the innocent girls are at a risk of contracting HIV/AIDS for they are forced into sexual acts in an era of the epidemic that had no cure. Ironically, the lustful and egocentric male politicians like Rex are unbothered about the impact of their ill actions on the poor girls yet they are leaders who ought to be protecting the lives and rights of their electorate.

The writer further cites Makerere University school girls as victims of sexual exploitation too. The university school girls, Nkwanzu inclusive survive being raped by the drunken soldiers who

ambush the university following orders from above. President Duduma had suspected that the mighty institution was planning a coup against him and therefore he commanded his soldiers to go and teach them a lesson. After all students had been forced out of their halls of residence, the soldiers started fondling the girls to the shock of the male students. The restlessness among the students was unbearable. As luck would have it, the commander of the soldiers issued new orders for them to leave the campus premises with immediate effect, to the relief of all students, both male and female. The “worst crime against humanity” (142) had been prevented from taking place by the commander, inadvertently.

In addition to the above, all females both young and old, educated and illiterate are further presented as likely targets for rapists and thus live in fear of men as they devise means to protect themselves. Senga; Nkwanzu’s aunt, for instance, when called on to talk to Nkwanzu about being a woman, Nkwanzu having seen her first menstrual blood, she warns the latter to be very cautious of the male sex lest she falls prey to their cunningness. Senga also bitterly expresses disgust for all rapists whom she feels do not have the right to live. She advises Nkwanzu to always be armed with her *empindu*: a long needle for weaving baskets, so as to stab a rapist, in case she encounters one in life. The duo then, go ahead to ferociously stab imaginable rapists for they are monsters that deserve no place in the human world. Senga cautions Nkwanzu thus: “Always have that *empindu* handy and stab such men. Stab, stab, stab!” (58). Absurdly for her, Nkwanzu does not survive the fate of most women in her society. Nkwanzu eventually becomes a victim of rape having survived this ordeal a few times for instance, by the Mafutamingi (Jack) that visited her way back while a student at Makerere University and even Rex, Genesis’ close friend while at Nile Mansion. Nkwanzu is raped by Rex on her wedding day. The latter had vowed that he would have her one day, and indeed he does. This terrible experience haunts Nkwanzu and temporarily destabilises her relationship/marriage to Genesis.

Relatedly, Goretti Kyomuhendo in “*The First Daughter*” just like Mary Karooro Okurut portrays women as victims of sexual assault. Women and girls are viewed generally as sex objects meant for the pleasure of men. Kasemiire, a student at Duhaga Secondary School is addressed as “pet”, “honey” (47) etc by her lover Steven Kirungi. Little does she know that what she considers names of endearment have reduced her to a non-human, a toy, a play thing for Steven. She is his pet to play with or honey that one cannot resist licking given its sweetness. During the

congratulatory party of the new prefects, Steven has his way with his toy/ licks his honey and she ends up being pregnant and all alone. She is forced to drop out of school as a result. Steven on the other hand goes on with his studies uninterrupted.

Later in the novel, Kasemiire is further depicted as a victim of sexual exploitation thus. She narrowly survives rape by the lustful Mr. Mutyaba, the husband to Mrs. Mutyaba, the kind social worker who picks her from her village where she had lost all hope of having a bright future and was resigned to work hard and fend for herself and her baby, having dropped out of school. Mrs. Mutyaba takes her to the city and finds her a job. When the former is away on a business trip, Mr. Mutyaba walks into Kasemiire's room one night, stark naked and unannounced. He quickly runs his filthy hands "over her body, trying to pull away the see-through night dress she was wearing. His hand went straight to her thighs, then to her breasts..." (91) dawning on Kasemiire that she is about to be raped. She fights hard to break free then runs off to the sitting room where she spends the rest of the night terrified. Ironically, Mr. Mutyaba is a man that is twice her age or even more, and more so an educated man who ought to be a father to her. He instead tries to shamelessly molest her. It is unfortunate that later, When Mrs. Mutyaba returns, she fails to believe that Kasemiire is innocent and thus, throws her out of the house, condemning her for trying to seduce her husband. The victim is condemned for being a victim. Poor Kaase!

Similarly, there are traces of sexual victimization of women in the selected the male authored texts that is; Ferdinand Oyono' *Houseboy* and Julius Ocwinyo's *Footprints of the Outsider*. The sexual abuse of women by men in these texts is discussed below;

Oyono portrays the African school girls as victims of sexual abuse. The female pupils who study at the Government School in Dangan are sexually taken advantage of by the African instructors and fellow male pupils who make them pregnant and also infect them with gonorrhoea (31). It is ironical that the people who ought to protect and guide them are the very ones that violate their innocence and set a bad example for the male pupils to follow suit. The school which should be a center of learning and reformation turns out to be a brothel, a place that propagates sexual immorality.

Besides school girls, several other individual female characters are further depicted as victims of sexual exploitation too. Kalisia for instance, a newly employed chambermaid at the

Commandant's Residence through a flashback, is presented as a helpless victim. She is coerced to give her body to various men in exchange for shelter and sustenance. While at the coast, she lives with an elderly white man, then later, a coast negroe, "other white men, other blacks and other men who were not quite black and not quite white" (91). The cook tells his fellow workers at the Residence that the "whites are all crazy about" Kalisia's behind which he describes as "lovely elephant's livers bulging beneath her cloth" (90). This description of Kalisia's attractive body emphasizes her lack of safety in a male dominated society. At Dangan, Kalisia is the mistress of Monsieur W.C. She tells Toundi sadly that when a woman meets the latter, she does not lift her hat but her "skirt" (101) thereby further developing the theme of female sexual exploitation.

Furthermore, Oyono presents Sophie, another female character in the text as a victim of sexual exploitation too. Sophie, who is described as the mistress of the agricultural engineer painfully accepts to be the latter's sexual toy in a bid to make ends meet. She laments about being discriminated by her white lover due to her black colour and seeks to have revenge someday. The latter is ashamed of presenting her to his white colleagues as his girlfriend and therefore pauses with other white women instead as Sophie is pushed to the periphery. She is only good for sex and nothing more. Sophie thus feels violated, used and abused. She however hopes that she will break free someday from this trap.

Sexual abuse is not only limited to the black female characters in the text but the white ones too. Their 'superior' colour as portrayed in the text, does not save them from the patriarchal curse of being women. A case in point is Madame, the most beautiful woman in Dangan and the only wife of the Commandant, the man that oversees all that goes on in Dangan; the chief of Dangan. Madame is a victim of her sexuality given the disrespectful and unbecoming comments thrown at her by the opposite sex about her body while at Dangan market shopping with Toundi, her houseboy. The men insensitively and excitedly shout obscenities in relation to Madame's physical appearance in the native language as translated in the dialogue below that Toundi narrates thus;

"See the way those buttocks go! Someone said. "What a figure, what hair"
"What couldn't I do with what's inside those slacks," said someone else longingly.
"Man, your shorts must be soaked," a third shouted at me (54).

