

**THE AESTHETICS OF UGANDAN LITERATURE: A STUDY OF
SELECTED WORKS**



JULIET NANNYONJO

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DECLARATION

I, Nannyonjo Juliet, declare that this study, entitled, The Aesthetics of Ugandan Fiction: A Study of Selected Works, is a product of my own academic efforts, and that it has never been submitted to any institution of higher learning for any formal award, and that all the cited sources have been acknowledged.

Signature:

Date:

Nannyonjo Juliet

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation, entitled, **The Aesthetics of Ugandan Fiction: A Study of Selected Works**, has been done under my supervision and is ready for submission for external examination.

Signature:

Date:

Dr. Mukakanya Patrick

(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the Almighty God—my stronghold and true source of my inspiration, together with the Superior General and Daughters of Mary-Bannabikira Sisters (DM), who awarded me a scholarship to pursue my postgraduate studies.

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This work has come to completion, thanks to the amazing support that I got from various sources, which I now gratefully acknowledge: first of all, I give great honor unto the Almighty God for granting me the grace that has always sustained me throughout all my academic pursuits.

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ABSTRACT

This study set out to critically explore the Aesthetics of Ugandan Prose Fiction in selected literary works, such as Timothy Wangusa's *Upon this Mountain*, Violet Barungi's *Cassandra*, Mary Karoro Okurut's *Milking a Lioness* and Goretti Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter*. The study focused on the critical analysis of the 'artistic properties' of each of the selected works that endear them to the reading public in Uganda, and beyond—how, as Munro puts it, “the art has impacted on peoples' moods, beliefs, and attitude towards life” (Munro, 2). The study set out with three objectives, namely: to apply the African aesthetic principles in the critical appreciation of the selected works; to apply Western aesthetic principles in the analysis of selected works; and to draw conclusions from the aesthetics of the selected works. The study employed the documentary analysis method which belongs to a qualitative research design. This involved a close-reading of both primary and secondary sources of data. In the application of both African and western aesthetic principles to analyze the aesthetics of the selected Ugandan literary works, it was discovered that the selected authors, Kyomuhendo, Wangusa and Karoro used a mixture of African and Western aesthetic principles. Barungi, on the other hand, adroitly and religiously stuck to western principles in language and style. Nevertheless, Barungi's novel has allusions and themes that are typically Ugandan and African. The study concludes that the charm of the four selected Ugandan fictional works sprung from aesthetic dualism: the writers used both African and western aspects of beauty that enabled the selected Uganda fiction succeed in being a page turner. Finally, the study recommends the inclusion of aestheticism as a core component of literary theory and criticism given its remarkable influence on African literary production, among others.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This study is a critical examination of the aesthetics of selected Ugandan prose fiction. It is focused on the four well-written texts: Violate Barungi's *Cassandra*, Goretti Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter*, Timothy Wangusa's *Upon this Mountain*, and Karooro Okurutu's *Milking a Lioness*. Each of the texts will be discussed in terms of its aesthetic qualities; what makes it beautiful as literature. According to J.A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literature and Literary Theory* (1977):

The term aesthetics has come to signify something which pertains to criticism of the beautiful or to the theory of taste. An aesthete is one who pursues and is devoted to the beautiful in art, music and literature!

In discussing the selected works, this study focuses on those elements which constitute "the beautiful" in the work such elements are, according to Kelly Griffith (1998), in *Writing About Literature*, "what publishers call page turners; those elements that compel the reader to keep turning the pages to find out what will happen next" (2).

But according to deconstruction literary theory, there is no absolute determinant of what constitutes beauty of any literary work (Shrawan 2019). For what amuses one person may disgust the other. What makes one person despondent may be a source of inspiration for the other. Thus, what makes a work beautiful to various audiences is rather subjective. The subjectivity of beauty is granted. But there are some well-recognized aspects of Western aesthetics and African aesthetics which have become more or less objective because of their acceptance by most people (Townsend 2010). As Longinus, in his *On the Sublime*, argues, if a

work of literature such as Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* is appreciated by diverse readers in diverse places and times, its sublimity is unquestionable. African literature may not yet have "passed the test of time", but it has already some aesthetical qualities such as the use of "Orature" which is, by critical consensus, pleasing.

The Ugandan prose fiction for this study is a good illustration of what Professor Ali Mazrui calls 'aesthetic dualism' in African literature³. The novel as a literary form originated from Europe. It found its way to Africa through European colonial education. In time, African writers adopted and modified the form. They write about African experiences in both European and African styles, in a European language dominantly English or French.

As G.A Heron observed in his introduction to Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*, these writers "wish to express African ideas. But they have chosen a non-African tool to express them."⁴ Hence the "aesthetic dualism" of the resulting literature.

Because of this dualism, this study will examine both Western aesthetics and African or Black aesthetics in order to find the respective criteria for "the beautiful in literature".

1.1 Western Aesthetics

The question of what constitutes Western beauty in art, according to Western aesthetics dates way back to classical times. For Aristotle, the beauty of a tragic play ultimately resides in its catharsis, the purgation of the emotions of pity and fear which emanate from the downfall of a tragic protagonist (Belak 2013). For Horace, the beauty of poetry is its ability to delight and instruct, "The man who has managed to blend profit with delight wins everyone's approbation, for he gives his reader pleasure at the same time as he instructs him."⁵

According to Longinus, another famous classical literary critic, the beauty of a work of literature is its sublimity: "those qualities in a work of literature which instantaneously create in a reader a

sense of being elevated to new heights of passionate experience.”⁶ Longinus points out the universality and timelessness of the sublime(Cora 2014) .

As a generalization, you may take it that sublimity in all its truth and beauty exists in such works as please all men at all times. For when men who differ in their pursuits, their ways of life, their ambitions, their ages, and their languages all think in one and the same way about the same works, then the unanimous judgment, as it were, of men who have so little in common, induces a strong and unshakable faith in the object of admiration.⁷

The qualities of a literary work which constitute its sublimity are both stylistic (Kant and Guyer 2011) (“the creation of a noble diction...and the elaboration of style”) and thematic (“the ability to form grand conceptions”).⁸

Many writers and critics today would agree with Longinus that the beauty of a work of literature is in both its form and meaning. But there are critics who emphasize content at the expense of form and others who do the reverse. Some moralists for example, see the form or technique of literature as means to an end and emphasize content at its expense.