The native men are only taken up by her physical beauty and that is what defines Madame as a woman. She is nothing more than just a sex object.

In *Footprints of the Outsider*, Ocwinyo like Oyono depicts the female sex as a victim of sexual abuse as explained in the paragraphs below;

Ocwinyo creates Ikangi's daughters, the most beautiful girls in Teboke and vividly paints the challenges that stand in their way due to this beauty, sexual exploitation emphatically brought out. According to the account, the girls described as "human lamps" (05) possess attractively fair skin complexion and are endowed with "the broadest hips and longest necks" (05) which are parameters of beauty as per the natives of Teboke, the village where they live. The author reveals that the "men hungered for them" (05) and thus sexually harass them through their insensitive and indecent comments about their very attractive bodies. This insinuates that if they had the chance, they would openly violate these girls. That is the fate of a beautiful woman.

Elsewhere, Ocwinyo presents Ms. Housekeeping, a hotel cleaner in Lusaka, Zambia as a victim of sexual assault. Ironically, her abuser is none other than an 'honourable' Member of Parliament (MP) from Uganda who is on National duty. Adoli Awal, the MP in question lusts after the hotel cleaner at first sight because she has the kind of figure that the former "craved – tall, plumpish, with a wasp-waist", (103) as though having such a figure is a mark for one to be sexually exploited. Adoli therefore resolves to lure her into his bed using "a flurry of US dollars" (104). He takes advantage of his financial power to tempt Ms. Housekeeping, a poor cleaner into falling in his trap. The latter however teaches him a life time lesson by taking advantage of his lust to rob him of all the money that he brags about. A younger innocent woman would have fallen prey to Adoli's sexual exploits just because they need the money.

Irene Namu, one of the daughters of Ikangi mentioned earlier and the owner of Namu Bar and Restaurant in Teboke, along with her assistants Olympia, Keren, and Aguret are further victims of sexual exploitation in the novel. In their bid to make ends meet and gain some bit of economic freedom, they resort to prostitution. Namu offers her body to the men that are quite wealthy whereas her helpers would give in their bodies to men in exchange for "a little drink" or "a little food" (118). Poor girls! They survive at the cost of their dignity.

Furthermore, sexual exploitation is not limited to just a few individual female characters in the text but rather to all women in Teboke. The author reveals that when the natives of Teboke and the neighbouring villages are hit by terrible famine and drought, women who don't have anything else to offer are forced to trade their bodies in exchange for "mature cassava" (90) in order to feed their families. The men thus gladly use the opportunity of being financially advantaged over women to exploit them. This act is really degrading and dehumanizing to the female sex.

3.1.2 Brutality

Women and girls are also portrayed as victims of brutality by the selected authors. Okurut for instance presents her protagonist, Nkwanzi and the close friend, Goora as brutalized victims throughout their childhood right to adulthood because they are female. The two boon companions are terrorized by boys in their village when they are still in primary school. The boys lay ambush for the girls, and "put a long stick across the road and dare the girls to jump over it. If a girl dared do so, they would beat her up" (38). The poor girls therefore live in fear of their peers, the boys and worry about their safety whenever they have to take such routes back home.

Besides being brutalised by young boys, women also suffer brutality at the hands of elderly men. Then men who ought to be concentrating on their construction and road maintenance work ironically abandon their duties in order to bully the girls or any girl that passes by them. The narrator reveals that while putting up an electric board and a girl happens to pass by, they would shout all sorts of obscenities at them. "All the girls felt embarrassed at this vulgar behavior" (48) and Nkwanzi desperately wonders why girls cannot be left alone in peace. She is disgusted by the unbecoming and disrespectful behavior of such men towards girls.

Additionally, the brutality of men towards women is also vividly portrayed through Goora's father who rules his household with an iron hand. Goora, her mother and sisters are victims of domestic violence in the hands of her violent father. When the former conceives and is expelled from school, her cruel father insanely flogs her until she does not feel the blows of the cane anymore. He then descends on Goora's mother when she begs him to stop beating Goora, he beats her up seriously along with Goora's young sisters and also demands them to leave his

house. The helpless women leave the home in tears, for the man has ordered them to do so. What a disgraceful experience for Goora's mother and her daughters!

Brutality towards women is not limited to only the illiterate and economically handicapped women like Goora's mother and her daughters above. Nkwanzu too, a lawyer by profession and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs is unbelievably a victim of brutality by her husband, Genesis. Genesis blames her unnecessarily for focusing on her job and in retaliation, resorts to cheating on her, and drinking uncontrollably. In his drunken stupors, he returns home and demands for sex, and when Nkwanzu tries to put a condom on him to protect herself, he gets angry and beats, scratches and bites Nkwanzu (225) who does not fight back because she is a woman. He also often reminds her that he is the man in the house and expects her to be submissive even if she is "a minister" (225). The habit of beating up Nkwanzu becomes a norm, and just when the latter makes up her mind to walk away from the abusive relationship, Genesis falls ill and his health degenerates so quickly that Nkwanzu pities him and chooses to remain and take care of her sick husband.

Goretti Kyomuhendo like Okurut similarly presents women, both educated and uneducated, young and old as victims of brutality in her text, *The First Daughter* as discussed below:

Kasemiire, the protagonist in this novel is depicted as a victim of male brutality. She for instance suffers humiliation and violence by Ojuka, a bully and senior student, when she joins Duhaga Secondary School. First and foremost, Ojuka dubbed "headmaster" (34) names her his wife in Senior One West against her will. While at the dining hall, Ojuka sits next to her, tickles her against her will, caresses her thighs forcefully amidst cheers from the other students and then demands her to kiss him. When she objects by pushing his hands off her thighs and walking away, Ojuka throws a piece of posho at her buttocks, walks to her and kisses her roughly. He then "slapped her very hard and gave her a big shove. Fortunately, Kasemiire managed to retain her balance. With tears of rage and shame almost blinding her vision, she ran out of the dining hall" (35). The humiliation that she is subjected to is unbearable. Poor Kasemiire! It is even more heartbreaking that the school authorities do not come to the rescue of Kasemiire and other girls that suffer from such teasing. One wonders where Ojuka gets the right to bully girls. Who is he? He is a man; a chauvinistic man for that matter.

Another case of brutality is clearly demonstrated through Ngonzi, Kasemiire's mother while at her father's household, a place that ought to be a safe haven for her. The latter in a flashback demonstrates how she suffers brutality by her own father. According to the account, as a young girl, Ngonzi is accused of being a loose woman having been seen by her father, standing with a man. Without being given the opportunity to explain anything, her father orders her to lie down and then flogs her mercilessly with a thorny cane thus hurting her as described below:

The thorns were tearing off small bits of her skin. It was becoming unbearable. She was screaming at the top of her voice. She tried to get up, but her mother forced her down and held her there tightly. Her father's cane was now coming down on her from all sides. She tried to twist and turn but it was of no use (14-15).

The fact that she is hit with a thorny stick is suggestive of her father's heartlessness. It is absurd that Ngonzi's mother too, as a way of expressing her submission to the husband joins him in battering her own daughter till the poor girl faints. Ngonzi only manages to get back on her feet a week later, after being nursed thoroughly by her young sister.

Brutality towards women is further prevalent in marriage as well. Kyamanywa's second wife Atenyi, the step mother of Kasemiire also suffers brutality by her husband. On the fateful day when she chooses to visit her parents despite her husband's objection, she faces it rough when she returns. Kyamanywa beats her severely "until she had cried out for mercy" (6). This severe beating due to so minimal a problem is a case of disrespect towards the helpless women and chauvinism of men.

Another case of brutality that is evident in the text is one of the father towards the daughter as earlier elaborated in the case of Ngonzi, Kasemiire's mother. Ngonzi's daughter, Kasemiire too is subjected to her mother's ordeal only that the circumstances vary. Unlike her mother who is brutalised basing on suspicion of being morally loose, Kasemiire gets it rough when she gets pregnant before completion of school thus disappointing her father, Kyamanywa. The latter breaks into the room where Kasemiire is, grabs her from the bed and throws her to the ground. With the whip in his hands he thrashes her with such fury that it soon breaks. Then he resorts to kicking and boxing her all at the same time (52). He is not even bothered when she starts to bleed through the nose and mouth. He continues beating her up until his brother, Kaliisa restrains him.

Kyamanywa's frustration and bitterness does not end with the murderous caning of his daughter. He also beats up his wife, Abwooli and the younger daughters, branding them whores. He decides that none of his daughters will ever return to school for "they are all women after all, and their offices are in the kitchen" (57). Consequently, Kenyange who is about to sit Primary Leaving Examination is forced to drop out of school and so is Katutu, a primary five pupil. Kyamanywa also chases them out of his house and literally disowns Kasemiire. They spend the night in the banana plantation. His hatred for Kasemiire does not subside at all as he continues to haunt her psychologically by spitting on the ground in disgust whenever he sets his eyes on her. This extreme bitterness is not expected of a father.

This chain of brutality goes on and on and majority of the victims are helpless and dependent women on men. Katutu, Kasemiire's youngest sister who is forced into marriage with hope of getting sustenance from her husband is subjected to violence that turns out to be a nightmare to her. She is turned into a punching bag by her husband. On a fateful day, her heartless husband beats her up severely and chases her with her kids (131). She is therefore left with no choice but to return to her father's home. Poor woman! Men subject their women to all sorts of violence as a means of expressing their superiority over them. As a result, the women and children live in fear and often do all they can to avoid getting in trouble. Kasemiire's mother, Ngonzi and sister, Katutu are victims of such uncalled for brutality.

The male writers selected for this study too, that is Oyono and Ocwinyo, similarly depict women and in some cases, males too as victims of brutality in their texts *Houseboy* and *Footprints of the Outsider* respectively.

In *Houseboy* for instance, the mother of Toundi, the protagonist is portrayed as a victim of her husband's violence. Her son Toundi is not spared either. She is often beaten up mercilessly by her chauvinistic husband and for that reason, she fears him so much. It is heartbreaking that many a time, she suffers humiliation when her husband thrashes her callously along with her son, Toundi, and she silently but painfully succumbs to the blows because she is a woman. Toundi reveals his father's monstrous nature when he stresses that whenever his father would go for him or his mother, it always took them a week to recover (10). Toundi notices his mother's vulnerability when he hears her crying and painfully remarks, "...I thought of killing my father". He desires to save his mother from this victimization but he is just a child. Unlike his mother

who bears the brutality of her husband, Toundi runs away from home and seeks refuge at Father Gilbert's.

Relatedly, in *Footprints of the Outsider*, the theme of brutality of women is explored. Ocwinyo however blames the brutality of men towards women largely on poverty in the domestic sphere. We come across Gaudensio Amute, a Primary School Headmaster and his wife Maria Acio, a formerly lauded couple languishing in poverty and endless fights. The narrator reveals that in one of their vicious fights, one hot November afternoon, "Maria had shot screaming out of her house like a nightjar and fled towards the staffroom, with her panga-wielding husband in hot pursuit. It took the strenuous and unremitting effort of all the male staff to restrain Gaudensio from hacking Maria to death" (135). Maria survives being battered by her bitter husband, thanks to the male staff that run to her rescue.

3.1.3 Oppressive Patriarchal Culture

Besides the violence meted on women, the latter are victims of the oppressive patriarchal culture, a culture that depicts women as the inferior sex and also denies them certain privileges. This victimization is elaborated in the paragraphs below in Karooro's *The Invisible Weevil* and Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter* respectively:

One way in which the oppressive patriarchal norms victimise women is by limiting their choices and denying them some privileges in life as seen through Nkwanzu, the protagonist in *The Invisible Weevil*. While growing up, Nkwanzu and her brother, Tingo are once given the chance to pick roasted meat at will by their mother. Nkwanzu enjoys the meat she picks seriously till her mother realizes she is eating her father's tongue; the tongue of the cow meant for only heads of the home. She demands Nkwanzu to return the remaining pieces and pick another stick, but the latter is unwilling to do so. She instead takes off chomping away on the delicious meat. The entire household, that is, her mother (Maama), brother, the servants and even Rukamba, the dog run after her to get her "father's tongue" back (42). Maama soon catches up with her and snatches "the balance of the tongue from her" (43). She then calmly advises her thus: "child", she panted, "never eat tongue. It's for the owner of the house. It's only eaten by boys and men. Women and girls never eat it" (43). When Nkwanzu demands to know why women are denied the opportunity to eat the tasty tongue, Maama tells her it is dangerous because such a woman

“becomes proud and thinks she should speak like a man. It’s only a man’s tongue that should speak loudest in a home, not a woman’s. A woman speaks once, a man twice. A man is the head, a woman the shoulder and the two can never be at the same level” (43). This gender stereotypical cultural belief that Maama upholds propagates passivity and subjugation of women. This is because Maama is a traditional woman. She is not to blame for she too is a victim.

The patriarchal customs further victimize women by reducing them to sex objects even in their marriages. At her marital home, Nkwanzu’s mother-in-law, Kaaka narrates to her the ordeal that women of the past used to suffer in the hands of men. She tells her that “There was a custom that if one’s brother came to visit, the one visited would leave his bed and wife for his visiting brother. All the visitor had to do was plant his spear in front of the hut where the woman he wanted was” (13). She adds that the woman had no right to refuse for “it was supposed to be her duty (13) to entertain her husband’s brother in all ways possible. Such an insensitive custom, made women voiceless sex slaves. Nkwanzu is shocked by such an evil practice.