The formalists (New critics), on the other hand, emphasize form at the expense of content (Selden 2016). They focus on such formal elements as structure, plot, character and characterization, and language use. In fact, for formalists who belong to the radical school of art for art’s sake, the beauty of literature is only in its form.

The school of art for art’s sake is best represented by “aestheticism” or the aesthetic movement...a European phenomenon during the latter nineteenth century... Its roots lie in the German theory, proposed by Kant in his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (1799) that the aesthetic experience consists of a “disinterested” contemplation of an object without reference to reality or to the “external” ends of its utility or, morality...The end of a work of art is simply to exist in its formal perfection and to be beautiful.⁹

For believer in “art for art’s sake”, such as Oscar Wilde, art has no utility: “All art is quite useless.”¹⁰ In contrast, the utility of art is central to the concept of Black aesthetics.

1.2. African Aesthetics

Maulana Karenga, in *Journal of Black Studies* (1988), defines Black aesthetics as a “distinctive mode of artistic expression judged in terms of its creativity and beauty as well as its social relevance”.¹¹ According to Clarence Major in, *Black Aesthetics* (1971), the term “can be defined in terms of the elements of a work of art (such as music, sculpture and literature) which are appreciated by the black audience.”¹² With literature such aesthetic elements are both stylistic and thematic. Many commentators, however, put more emphasis on the latter element, on the thematic value or relevance of the literary work. Pio Zirimu, for instance, sees Black aesthetics largely in terms of its utility. Its function goes beyond beauty.¹³

African art tends to carry strong moral and religious significance. Some African sculptures, for example, are not even meant to be seen; they are buried in the ground or hidden, but are used to protect the family from malicious magic. They hold spiritual power. Hence something is not beautiful because it looks good, it is beautiful because it is an embodiment of good.

Sculpture, which is according to some observers the cornerstone of African art,¹⁴ tends to be polished, smooth, and luminous. These aesthetic qualities reflect craftsmanship, skill, and sophistication. However, figures tend to have exaggerated features, each of which communicates some form of spiritual power. Likewise, many statues depict a person from multiple sides at once, which may have influenced cubism.

Black aesthetics is the opposite of art for art’s sake (McKee 2016). It is “art for people’s sake... [which] should focus on the everyday social and political lives of black people.”¹⁵ Most black literature African, American or Caribbean is socially committed; it is focused on social issues: political, racial, moral, economic, religious, etc. as Karenga reiterates, “Black art had to be-

functional, collective and committed to be considered real and relevant.”¹⁶ It is because of this relevance that it is appreciated by black people. Its relevance is part of its beauty.

According adherence to (Mbowa 2013) African values is another dimension of Black aesthetics. Good African literature should be that which celebrates what is African: the values and beliefs, which makes the audience to identify with the work.¹⁷ This celebration echoes Negritude: “a literary and cultural movement...[whose] fundamental objective ... was the need to define black aesthetics and black consciousness against a background of racial injustice and discrimination around the World.”¹⁸ Negritude poems such as Leopold Senghor’s “Night of Sine” and “I will Pronounce your Name” are a celebration of the beauty of the African Woman, while David Diop’s “African’ is both a lament for the mistreatment of Africa by whites and a celebration of its greatness.¹⁹

In terms of style, the concept of black aesthetics is undermined by the use of European languages, dominantly English or French, by most African writers(Manus 2012). As Heron observes in his introduction to *Song of Lawino*:

African writers who choose to use English or French set themselves certain problems. They wish to express African ideas. But they have chosen a non-African tool of language- they will borrow other foreign things. Every language has its own set of literary forms which limit a writer’s manner to expression. How many of these tools can a writer borrow before his African ideas are affected by the influence of foreign ideas implied in them?²⁰

Some African writers, such as Okot P’Bitek himself, try to overcome the foreign language problem by “Africanising” English/French with local idioms, myths, images, metaphors and symbols. Timothy Wangusa, for example, opens his novel *Upon This Mountain*; “Many many millet granaries ago...” no English author would write like this. Similarly, Achebe writes in *Things Fall Apart*:

Go-di-di-go-go-di-go. Di-go—go-di-go. It was ekwe talking to the clan. One of the things every man learned was the language of the hallowed-out instrument.²¹

This should remind most, if not all, African readers of the idea of a talking drum, the traditional African instrument of mass tele-communication.

A major stylistic element of Black aesthetics also serves to “Africanise” African literature in English/French(Ncongwane 2018). This is the use of oral literature or orature in fiction and drama. Many of the best African writers employ, for mostly instructional purposes, folk tales, proverbs, sayings and songs in their literary works- quite unlike Western literature. As Achebe says in connection with his use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart*; “Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.”²² This sounds true of many other African people.

Because of the stylistic and thematic differences between Western and African art, it was imperative for “supporters of black aesthetics” to call for the establishment of “a new standard of judgment and beauty based on African myths, spirituality, belief systems and music in opposition to Western aesthetic”. According to this “new standard of judgment”,²³ the beauty of African art largely resides in its utility, spirituality and physical(Hall 2010).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Lamarque, (2008) remarked that literary critics worldwide have demonstrated a marked reluctance to acknowledge the relevance of aesthetics to literature. This applies to Uganda, a country once described as a literary wasteland but today boasts of a rich literary harvest. With forty-five fresh novels, numerous manuscripts of novels and other forms of fiction, many biographies, memories poetry anthologies, travel journals, award winning non-fictional texts, published in the last thirty years, one can comfortably say that Uganda is on the way to becoming

a literary power house in East Africa. All the above manuscripts and publications have raised the bar for the country's budding authors (Anena 2015). This revolution has been ignited by the rise of ambitious, creative people who are shaping the conversation about writing in Uganda. Among these are Timothy Wangusa, Violate Barungi, Mary Karoro Okurut, Kyomuhendo Gorretti, to mention but a few.

However, while researchers, in other countries, have done evaluative studies of novels, they have only employed western narrative traditions as compared African traditions which renders African style ineffective in the face of western style. This study therefore aims to examine the unique African aesthetic principles which when combined with the western aesthetic principles yields to the contemporary African society as (Gale 2016) points out.

The use of aesthetics in literature, or basically the inclusion of references to artistic elements or expressions in a literary text aimed at the pursuit of beauty "art for art's sake" has, since its inception in the late Eighteenth Century, been a major hallmark of modern literary production, with greater emphasis on the literary text's intrinsic-value as opposed to its social and moral functions. Although literature occupies a lofty place in contemporary aesthetics (Josette Attard, 2018), much of the critical studies centre on the ethical aspects of literary works. The basic problem, therefore, is that there is not much that has been written on the topic. Moreover, the researcher has not come across a critical book or article focused on the aesthetics of Ugandan prose fiction, and yet the importance of the topic in appreciating and evaluating this literature cannot be over emphasized. Hence the necessity for this study.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. Apply Western aesthetics principles to the judgment of selected works.

- ii. Apply African/ Black Aesthetic principles to the judgment of the selected works.
- iii. To establish the aesthetic dualism of the selected Ugandan works of Ugandan writers.

1.5. Research Questions

The study was guided by three fundamental questions:

- i) How do the selected Ugandan prose works reflect Western Aesthetics?
- ii) How do the selected Ugandan prose works reflect Black Aesthetics?
- iii) To what extent do the selected texts reflect Aesthetic Dualism?

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study focused on four representative and popular fictional texts by different authors: Timothy Wangusa's *Upon this Mountain*, Violate Barungi's *Cassandra*, Goretti Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter*, and Mary Karooro Okurut's *Milking a Lioness*. Conceptually the study will examine the aesthetic success of the selected works by using both the western and African standards of evaluation because much as some studies have been carried on the same books, researchers have only evaluated them using western aesthetics and have not exhausted the African aesthetics in the African books. Geographically, the study will limit itself on works (novels and novelette) written by Ugandans. The selected novelists are widely celebrated novelists in Uganda; they have served as lecturers and heads of Literature departments in different recognized institutions. It is expected that their novels are some of the cream of novels available on the Uganda market rendering them worthy studying and examining.

1.7 Significance of the study

- i) Both teachers and students of literature in Uganda will use this evaluation to understand the literary aesthetics of the selected texts.
- ii) It is projected that this research will encourage further research in the line of aesthetic success and shall be used as reference by other researchers.
- iii) Literature curriculum designers, too, will be able to consider more Ugandan literary texts within the literature syllabus, while Ugandan writers might be in position to write more novels.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

Examination: In the context of this research, examination refers to a detailed investigation of the texts using the given criteria.

Aesthetics: The term aesthetics refers to the philosophical study of beauty and taste. A philosophy of art that is concerned with the nature of art and the concepts in terms of which individual works of art are interpreted and evaluated.

A novelette: The term "novelette" refers to a story that is romantic or sentimental in character. It is also a narrative fictional prose. A novelette is longer than a short story, but shorter than a novella. The word-count is usually between 7,500 words to 17,500 words.

Metalinguistics: This is the branch of linguistics that studies language and its relationship to other cultural behaviours. It is the study of dialogue relationships between units of speech communication as manifestations and enactments of co-existence (Nganga, 2018).

Paralinguistics: These are the aspects of spoken communication that do not involve words. These may add emphasis or shades of meaning to what people say (Curtis and Romney 2019). Some

definitions limit this to verbal communication that is not words. For example; body language, gestures, facial expressions, tone and pitch of voice, are all examples of paralinguistic features.

1.9. LITERATURE REVIEW

The reviewed literature was to provide critical information on the relevance of aestheticism in the selected Ugandan prose works. It sought to find out which aspects of aesthetics of literature have been studied; create an understanding of aspects of the African novel, and therefore create direction for the proposed research through identifying a gap in the available literature.

1.9.1. Western Aesthetics

According to Anena (2015), Aesthetics of any literature is traced from the aspects used to build up a literary writing. These are theme, character, style, plot, and setting. These work hand in hand to produce the total effect of the novel to the readers. The total meaning of the novel is not complete until each of the above aspects is analyzed and their relationships to each other are established. When a work of literature is to function successfully, ‘pleasure and utility’ according to Anena (2015) should co-exist and coalesce. The seriousness and instructiveness of literature should be pleasurable seriousness; an aesthetic seriousness, a seriousness of perception.

According to Connor (2011), a novel shall be considered aesthetically successful only if it is able to shock, thrill, anger, make readers laugh out loud, or cry silently; have the ability to provoke readers into thinking about life either as a ridiculous joke or a wonderful dance and a tragic tale accordingly. If any literary piece of work is going to succeed in its intentions, it must deploy recognizable features of aesthetic value, but must equally capture something that makes it stand out from products of different authors, geographical location, or subject matter. Aesthetics analysis in any literary work brings a number of issues to light; how the work appears, what

impact it has, what is salient in it and what merits aesthetic attention. Thus, aesthetic appraisal of any literary work should be wider than simply the beauty and pleasure they afford.

Lamarque, (2008) maintains that only people possessing a certain kind of “sensitivity” or “taste”, itself subject to training and improvement, will be able to apply aesthetic terms correctly and engage in aesthetic appreciation. Something parallel is true in the literary case, namely that mere grasp of the language is not sufficient to appreciate a work aesthetically. Whether or not a particular sensibility is called for might be open to question, but that some skill is involved beyond linguistic competence seems certain. Literary appreciation is not a natural but a trained mode of discernment.