Additionally, the patriarchal culture also victimizes the females by promoting preference for the male sex to the female sex at birth. The narrator in *The Invisible Weevil* reveals that among the Batooro people, a married woman who gives birth to only girls is despised by her in laws for bearing “vegetables” for boys/men. By referring the female sex to vegetables for men, they are stripped of their human dignity. The statement also insinuates that women are created or meant for the pleasure of men. The men have the right to do with them as they please.

The victimization of women through patriarchy is not limited to segregation only but also reduction of the female sex to material objects for men, particularly their fathers. This is propagated through the custom of bride price which victimizes women by reducing them to “objects for sale” to their husbands to be. In *The Invisible Weevil*, Kaaka’s husband, Runamba for instance, “paid the cows and brought goats and beer” (17) to Kaaka’s father in order to officially have her for a wife. The impact is that such a custom undermines the value of women and makes them vulnerable to oppression by their buyers (husbands). No wonder, later when Kaaka supports her son, Rwenzigye Genesis who has embraced a new political party, against his father’s will, the latter reminds Kaaka that he is the man and she ought to obey him. When she insists on supporting Genesis, Runamba orders both of them to leave his home and stresses that

he cannot tolerate a disrespectful woman, a woman who does not know her duty to the husband; the duty of being submissive.

Women are further victimized through the patriarchal culture which emphasizes virginity of women and girls till marriage and yet it grants freedom to men to explore sex before and even after marriage. The culture of maintaining sexual purity of only women before marriage is indeed oppressive towards the girl child. Those that are found not to be virgins at marriage are terribly humiliated and yet men are free to explore sex at an early age in order to become perfect. Senga, a traditionalist cautions Nkwanzu to always keep her legs tight to ensure she remains a virgin until marriage. When asked if the same harsh custom applies to men, Senga is shocked by Nkwanzu's foolish question but then tells her that men are exempted from this because they must practice sex before marriage. Why then mustn't women practice too? Senga surely is a victim too. She believes in a custom that she can hardly defend; a custom that makes a woman inferior to man.

Similarly, this unjust custom of maintaining sexual purity of girls till marriage is not limited to Nkwanzu only but to other women as well. Goora too is a victim of the cultural belief that girls should be virgins before marriage and those that fail to abide by this are considered unworthy and thus treated with contempt for they are a disgrace to their family members. Goora, due to her unwanted pregnancy is forced into early marriage by her mother to a strange unlikeable man from a far off village so as to save the image of her family. Goora painfully follows her 'husband' to her new home despite her total distaste for him. She hates the fact that he is short, filthy and poverty stricken, as in the description below:

The flesh of his buttocks peeped out of two gaping holes in his trousers. His whole body seemed to be a granary of dust. I doubted whether it had seen water in the past decade. His nails were torn and had obviously not been cut for a longtime, may be his teeth doubled as a razorblade. When he opened his mouth to speak, I looked into a long dark tunnel. His teeth were coated with the millet of yester-years ... (88).

This emphasizes the ugliness and despicable outlook of the man that Goora is coerced to get married to. Her crime is losing her virginity and thus the man that takes her is doing her a favour since she is already a fallen woman. She must go with him whether she likes it or not. The description above clearly portrays the narrator's contempt for forced marriage of young girls.

Besides, unfair cultural norms subject women to heavy domestic chores whose value is unappreciated by many men. Goora for instance reveals through a long letter that she writes to Nkwanzu that she, like other women in their marital homes is a victim of labour exploitation. At her husband's home, it dawns on her that she is "just an addition to the free labour in his house; labour that neither complains nor is paid...the unpaid labourers" (90). Like the other women in this household, she is subjected to heavy domestic work that benefits only the man of the house. She is therefore reduced to a slave by her husband.

Kyomuhendo like Okurut, also portrays women as victims of the oppressive patriarchal cultural customs which holds men in high regard and perpetuates the passivity and subjugation of women.

A case in point is Kyamanywa's second wife, Atenyi who is a victim of this kind of oppression. She suffers terrible humiliation at the hands of her chauvinistic husband who demands total submission and respect from both his wives, whom he considers inferior to him. When Atenyi goes against his orders by visiting her parents, the narrator reveals that Kyamanywa, "led her to bed and ordered her to spread her legs wide apart, then spent a full month without visiting her chambers" (7) having given her a thorough beating. Atenyi does not fight back or even to defend herself because it is unnatural for her to do so. This is absurd, for what happens to her or what Kyamanywa does to her is actually abuse of her rights and is unlawful. Poor ignorant Atenyi!

Furthermore, the patriarchal culture of traditional marriage reduces women to objects for sale, particularly through the practice of bride price. Abwooli's father for instance is said to have had "a habit of marrying off his daughters at an early age so that he could squander all the bride price on drink". Abwooli who is a victim vows to protect her daughter, Kasemiire from this ill fate. This egocentric nature of men is what Gorette Kyomuhendo abhors and mocks.

This culture also condemns women to passivity and subjugation as it dictates that a woman should never raise her voice at any man or even dare to fight them no matter the circumstances, for it is unbecoming. Ngonzi, who is brainwashed by these customs and ignorant of her rights or generally the rights of women, beats up her daughter, Kasemiire for failing to behave as a woman by fighting her brother Mugabi, a boy. As she canes her seriously, she keeps asking her, "Since when did women start beating men...?" (21). Kasemiire is coerced to run to escape her

mother's wrath and later apologizes to her mother who is still shocked and bitter due to her alien behavior.

The oppressive customs further affect the school going girls as well. School girls are victims in that the customs condemn them alone when they get pregnant and shield the men who are responsible for their state. A case in point is Kasemiire, the head girl at Duhaga Secondary School who drops out of school because she is pregnant. She cannot dare to return to school in that state and suffer all sorts of humiliation, "the pregnancy also meant that she would no longer go back to school to sit for her long-awaited exams" (49). Just like Goora in *The Invisible Weevil*, her education is interrupted just because she is pregnant while Steven Kirungi her lover, like Equation, Goora's defiler, pursue their career dreams peacefully. It is unfair because the boys /men too are responsible for the pregnancy and therefore ought to share the punishment if any. This is why Nkwanzu declares that if she had authority, she would ensure that the boys too miss school until the girl they impregnated gives birth. They too if possible, should be subjected to the humiliation and suffering these girls face while in such a state.