In “An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue” (1725), Francis Hutcheson explained: “The origin of our perceptions of beauty and harmony is justly called a ‘sense’ because it involves no intellectual element, no reflection on principles and causes(Kivy 2012).” Francis Hutcheson was perhaps the first to place the problem of aesthetic judgment among the central questions of epistemology: How can we know that something is beautiful? What guides our judgment and what validates it? His answer was decidedly Empiricist in tone: aesthetic judgments are perceptual and take their authority from a sense that is common to all who make them. (Roelofs 2014)

Hume(1757), following Voltaire in the *Encyclopédie*, raised the question of the basis of aesthetic judgment and argued that, “It is natural for us to seek a standard of taste; a rule by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another.” With regard to the standard of taste, Hume recommends an ideal of the man of taste, whose discriminations are unclouded by an emotional distemper and informed by a “delicacy of imagination . . . requisite to convey a sensibility of . . . finer

emotions.” In an Essay entitled “Of the Standard of Taste” (in four Dissertations) Hume argues that there is a great resemblance between “mental” and “bodily” taste, between the taste exercised in aesthetic discrimination and that exercised in the appreciation of food and drink, which can equally be deformed by some abnormal condition of the subject. Hume proceeded to lay down various procedures for the education of taste and for the proper conduct of critical judgment. His discussion, notwithstanding its skeptical undercurrent, has proved lastingly influential on the English schools of criticism as well as on the preferred Anglo-Saxon approach to the questions of aesthetics.(Hill 2010)

The view that art is expression emerged during the 1700s. Rousseau puts forth the theory of the arts as forms of emotional expression in an essay: *Dealing with the origin of languages*. This theory, regarded as providing the best possible explanation of the power of music, was widely adopted. Treatises on musical expression proliferated during the late 18th century. One illustrative example is James Beattie’s *Essay on Poetry and Music as They Affect the Mind* (1776), in which the author rejects the view of music as a representational (imitative) art form and argues that expression is the true source of musical excellence. Another example is provided by Denis Diderot in his didactic novel *Le Neveu de Rameau* (1761–74;(Norton 2012) *Rameau’s Nephew and Other Works*). The theory of expression was inherited by the German Romantics, especially by Schelling, Schiller, and Herder. It was, furthermore, developed in a novel direction by the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico in his *Scienza nuova* (1725–44; *New Science*). Vico integrated art into a comprehensive theory of the development and decline of civilization. According to him, the cyclical movement of culture is achieved partly by a process of successive expression, through language and art, of the “myths” that give insight into surrounding social conditions.

1.9.2. Black aesthetics

To explain the term black aesthetics fully one needs to first know the term African literature. The latter could be defined as literature set in black Africa, about the cultural concerns of Africa and it is written by a black African. According to Pio Zirimu and Andrew Gurr (1971), the advent of African and black literature in East Africa forced many African scholars to focus on African and black literature in East Africa (Zezeza 2010). Hence there was need to develop a criteria or a philosophy for evaluating this new genre of literature called black literature. This criterion is called black aesthetics. The critics cited above further averred that an evaluation of the beauty of black literature takes into considerations the cultural concerns that face the black writer in Africa as a practitioner of his art of Black Africa. The cultural concerns of Africa range from sense of identity, issue of Pan-Africanism, national or artistic to political postures which pertain to the African identity. David Dorsey (1971) definition of aesthetics, however, puts more light on Zirimu's description of black aesthetics. According to him, black aesthetics is a syndrome of factors within a work of art, which govern the audience's perception and appreciation of the work (Shockley 2011).

An Examination of African Literary Canon

With four literary Nobel laureates the past three decades (Wole Soyinka, Idris Mahfouz, Nadine Gordimer, and J.M. Coetzee), modern African literature has reached such a world standard of respectability that deserves internal re-examination (Ndi 2022). Once a writer wins the Nobel Prize, his/her literature and the culture assume a significance that would normally not be accorded it. For this reason, it is pertinent to re-examine the modern tradition of African literature.

This section examines the idea of an African literary canon through the creative talents of African writers and their critics. The term "canon" will be used here in its simple meaning of being

“privileged,” or given special status, by a culture (Murfin and Ray 38). Broadly speaking, works that attain the status of classics and are repeatedly discussed, anthologized, or reprinted are usually said to have entered the canon. Of course, different schools of critics, especially Marxist, feminist, postcolonial, cultural, and minority ones argue that many artistic works may not enter the canon if they do not conform to the mainstream ideology.

The discussion of the African literary canon will have more to do with what makes African literature generally, than isolating specific texts into a superior class of its own. This section thus discusses the criteria for inclusion and what constitutes cultural acceptability in African literary works. Once there is a canon, it follows that there will be works outside its domain or what could be described as non-canonical works. By inference, if literature is a cultural production, as there is a Western literary canon, so also will there be an African literary canon (Kiguru 2016). This assertion is based on the idea that literature is a cultural production. Inevitably, since writers of Europe, North America (Canada and the United States), and European world peoples in Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere have their literary canon as defined by critics such as Harold Bloom and others, one needs to define what is the African literary canon. This definition is based on the African-ness or Africanity and what it constitutes in literary terms. Africa is a geographical, political, and socio-cultural entity. For this reason, the African in this discussion is not limited to the racial but also covers the totality of a diverse continent. African writers are those writers that express the African sensibility in their works (Gunning 2012). This is significant as critics have been shy to address the position in African literature of non-black writers of South Africa and also of Arab writers of North Africa. If Nadine Gordimer has been a life-long member of the African National Congress and expresses the concerns of Africans, she is an African writer.

There is also no doubt in my mind of the Africanness of Dennis Brutus, Breyten Breytenbach, and Athol Fugard. Brutus is popular in African literary circles, especially the African Literature Association, and for his anti-apartheid struggle. Breytenbach has suffered incarceration for his anti-apartheid views. Some dispute may arise on the African-ness of J. M. Coetzee, but he is a South African even though he currently lives in Australia (MacFarlane 2013). Similarly, being Africans politically and geographically, North African writers are African despite their Arab or Muslim affiliations. Simply put, any writer who is a citizen of any African country is an African writer. It is another matter to question whether any specific African writer projects an African sensibility. Every literary canon exists in the context of the people's overall experience and aesthetic values. Thus, the African literary canon is related to the African experience (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 2015), which has strong cultural and historical underpinnings. The question, rather the idea, of an African literary canon is one that has often been raised in controversies but not addressed head-on in its totality. Chinweizu's "debate" with Wole Soyinka in the 1980s, the issue of the language of African literature from Benedict Vilakazi through Obi Wali in "The Dead End of African Literature" in 1963, and Ngugi wa Thiongo's cultural crusade since the early 1980s to now, and the ongoing debate as to whether contemporary African writers, especially those living in North America and Europe, are writing more to please their Western audiences and publishers rather than their own African people they write about, are examples of discussions that touch the issue of canon in modern African literature (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 2015).

In addition, what constitutes the African experience forms a significant part of the canonical definition (Glover 2011). The issues of cultural identity are also involved in this exploration. All such controversial debates contest what should be or not be part of the African literary canon, what Abiola Irele describes as "the African imagination." To Chinweizu, Madubuike, and Jemie,

modern African literature has to be “decolonized” to be taken seriously and seen as authentically African. Many critics would quarrel with that position as essentialist (Berger 2010), but others still wonder why modern African literature should be written mainly in the foreign languages of former European colonizers of the continent and also exhibit core features of European modernist writing. To Soyinka, the reality of Africans has to be acknowledged and the modernist impulse of Europe has to be part of the historical experience of colonization, which, for better or worse, has given rise to modern African states. The traditional mode of Africa before colonization can no longer stand in isolation in the face of modernity and globalization (Falola 2013). The world is more inter-connected now than ever before because of new means of communication, rapid movements of people, new technologies, and other “escapes” that Arjun Appadurai ascribes to globalization that makes the entire world a “global village.” Benedict W. Vilakazi, as far back as 1939, lamented the fact that South African writers were writing in English and not in African indigenous languages. Very much in the manner of Chinweizu, some five decades earlier he saw African literature as literary works in African languages. He wrote:

By Bantu drama, I mean a drama written by a Bantu, for the Bantu, in a Bantu language. I do not class English or Afrikaans dramas on Bantu themes, whether these are written by Black people, I do not call them contributions to Bantu Literature. It is the same with poetry... I have an unshaken belief in the possibilities of Bantu languages and their literature, provided the Bantu writers themselves can learn to love their languages and use them as vehicles for thought, feeling and will. After all, the belief, resulting in literature, is a demonstration of people’s “self” where they cry: “Ego sum quod sum” [I am what I am].

That is our pride in being black, and we cannot change creation. Vilakazi also sees Bantu sensibility as different from what he describes as the Romantic sensibility of South Africans of

European stock (qtd. in Masilela 75)(Ojaide 2018). This same idea of an African language defining African literature is to be pursued by Chinweizu et alia and Ngugi wa Thiongo later on. Doubtless, literary works by Africans in indigenous African languages such as Ewe, Sotho, Yoruba, and Zulu are African works that have a place in the canon. So also are works of Afro-Arab literature in Ki-Swahili and Hausa. However, a people's experience is so diverse that it is not limited to "authentic" or pristine features. The African reality is diverse and ever changing, and it is expansive enough to accommodate what Africans do in their own different ways. Hybridization inevitably occurs in the course of a people's history, as that of Africans, and that is an integral aspect of the people's experience. The African identity, therefore, is an ongoing process, like the African culture, and is not fixed on marble but is dynamic; it absorbs new features, even as it discards some of its own old ways. Thus, literary works, in non-African languages by Africans, that express the African experience, belong to the multifarious tradition of African literatures (Kanneh 2017).

Much as literatures in pre-colonial times are defined by the languages they are expressed or written in, European colonial adventures across the globe have made that definition of a people's literature limited and outmoded in a postcolonial context (Alami 2013). Chinua Achebe accepts the use of English, but attempts to indigenize it to suit the society he writes about. In fact, in his particular case, as in *Things Fall Apart*, the language of the colonizer becomes a potent medium of the colonized to interrogate the colonial enterprise in its political, moral, and ethical dimensions. Abiola Irele defends African writers' use of English, which he describes as an "extra-territorial" language, since there are now many Englishes worldwide (Ojaide 2009). On the other hand, the language debate, as to whether a work in English, French, or Portuguese can be "African," appears to be playing itself out in suggestions of translations of works done by

Africans in foreign languages into indigenous African languages. Furthermore, by using indigenous oral techniques to write, African writers are practicing what Abiola Irele describes as “written oral literature.” Literature in Africa has traditionally played a transformative role in society (Higgs, Philip 2003). Satiric or abuse songs, such as the “*udje*” of Nigeria’s Urhobo people and the “*halo*” of the Ewe of Ghana and Togo, were composed to check the excesses of individuals in a communal society through insults of those breaking the communal ethos. One can say that the Yoruba’s “*ijala*” and the Zulu and Tswana’s “*izibongo*”, by praising individuals in society with the virtues of courage, generosity, sensitivity, and others, also stirred people to strive for such virtues.

Oral narratives, especially epics such as of Sundiata, Ozidi, and Mwindo engage in stirring up a sense of heroism in individuals among their peoples (Diallo, Souleymane (2021) "The Dynamic Dialectic and the Eclectic Plaintive Rhythm in Bembeya Jazz's, Black Beats Music." *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation* 4.2 (2021): 50-57. In simple folktales, the small animals outwit the big, with the animals behaving as humans in order to proffer lessons for humans in society. The mold that communality is supposed to ensure is often broken by the tricksters tortoise, spider, hare, and hyena that get away with unacceptable behavior in society. Thus, while there is a sense of community, there is room for the individual to be unique as long as that does not infringe negatively on others or communal harmony. Modern African literature has imbibed many qualities of the oral tradition. Much of the writing is functional in the sense that the literary creations; poetry, fiction, and drama aim at transforming society into a more humane one (Katrak Ketu, 2006).

It is for this reason of having an impact on society that Mazisi Kunene finds African literature “heavy,” and beautiful compared to European literature. He told Dike Okoro in an interview in Durban, 2003, the following:

When an African writer tries to change, they’re trying to adapt to the idiom that is non-African. That is why the literature is light. They write about flowers. Beautiful flowers. Who cares? (Laughs). Who cares about beautiful flowers?