In addition to the above, the oppressive culture also denies women the chance to inherit property from their parents because they are women. According to the account, "Girls were not normally named heirs because they would not perpetuate the clan" (80). Due to this unjust custom, women are left economically handicapped and thus dependent on men who use this opportunity to oppress them. The author advocates for emancipation of women through granting them access to education which will definitely grant them economic independence and in turn minimize their chances of being victims of brutality in their marital homes.

Relatedly, the emancipation of women through education is something that does not go down well with the elders, both male and female that enforce the patriarchal cultural customs. While many men believe that educating a girl child is a waste of time and money, since women are meant for marriage, some elderly women too ironically concur with this view. Mukaaka, Kasemiire's illiterate paternal grandmother and a traditional woman for instance, curses the education system which keeps girls at school for long. She believes that a woman's place is at her husband's home or rather in the kitchen. When Kasemiire, now a senior one student returns home for holiday at the end of the term, Mukaaka laments thus, "Kasemiire would now be having two children of her own. After all, the primary education was really enough for her.

Couldn't she now write and read?" Mukaaka is simply ignorant of the power of the pen in as far as women empowerment is concerned. She is not to blame for her belief but rather pitied for she too, like many other women is but a victim.

Women are also victims of polygamy, a practice propagated by the oppressive cultural customs, a practice that many a time instigates jealousy and hatred among co-wives and also perpetuates passivity of women. Just like Goora in *The Invisible Weevil*, who ends up with a cruel polygamous man and is doomed to suffering, Ngonzi, Kasemiire's mother painfully accepts her husband's second wife for she has no right to deny him that pleasure. Atenyi, her co-wife, is a proud and quarrelsome woman. For that matter, Ngonzi trains her children to respect her and even tries to be friendly but "deep inside", she is heartbroken as Kasemiire observes. When the latter inquires about the problem, Ngonzi tells her that "it's a curse being born a woman". Soon, her co-wife wrongly accuses her of witchcraft and subsequent murder of her son. The worst bit of it is that her husband, Kyamanywa believes Atenyi's allegations and this does not leave the family the same any more. Through this, Gorette Kyomuhendo shows her contempt for polygamy and therefore advocates for monogamy for a happy home as seen through her wonderful couple; Kasemiire and Steven Karungi by the end of the novel.

Women are also portrayed as victims of early marriage, a practice that is upheld by the patriarchal norms. Ngonzi, the mother to Kasemiire for instance is forced into marriage at a very tender age, to a stranger just because her father suspects that she is having an affair with him. Her materialistic father, Kyamanywa gladly accepts the bride price offered to him by the hunter, and gives away his daughter who does not even know the husband's name. The narrator reveals that as far as the marriage was concerned, "Ngonzi felt no elation. She hardly knew the hunter, but she was glad to get away from her parents, who were treating her like some heap of cow dung" (16). Ngonzi goes into marriage just to escape the brutality and callousness of her parents. She goes with a man because she has no choice but to go. Poor Ngonzi! A few years later, it is no wonder that she regrets this decision, for Kyamanywa treats "her as if she was an object without feelings". Ngonzi thus vows to protect her daughter, Kasemiire from being a victim of early marriage having tasted its bitter fruits. It is absurd though that she fails to protect her daughters, Kenyange and Katutu. Kenyange is forced into early marriage because her father is not willing to educate her anymore and "there was nothing for her

to do” (121) at home. Katutu on the other hand decides to get married at only fifteen when there is no money to take her back to school and her mother has no means to fend for her. When Kasemiire visits their marital homes, “they were both in a sorry state” (124). Goretti Kyomuhendo therefore condemns early marriage. It is a source of suffering for its victims who are particularly, the girl-child.

Female characters in *Footprints of the Outsider* by Julius Ocwinyo are victims of patriarchy, a system that ties them to loveless marriages and also reduces women to material objects for sale. Through patriarchy, “the women themselves are socialized to accept their own victimization, and in some cases take pride that it happens”. (Schurink et al. 238). This means women are not offended when they are oppressed since they have been taught to accept male domination and passivity. In the text, Ocwinyo presents Pascolina as one such character. Despite her fears about Adoli Awal’s questionable character, she accepts to get married to him. She convinces herself that “It was better to marry a bad man than to have no husband at all” (100). Pascolina’s mother, Alimaci too supports her daughter when she says it doesn’t matter whether Adoli takes on another wife in future or has several affairs so long as he does not put them in Pascolina’s house. She also reveals that her husband is said to have had an affair with a Muruli woman around Lake Kyoga but that did not affect her because she chose to mind her business. She advises her daughter to do the same. Shortly after her marriage to Adoli, the latter’s lust drives him to have affairs with a number of “womenfolk, young and old, married and unmarried” (101) but like a good wife, Pascolina lets him be.

This is not limited to Pascolina alone as elsewhere in the novel, Bitoroci, Saida Acola’s mother is also portrayed as a victim of cross generational marriage and loveless marriage which she proudly embraces. Her husband, Jago Olima is wealthy and that is what matters to her. At nineteen, she gets married to a forty-eight-year-old polygamous man and she claims she is happy because the man ably provides for her and the children. She even misadvises her daughter, Saida Acola to marry a man that can take care of her, not the one that she loves. Consequently, Saida rejects her poor lover, Patrick Amunu and gets married to Abdu Olwit, the Officer in Charge of Alaro Prison Farm. Saida regrets her decision when the man she loves becomes a successful paediatrician but it is too late for her. She remains in her marriage to Olwit because she has no other option.

In this text by Ocwinyo just like in the female written texts discussed earlier, patriarchy reduces women to objects of material value particularly through bride price and ironically, some women appreciate that. Saida Acola for instance is ‘sold off’ expensively to Abudu Olwit who parts with a lot of money known as “*aranga*”; the cash component of the bride wealth, seven cows, eight goats, chickens, lango hoes, cartons of sportsman cigarettes and many other items (83). Saida and her mother are proud of this dehumanizing practice unfortunately. The author also reveals that given Olwit’s financial success, many fathers would gladly offer their daughters to him as second or third or even fourth wife. This insinuates that women are voiceless when fathers decide to give them away in marriage to a man of their choice.

Besides, the patriarchal culture also makes women sex slaves as portrayed in the novel, *Footprints of the Outsider*. The culture demands that a woman accepts the husband’s brother as husband when the former dies. She is not given the chance to make a choice on that. In the text, Alfred Opio, an ex-soldier from exile, on returning home to his people is shocked to find that his wife “Kerobina, had already been inherited by one of his younger brothers, and that she was pregnant with his third child” (141). The family thought he had died in war a few years back and so, culture had to take its course.