In fact, it is those works that aim at changing the world as it is (often imperfect) and installing new values that will advance the betterment of society and individuals that can be said to be natural inheritors of the oral tradition. In the oral tradition, as in “*udje*” and “*halo*”, literature matters as individuals pay attention to the way they live, and so follow cherished values so as not to be laughed at in songs. Literary works that have this attribute should contend for inclusion in the African literary canon because they highly contribute to the aesthetic beauty of African literature (Stratton, Florence1994). Many African literary works deal with subjects that in the Western canon will be described as “extra-literary,” suggesting that they should not be legitimate concerns of writers. However, what is “extra-literary” to the Western critic is intrinsic to the African writer, who, because of the historical predicament and tradition, draws materials from the socio-political happenings around him or her. For this reason, those literary works in all the genres criticizing political corruption, tyranny of leaders, excessive materialism of the elite, and others meant to ridicule and, by so doing, eliminate the negative habits of society are also natural heirs of the African oral traditions of literature (Stratton, Florence1994).

Modern African literature is a literature that responds to the people's plight, feelings, and aspirations. The cultural identity of modern African literature is a major consideration in establishing a canon for its texts. Culture involves a shared experience of belief systems, worldview, traditions, and aesthetic standards. One can observe certain aspects of cultural identity in modern African literature, especially the novel (T, Ojaide 1992), even though written in English, French, or Portuguese, foreign European languages. As expressed in *Poetic Imagination in Black Africa*, these cultural qualities include the utilitarian function of the literature, social cohesion, the ethical/moral nature of African civilization, defense of African culture, African mystical life, ideas of law and order, peculiar attitude to time and space, and special use of folklore and language, especially of proverbs.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by the theory of formalism/new criticism. This theory considers literature as a culture that can be understood by its own conventions. By the use of formalism approach, the researcher was preoccupied with how the internal structures, the language patterns, imagery, characterization, plot and themes, cohere to produce the beauty of the work.

New Criticism was a formalist movement in literary theory that dominated American literary criticism in the middle decades of the 20th century (Bercovitch, Sacvan. 2017). It emphasized close reading, particularly of poetry, to discover how a work of literature functioned as a self-contained, self-referential aesthetic object. The movement derived its name from John Crowe Ransom's 1941 book; *The New Criticism*.

New Criticism developed as a reaction to the older philological and literary history schools of the US North, which focused on the history and meaning of individual words and their relation to

foreign and ancient languages, comparative sources, and the biographical circumstances of the authors, taking this approach under the influence of nineteenth-century German scholarship. The New Critics felt that this approach tended to distract from the text and meaning of a poem and entirely neglected its aesthetic qualities in favor of teaching about external factors (LM Rosenblatt – 2014). On the other hand, the New Critics disparaged the literary appreciation school, which limited itself to pointing out the "beauties" and morally elevating qualities of the text, as too subjective and emotional. Condemning this as a version of Romanticism, they aimed for a newer, systematic and objective method.

New Critics believed the structure and meaning of the text were intimately connected and should not be analyzed separately. In order to bring the focus of literary studies back to analysis of the texts, they aimed to exclude the reader's response, the author's intention, historical and cultural contexts, and moralistic bias from their analysis. These goals were articulated in Ransom's Close reading (or *explication de texte*) was a staple of French literary studies, but in the United States, aesthetic concerns and the study of modern poets were the province of non-academic essayists and book reviewers rather than serious scholars (N Easterlin – 2012). The New Criticism changed this. Though their interest in textual study initially met with resistance from older scholars, the methods of the New Critics rapidly predominated in American universities until challenged by feminist literary criticism and structuralism in the 1970s (R Fowler – 1987).

In 1946, William K Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley published a classic and controversial New Critical essay entitled "*The International Fallacy*", in which they argued strongly against the relevance of an author's intention, or "intended meaning" in the analysis of a literary work. For Wimsatt and Beardsley, the words on the page were all that mattered; importation of meanings from outside the text was considered irrelevant, and potentially distracting.

In another essay, *"The Affective Fallacy"*, which served as a kind of sister essay to *"The Intentional Fallacy"*, Wimsatt and Beardsley also discounted the reader's personal/emotional reaction to a literary work as a valid means of analyzing a text. This fallacy would later be repudiated by theorists from the reader-response school of literary theory. One of the leading theorists from this school, Stanley Fish, was himself trained by New Critics. Fish criticizes Wimsatt and Beardsley in his essay *"Literature in the Reader"* (1970).

The hey-day of the New Criticism in American high schools and colleges was the Cold War decades between 1950 and the mid-seventies. Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry* and *Understanding Fiction* both became staples during this era.

Studying a passage of prose or poetry in New Critical style required careful, exacting scrutiny of the passage itself. Formal elements such as rhyme, meter, setting and characterization and plot were used to identify the theme of the text (Serafini, 2013, 50). In addition to the theme, the New Critics also looked for paradox, ambiguity, irony and tension to help establish the single best and most unified interpretation of the text which bring out the beauty of work.

Although the New Criticism is no longer a dominant theoretical model in American universities, some of its methods (like close reading) are still fundamental tools of literary criticism, underpinning a number of subsequent theoretic approaches to literature including poststructuralism, deconstruction theory, New testament narrative criticism, and reader-response theory. It has been credited with anticipating the insights of the linguistic turn and for showing significant ideological and historical parallels with logical positivism (Pálsson, 1995).

It was frequently alleged that the New Criticism treated literary texts as autonomous and divorced from historical context, and that its practitioners were "uninterested in the human meaning, the social function and effect of literature."

According to (Harfitt, 2011) *Indicative of the reader-response school of theory*, Terence Hawkes writes that the fundamental close reading technique is based on the assumption that "the subject and the object of study; the reader and the text are stable and independent forms, rather than products of the unconscious process of signification," an assumption which he identifies as the "ideology of liberal humanism," which is attributed to the New Critics who are "accused of attempting to disguise the interests at work in their critical processes. For Hawkes, ideally, a critic ought to be considered to "[create] the finished work by his reading of it, and [not to] remain simply an inert consumer of a 'ready-made' product."