3.2 Victimization of Male characters

3.2.1 Patriarchy

Patriarchy, a male dominated system of governance oppresses men through its high expectations from a man. A real man is expected to be courageous, industrious, fierce, intelligent and a family breadwinner. Those who fail to live up to these expectations are despised. Consequently, men are pressurized to do all they can in their power to avoid being viewed as failures in society. Mary Becker (1999) breaks down the ways in which men are victimized through patriarchy and these are evidenced in the selected texts by both female and male authors as discussed below respectively;

Becker in her article entitled “Patriarchy and Inequality” posits that “men as well as women are damaged by patriarchy. For example, masculine men are hurt when they learn to repress emotions and to deny their need for connection and intimacy in order to avoid being punished as sissies and to maintain control necessary to protect themselves from other men” (30). Men in other words are denied the chance to freely express their feelings of pain, remorse, or ecstasy

simply because such is considered feminine. Men ought to be tough and emotionless as per societal standards. In both male and female authored texts, male and female characters are victimized and in some cases it is inadvertent. The female authors do it to condemn chauvinism whereas male authors do it to mock men who fail to act in a ‘manly’ way. In Oyono’s “*Houseboy*” for instance, Toundi endures his father’s blows silently for fear of being thought weak by his peers. Despite the intense pain from heavy blows, he does not cry out loud. Toundi says, “I couldn’t cry out because that might have attracted the neighbours. My friends would have thought me a girl. I would have lost my place in the group of boys-who-are-soon-to-be-men” (11). Toundi is thus forced to repress his pain just to prevent the humiliation that is likely to arise in case he cried out loud due to the pain. Poor Toundi!

Kyamanywa, in Goretti Kyomuhendo’s *The First Daughter* is a victim too when he fails to apologise to his first wife, Abwooli having unfairly branded her a witch as per his second wife’s claims. When Kyamanywa eventually discovers that Abwooli is actually innocent, he is weighed down by remorse. It is absurd that he cannot dare to “explain and apologise to his first wife” (24) for fear of being considered weak. He chooses to keep it to himself just to prove to himself and those around him that he is a man. It must be so difficult for him to suppress his guilt as he is driven to be more reserved than usual and he is forced to avoid Abwooli, however the desire to live up to the patriarchal expectations of manliness leaves him with no choice but to bury his feelings and pretend that all is well.

Elsewhere, we see this victimisation when Kyamanywa shamelessly elopes with a wealthy elderly woman and thus becomes dependent on her, something that is mocked by the patriarchal cultural customs. Kyamanywa abandons his wives and entire family, starts a new marriage however, life proves to be very difficult for it is unnatural for him, a man to depend on a woman. Kyamanywa is thus bullied by his wife and is denied food on many occasions. His daughter Kasemiire finds him in a deplorable state when she visits him with intent to request him to avail himself for her forthcoming traditional marriage ceremony. The narrator reveals that “there were unshed tears in his eyes as he looked up at his daughter”, (128) but why unshed? The answer is obvious. It is because he is a man and is therefore not expected to cry no matter the situation. This insinuates that Kyamanywa’s insensitive attitude towards his daughter and family in the past was basically due to his being tied down by the unrealistic and harsh patriarchal customs

that dictate that a real man ought to rule his home with an iron hand. According to the account, he had in the past monstrously punished his daughter Kasemiire and entire household when the former conceived in school because his ego was wounded having made a decision to educate his daughters unlike other men that despised the female sex. Because the shame and disappointment was unbearable, he disowned Kasemiire and eventually abandoned his home. His current unbecoming state made him remorseful. He is described as haggard, thin, underfed and has taken “to the bottle” (127). He tells Kasemiire when she requests for pardon from him, “Who am I to forgive you?” and adds, “I have done more wrongs than you have. Life has changed, I’m a poor man now, no longer the harsh, uncompromising and proud father I used to be” (128). He then openly breaks down and cries before Kasemiire to her shock. She cannot believe that her father can “bend so low” to that extent. This dialogue between father and daughter reveals that men are coerced to be harsh beings due to patriarchy which grants them economic power over women. Without money, men lose their power just like it is in the case with Kyamanywa. He admits that he is now powerless and hopeless. Kasemiire pities him and decides to return him home but her mother, Abwooli refuses to accept him back as husband given her sad past experience. If only Kyamanywa had been true to himself and not bent to the pressure of patriarchy, the situation could probably have been different.

The oppressive patriarchal customs also victimize men given the “costs of conforming to patriarchal ideals of manhood, such as basing self-worth on performance” (Becker 31). A real man in other words, should be intelligent, hardworking, brave and a family bread winner and failure to exhibit these traits, he would lose his place as a man.

In the female written texts, male characters are portrayed as victims of the oppressive patriarchal customs that emphasise that men are more intelligent beings than women and they are the breadwinners in their families, and thus they have to do their best to exhibit these traits. Mugabi and Steven Kirungi in “*The First Daughter*” and Tingo and Goora’s husband in “*The Invisible Weevil*” are victims due to failure to live up to these societal expectations. Mugabi, Kasemiire’s brother feels unloved and unappreciated by his parents due to his low academic achievement and laziness unlike his sister. His father regards him as a “total disappointment” because he is “shy as a woman and his father did not believe that he had ever bedded a woman! He had finished his

primary seven but the teachers had said that his grades were too poor and so he could not join secondary school. He was both too lazy at his class work and the hoe” (10). His father disdains him due to these failures and satirically concludes that the best his son will do in life will be to “work for the rich English women and change nappies for their babies” (10). He feels that Mugabi is a “waste” (10) unlike his daughter Kasemiire whom he visibly is proud of given her industriousness, responsibility and academic excellence. This discrimination by his parents makes him to resent his own sister to the extent that when Kasemiire conceives while in senior four and consequently drops from school, Mugabi jubilates inwardly for his sister, a woman shall never be better than him, especially given her current predicament. Patriarchy is to blame for his callousness. Since no one believes in him, he ends up a wasted child. Mugabi elopes with a woman that is much older than him and loses touch with his family for years. He only returns when he hears rumours that his mother has joined the heavenly choir. At the funeral, his father vehemently condemns him for abandoning the family. The two engage in a bitter argument and Mugabi vows never to return to the home.

Tingo, Nkwanzu’s brother in Karooro Okurut’s *“The Invisible Weevil”* also has his pride as a man injured when he fails to exhibit academic excellence. Unlike his sister who makes it to A’level with very high grades, Tingo fails his ordinary level exams miserably and his dreams of being a “big man” are shattered. He however decides that he will do all it takes to make it in life.

Since men are expected to repress their feelings, kasemiire in Kyomuhendo’s *“The First Daughter”* expresses shock when Steven Kirungi, her boyfriend breaks down on seeing her bruised body, a result of her father’s thorough beating due to her unwanted pregnancy. Steven is touched and hurt that Kasemiire was brutalized by her father. Kasemiire, on the other hand instead of appreciating Steven’s concern simply concludes that “Steven was too gentle to have been a man” (55). Real men ought not to cry or show any kind of remorse for their actions. It is unnatural for a man to cry and therefore in so doing, the author presents him as a weakling given his failure to control his emotions and act ‘womanly’.