In response to critics like Hawkes, Cleanth Brooks, in his essay "*The New Criticism*" (1979), (Harding, 2011) argued that the New Criticism was not diametrically opposed to the general principles of reader-response theory and that the two could complement one another. For instance, he stated, "If some of the New Critics have preferred to stress the writing rather than the writer, so have they given less stress to the reader's response to the work. Yet no one in his right mind could forget the reader. He is essential for 'realizing' any poem or novel. ... Reader response is certainly worth studying." However, Brooks tempers his praise for the reader-response theory by noting its limitations, pointing out that, "to put meaning and valuation of a literary work at the mercy of any and every individual [reader] would reduce the study of literature to reader psychology and to the history of taste." (Harding, 2017)

Another objection against New Criticism is that it misguidedly tries to turn literary criticism into an objective science, or at least aims at "bringing literary study to a condition rivaling that of science." One example of this is Ransom's essay "*Criticism, Inc.*", in which he advocated that "criticism must become more scientific, or precise and systematic". Rene Wellek, however, argued against this by noting that a number of the New Critics outlined their theoretical aesthetics in contrast to the "objectivity" of the sciences. The researcher concluded that various stylistic and thematic elements of a literary work influence each other; and that form and content cannot be meaningfully separated; and therefore focused on studying the aesthetic principles of both African and western literature.

1.11 Research Methodology

This research mainly employed documentary analysis method which belongs to a qualitative research design. The researcher read the primary texts to examine the aesthetical qualities of the selected Ugandan novels and novelette, and used knowledge from the secondary sources to determine the aesthetics of the works under study.

1.11.1 Research Design

This was a library-based qualitative study. It involved close reading and analysis of both primary and secondary texts.

1.11.2. Data Collection Methods

All information here is library based. Data will be collected from both primary and secondary sources.

The primary sources

The primary sources of data in this research are: Timothy Wangusa's *Upon this Mountain*, Violet Barungi's *Cassandra*, Goretti Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter* and Mary Karooro Okurut's *Milking a Lioness*.

Secondary sources

This study relies on secondary data from many other critical works selected such as journals, articles, textbooks, book reviews and commentaries.

1.11.3. Data analysis procedures

The following steps have been undertaken in carrying out the study.

The topic of research was identified and approved: **The Aesthetics of Ugandan Fiction: A**

Study of Selected Works:

- i) Areas examined were presented in form of objectives and research questions.
- ii) The review of published and unpublished works addressing the issue of aesthetic success.
- iii) Synthesis of materials gathered in literature review was done.
- iv) The collection of evidence of aesthetic success in the selected novels and novelette as well as other consciously chosen books by Ugandan writers presented.
- v) Findings, conclusions and recommendations were made.

CHAPTER TWO

WESTERN AESTHETICS IN UGANDAN FICTION

2.1. Form in the Selected Works

One feature of Western Aesthetics in selected Ugandan fiction is form. I will consider aspects of form such as structure, conflict, plot, setting and point of view. However, I will also consider the new/the unusual, in terms of characterization, plot and conflict resolutions. Because, as Kelly Griffith (1998) notes in his book, *Writing About Literature*, “novelty and surprise are also criteria for giving pleasure. Griffith further argues that “the novels give pleasure by utilizing unusual/exotic settings, unusual characters, and suspensional plots.” A novel shall be considered aesthetically successful only if it is able, “to shock, thrill, anger, make readers laugh out loud, or cry silently, have the ability to provoke readers into thinking about life either as a ridiculous joke or a wonderful dance and a tragic tale” according to Connor (2011).

2.1.1. Plot

The plots of the four works under study please by imposing order upon content. The placing of order upon content makes the meaning easily garnered subsequent to the flow of thoughts and events. In all the four works every event is explainable and accountable. Events rationally lead to one another until the very end. Nothing seems to fall from the moon. There is causality to every incident. This causality is a crucial aspect of form. Emmanuel Ngara (1982:16) calls it the “backbone of a work of art”. Plot gives pleasure because it holds various elements of a literary work together and indeed gives the text a structure. It is an intellectual formulation about relationships among the incidents in a text; it is a sequence of events arranged in a time-chain from the beginning to the end.

In *The First Daughter*, Kyomuhendo arranges events that move from sadness to happiness. The protagonist, Kasemiire starts off as a poor girl who only hopes to redeem herself and her mother and siblings from the abject poverty to a worthwhile life through education. The author characterizes her as a talented and brilliant girl and this makes her realistic for the kind of hopes she has. The reader's expectations are raised. Despite this high potential she remains a human being who falls in love, and conceives before she completes her education. As a result of becoming pregnant, Kasemiire experiences many hardships. Her father forces her out of home thus separating her from her beloved mother at the time when she needed more consolation. Her boyfriend disappears. Kasemiire has to live with her grandmother and participate fully in the village activities and events. For instance, when an uncle of hers dies, even when she has just delivered her baby and is weak, she has to sleep out in the cold to keep a vigil for the dead. Kasemiire loses her glow and physical appearance deteriorates (96) as a young girl. All these events sadden the readers who have already associated with her previous potential and success.

However, there is a reversal of fortune which enables her to make it to the top of society. What more, the author surprises the readers in two major ways: one, she plots the reunion of Kasemiire with the father of the child at the point when both are mature and ready to face the past mistakes with honour. Two, the author makes Kasemiire reconcile with her father who had mistreated her in her childhood and who had separated her from her mother at the point she most needed comfort. This plotting provides a relief. It is a very happy ending with no shadows of misfortune hanging. This makes the novel very appealing.

The events in *The First Daughter* have a causal relationship with one another. In some parts, the plot alludes to chronological order of events in this novel. The main character Kasemiire completes her primary school successfully and naturally goes to the secondary school. She is a

very well behaved girl at home and among her distant relatives, particularly with her grandmother. This is why when she becomes pregnant and is thrown out by her father, the grandmother welcomes her. When she is being bulldozed by students at Duhaga S.S., one good girl recognizes her goodness and rescues her. Her gracefulness compels the students' body to make her their head girl, a position that creates a chance for overcoming the ordeal she faces when she drops out of school due to pregnancy. Mrs. Mutyaba recognizes her as somebody who had been in a leadership position in Duhaga S.S. One can say all actions Kasemiire performs and all what happens to her in the novel are interconnected to embrace a single whole. Through the chronological flow of events, plot gives a literally unity, cohesion and aesthetics.