Goora’s husband, a character in *“The Invisible Weevil”* is mocked and accorded the most humiliating description by the author due to his financial incapacity; something that is not expected of a family breadwinner. Goora is disgusted by the mere sight of him and detests him intensely. In her letter to Nkwanzu, her closest friend, she apprises the latter that when her

husband came to take her to his home, “He had rolled up his torn trousers and the calf of his leg stood out like the head of a hammer. The flesh of his buttocks peeped out of two gaping holes in his trousers. His whole body seemed to be a granary of dust... When he opened his mouth to speak, I looked into a long dark tunnel. His teeth were coated with the millet of yester-years” (88). She goes ahead to call him names for instance creature, reeks of a stench and also reveals that she is ashamed to call “it” her husband. Goora also adds that her husband’s one room house is dilapidated yet it houses several children and her co-wife. When it rains, the inhabitants all get drenched. Her poverty-stricken husband also shamelessly has four wives and about thirty children whom he can hardly take care of. Goora’s husband therefore is not worthy to be a man. He is a shameless failure in life that is blinded by a huge sexual appetite.

Men are also victims of oppression at the hands of fellow men who hold power over them. Becker posits that “men collectively exercise power over women but are themselves as individuals increasingly under the domination of (increasingly institutional) patriarchal powers. Many men are severely oppressed as members of certain racial or class groups” (31). In “*Houseboy*” for instance Toundi is a victim of racism by his fellow men who are white and economically stable. While at Father Gilbert’s, he is subjected to harsh labour as he serves up to three masses on a daily basis and the skin of his knees have become as rough as crocodile skin. Father Gilbert proudly refers to him as his “master piece” thereby dehumanizing him. After Father Gilbert’s death, Toundi is taken on by the commandant as a houseboy. He is inhumanely exploited so much as he works from the wee hours of the morning till midnight yet he is paid peanuts. He reveals that “I am not a storm. I am the thing that obeys”. Besides, his master despises him by treading on his fingers and kicking him to express superiority over him. His fellow workers too are victims of oppression by their masters. Baklu for instance, the laundryman at the Residence washes the commandant’s wife’s chemises, slips, the Commandant’s underpants and vests. The cook reveals with horror, “Everyone I have ever worked for has handed over these things to the laundry man as if he wasn’t a man at all...” (81). The Cook insinuates that such a task is demeaning and thus destroys a man’s ego.

Also, the bravery expected of men by society victimizes many men. Many are sent to combat just because they are men irrespective of their age and they are expected to protect themselves. In Oyono’s *Houseboy*, Mengueme the chief of Yanyans is a victim having lost a brother and

children to war. The narrator reveals that “When the German made the first war on the French, his younger brother was killed fighting the French. When the Germans made the second war on the French, his two sons were killed fighting the Germans” (36). It is only men that fight during war and hence some lose their lives as in the case with Mengueme’s brother and sons. Mekongo is yet another victim of this oppressive belief however, he absurdly takes pride in his victimized state as he braggartly informs his admirers, “I’ve fought in the white man’s country. I’ve left a leg there and I have no regrets” (57). He further proudly remarks, “When I left this country, I was already a man. If I had been a child, the white man would not have called me. When I went to war, I left a woman with a child” (57). He also gladly says that he killed many men, even the white men during the war. This shows that Mekongo is proud of his sacrificial nature and bravery, traits that only ‘real men’ possess. No wonder his listeners are impressed by his adventures during and after the war.

In Ocwinyo’s *Footprints of the Outsider*, this kind of bravery is attributed to men as they are generally presented as ex-soldiers, commanders, sergeants among others ranks but absurdly, some are disillusioned. At the onset of the novel for instance, we come across a disillusioned ex-soldier and Uganda Army Veteran who is said to drink like fish to the extent that “if he had touched his anus he would have mistaken it for a mere scar” (9). He drunkenly praises the liquor that is his only source of comfort, that is, “arege”. He therefore is but just a victim. Laban Oculi, a leper “had seen military action at the height of his physical prowess. To show that he still felt good despite his leprosy, he would march stiffly through Teboke Trading Centre shouting, “Left...left...” (29). He is a pitiful sight. There is nothing admirable about him despite his past sacrifice to serve in the army. He nostalgically sings a praise song about King George of England, having served as a soldier in “the jungles of Burma” and “in Misiri” and fearlessly “massacred” his opponents like flies (30). In Teboke, he languishes in poverty. His land is even grabbed by Father Varasco Guglielmo with intent to develop the Catholic Mission. Oculi’s resistance against this injustice doesnot yield any positive results as he ends up being arrested and taken to “Atura Police Station” (38). He is further charged with trespass. He ends up a disillusioned man. Laban Oculi too is a victim.

The patriarchal doctrine also stresses the sexual virility of men and therefore any man that fails to act as expected is not considered man enough. In *Houseboy*, Toundi the protagonist of the text

is discredited for exhibiting a high sense of self control and not falling for Sophie's seductive stance. Sophie mockingly tells Toundi, "You are shut up all night in a hut with a woman and you say your mouth is tired. When I tell people, they won't believe me. They will say, 'perhaps it's because his knife is not very sharp, he prefers to keep it in its sheath'" (43). This is a clear expression of her disappointment in Toundi. Her accusation also reveals that society expects Toundi to act otherwise lest he be branded unmanly. Elsewhere in the same text, Kalisia, the new chambermaid at the Residence where Toundi works finds it difficult to believe that the latter has never slept with his very attractive master's wife, Madame Suzi. She insists on teasing him with intent to find out the truth that she seeks in vain. She is shocked when she discovers that Toundi is actually innocent. That is not expected of a true man. A 'real man' ought to explore whatever opportunity comes their way as far as sex is concerned.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter made a critical analysis of the victimisation of both male and female characters in the selected male and female authored texts respectively, and this was done successfully through the carefully woven sub-titles, in which the researcher's views and direct quotations from the text were presented to support the given arguments or findings. In summary, men as well as women were confirmed to be victims of patriarchy. They are both victims of the unjust customs that uphold the system of patriarchy as clearly presented in the selected texts by both male and female authors. These customs suppress the male sex by demanding that they repress their emotions and exhibit bravery under all circumstances whereas the females are taught to accept male domination, to be compliant, passive and dependent. These societal expectations make both men and women vulnerable to victimization.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

4.0 Introduction

This study set out to make a comparative analysis of the portrayal of gender in selected African male and female authored novels. The study was anchored in a tripatite set of objectives which were: to examine the gender stereotypes, to analyze the objectification of women and to investigate the effectiveness of the language used to represent gender. Five texts were selected for the study, that is; three were male authored and two were female authored. These included *Houseboy* (1956), *Footprints of the Outsider* (2002), *A Cowrie of Hope* (2000), *The First Daughter* (1996) and *The Invisible Weevil* (1998). The intention was to compare the portrayal of gender in the respective male and female authored texts and to determine whether the sex of the author influences their representation of gender in literature.

4.1 Summary of Findings

With exception of Binwell Sinyangwe, the selected male authors' presentation of the female gender is mostly sloppy and biased. For instance, Oyono (1956) and Ocwinyo (2002) accord women traditional roles that keep them trivialized and inferior to their male counterparts as explored in this study. A case in point is Saida Acola in Ocwinyo (2002) who, despite being educated opts to be a housewife to take care of her home and husband, Abudu Olwit. The other women that are condemned to wifely duties in this text include Bitoroci Alupu, Pascolina and her mother, *min* Apici, and the wife to Jasper Amunu. Those that dare to explore the male dominated public sphere in search for money are all depicted as immoral for instance Alicinora; the *arege* seller who sleeps with every Tom, Dick and Harry, and Irene Namu; who is described as one of the attractions of Namu's Bar and Restaurant which she owns. She and her barmaids are prostitutes. In *Houseboy*, all the wives of the French are housewives. While their husbands go out to make money, they stay home to supervise their houseboys and strive to look beautiful. As for the African women, they have polygamous husbands and those that work or study are sexually exploited by their white bosses and African instructors respectively. The women are generally depicted as weak, submissive, immoral and materialistic. The men on the other hand

are the protagonists in the given texts as seen through Toundi and Abudu Olwit in *Houseboy* and *Footprints of the Outsider* respectively. The male characters have authority over the women as they are the heads of their families and bread winners. They are generally represented as brave, responsible, industrious, intelligent and ambitious.

Comparatively, Binwell Sinyangwe in *A Cowrie of Hope* portrays his female characters realistically. His protagonist, unlike the male authors cited above is Nasula, a female. Nasula despite being illiterate, poor and a widow is very industrious and ambitious. She single-handedly raises and educates her daughter, Sula amidst numerous challenges among which are poverty and chauvinism. She works tirelessly to ensure her daughter goes to school and stresses that education makes women independent. This shows that she believes in the power of education as the only means to empower women. Furthermore, Sinyangwe erases the gender disparity by making male and female characters exhibit praise-worthy traits such as bravery, hard work, responsibility and ambition as seen through Nasula, the old man from Solwezi, Nalukwi, the chief of police among others. Also, Sinyangwe shows that both male and female are human beings with compassion. Thus, although the women are portrayed as weak, submissive, materialistic and dependent as seen through Nasula, Nalukwi and other women, in the same text, the positive traits he gives them are redemptive. They are depicted as dynamic in that, their behaviour is not static but rather, changes with change in the situations around them. The weak and submissive Nasula at the onset of the novel becomes brave and ambitious as the story progresses. This applies to the male characters as well as the chauvinistic and callous Shikulukili Chiswebe, Nasula's father-in-law, becomes very repentant and compassionate towards the end of the novel and Gode Silavwe, the notorious and unrepentant thief eventually submits to the law. This is a very realistic way of portraying gender.

The other selected male and female authors on the contrary exhibit bias in their portrayal of gender. Cases in point are Gorette Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter* and Okurut's *The Invisible Weevil* both of which are written by females. One can hardly find a good man in these works. The men are portrayed as monstrous, shameless rapists, selfish, chauvinistic and vile beings among other negative traits which are unfathomable. These include Kyamanywa; a chauvinist, his drunk friends that are gynocentric, Mr. Mutyaba; a shameless rapist in *The First Daughter* and Rex; a traitor, defiler and rapist, Matayo; a defiler, Genesis; a chauvinistic man

and Equation; a defiler and religious hypocrite in *The Invisible Weevil*. Side by side with these monstrous male, the female characters are portrayed as angels and victims of men. Besides, they are denied the benefit of education which is considered the only emancipatory tool for the women and the given protagonists embrace it. For instance, the emancipated females are depicted as independent, brave and ambitious whereas the illiterate are submissive, dependent and weak. In this portrayal of victimizer victim, the female writers' style does not further gender equality, rather it furthers gender disparity thus, their portrayal is not recommendable.

Besides the stereotyping of the male and female characters in the given texts, apart from *A Cowrie of Hope*, the selected male and female writers use sexist language to depict gender negatively. The most prominent of the selected authors who employs sexist language is Okurut in *The Invisible Weevil*. She describes men as pigs, monsters, rapists to mention but a few. Whereas women are largely objectified in the selected male-authored texts, men are vilified in the female-authored novels. Consequently, this study strongly asserts that the given writers' sex definitely impacts on their representation of male and female characters.

4.2 Conclusion

Gender scholars and activists have argued that literature has been used as a tool to promote and perpetuate the subordination of women. This is why organizations of women like FEMRITE took to the pen to rectify the woman's image and to promote their self-esteem. The latter was to transform the worlds in the books into a society in which men and women are accorded their due rights as human beings. This would therefore create a society in which women are given equal opportunities like men. To gain this ideal society women writers should not just retaliate. Instead, they should create literary works which promote equality by depicting men and women in favorable terms. To show men as rapists, selfish, and extremely unconcerned would not stop men from being aggressive. Writers should employ a variety of lenses in the analysis of gender representation for purposes of gender equity and balance. Furthermore, authors should emphasize cases of complementarity of gender in promoting development and creation of stereotype free characters should be a priority to them. Practices that promote subjugation of women like forced marriage, widow inheritance, bride price, polygamy and property inheritance should be portrayed without prejudice in literary work. This will fill the missing gaps by

reconstructing the role of men and the honourable place of the African woman in the literary landscape.

The male writers ought to put it in mind that women need physical, economic, psychological and social freedom to live equally as men do and should strive to reflect this in their texts. Sinyangwe for instance advocates education as the major weapon that can uplift women from the mental and physical enslavement propagated by patriarchy. In contemporary writing, this should highly be encouraged as it is the order of the day. The extremity in gender portrayal witnessed in the selected texts by Oyono, Ocwinyo, Kyomuhendo and Okurut should be minimized as much as possible.

Concerning the language, Gender scholars and activists should also desist from using sexist language in their literary works but rather, opt for gender sensitive and gender inclusive diction to define male and female characters realistically.

Furthermore, there is a crucial need for deconstructing gender-based roles and culturally defined behaviors of men and women, and reassessing manliness and womanliness in connection with the changing socio-economic circumstances of the modern times through literature. Ultimately, gender activists should advocate literary style like that assumed by Sinyangwe in his *A Cowrie of Hope*. Such literary style addresses imbalances in gender portrayal thereby promoting gender equity.

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