Similarly, Violet Barungi exposes a protagonist who is strong, beautiful, determined to make it to the top of society independently. The writer piles up complications in *Cassandra* which makes the story interesting. Cassandra, despite her repudiation of letting men into her life, asks George to rape her so she may end the business of being a virgin, then she desperately falls in love with Raymond who happens to be a married man and thereafter she falls in love with Raymond's brother, Bevis. She has a child with Bevis but Raymond entertains the hope that Benjamin is his son, and even bequeaths him property. When Cassandra tells Raymond the boy is not his child, Raymond in an effort to attack Cassandra, falls and injures himself beyond recovery. The aftermath of Raymond's death is an agonizing time for Cassandra. Bevis and Cassandra have to swallow the secret yet the father of Bevis and Raymond expresses his excitement over Raymond's son and heir. Thus each section overlaps with the others. The beauty in which the structure is set does not only kill the boredom, but also entices the reader to keep turning the pages. Besides, the writer writes in simple readable prose. Barungi's plot is somehow linear. She does not frequently use flashbacks as Kyomuhendo does. Kyomuhendo uses a blend of linear and flashbacks, thus making her novel complex in structure requiring the reader to be open-minded.

In Karoro's short story, *Milking a Lioness*, the plot flows swiftly from exposition to complication of conflict, and finally to resolution. By the end of the first two pages of the story, we have already learned who the main character is and the situation. Kaana is alighting from the bodaboda to start on the tedious and adventurous trip very early in the morning. The writer intimates that the place the main character is going to is an unlawful one when the cyclist tells Kaana "I know you madam and I know where you are going." At this point the curiosity of the reader builds up. Questions like; where is Kaana going, and what is she going to do, come to one's mind. The curiosity increases as Kaana climbs the hills, a feeling of fear begins and it gradually grows to high intensity when Kaana is apparently confronted with the "walinga" a tree stump that looks like a huge monster due to darkness. The tension dies down as Kaana discovers that it is not really a monster. But the tension goes up again when it starts to rain and lightning and thunder rumbles out; the reader keeps wondering what is going to happen. Finally, Kaana gets to her destination and we are surprised to discover she has come to consort with the diviner about her abusive husband.

The suspenseful plot of *Milking a Lioness* is extremely delightful. A series of actions that Kaana has to perform in order to tame the brutal husband are page turners. In Kaana, one sees a woman who is determined by all means to change the domestic abuse she is undergoing. The intervention she undertakes involves making a secretive consultative trip to the diviner. Since society does not approve of open consultation with diviners, Kaana has to disguise herself. But the motorcycle rider surprisingly sees through her mask, thus causing tension not only in the character but also her audience. Yet the only means of transport to the diviner is this public motor cycle.

Tension is further created when the motorcyclist for want of extra money, threatens to expose Kaana's secret trip. To protect her name Kaana has to bribe the cyclist who after receiving the

bribe, confesses he does not know Kaana. The confession implies that Kaana has not done anything wrong. These episodes make the reader tensed up.

Because as the curve sags, another crest comes. This is the actual encounter with the lioness. The goal is to get two items: milk and the whiskers for mixing with the fetishes for taming her husband. However, the writer suspends this moment by doing two things: first, she makes Kaana get acquainted with the beast by giving it goat's meat. First, Kaana attempts to create a rapport with the lion by feeding it on goat's meat. Second, the lion attempts to devour Kaana even after she has fed it several times. The occasion sends chills down the spine of any reader. Kaana finally succeeds in getting whiskers off the beast's mouth as well as milk from its udders.

The author does not only raise tension of the reader but also sustains interest to the end. On the one hand, the reader experiences the fear of Kaana as she contemplates the daunting task of getting the ingredients. On the other hand, one witnesses the hope and joy when everything is in place after the struggle. Then the reader gets curious about the moment when the fetishes are going to be applied to the husband. Surprisingly however, the writer does not take us to this moment. The reader is shocked and disappointed like Kaana, when all her efforts to tame the lioness yield nothing but words of advice from the old lady. For when all is said and done, the diviner tells Kaana to tame her husband the way she has tamed the lion.

This kind of end corresponds to the formalist theory which says that a good work of literature will be balanced (Griffith 1990). It will thrill and disturb the reader at the same time. On one hand, a reader who identifies with Kaana will share the disappointment of not getting a solution after taking so much trouble to collect the ingredients. On the other hand, the sound advice of the diviner is appealing. If Kaana can do that much, she has the potential to control herself and husband. The yoking of the frivolous with the serious, renders the story hilarious.

The complication phase begins when the diviner gives Kaana the prescription for taming her violent husband. The reader keeps wondering how on earth Kaana is going to find a feeding lioness leave alone milking it and cutting its whiskers. The climax of the story is perhaps the most shocking and moving part of this story. After all the ingredients for taming Kaana's husband have been placed in her lap so to speak, the diviner, simply counsels Kaana to tame her husband the way she had tamed the lioness. The whole process turns out to be a big joke. Then the short story matches what Connor (2011) says that, an aesthetically successful work should be able to "shock, thrill, anger, make readers laugh out loud, or cry silently, have the ability to provoke readers into thinking about life either as a ridiculous joke."

However, in Kyomuhendo and Wangusa's novels respectively, the writers present their narratives in form of flashbacks pleasantly engaging the mind of the reader to frequently shift to the past, then present, and back to the past. A reader may not make sense of the novels: *Upon this Mountain* and *The First Daughter* respectively without the flashbacks. For example, in *The First Daughter*, there is a leap in time between the events of chapters 14 and 15. The gap between leaving the Mutyaba's family and going to the University is filled by a flashback in which the narrator recalls the horrible night when she was chased out of the house of Mutyaba. Her narrow escape from the fierce dogs, bumping into Stephen, escaping away from Stephen, an encounter with nuns, and finally a reunion with Stephen at the University when she has already attained a reasonable level of education. The flashbacks in both novels veritably establish the plot. We can only understand where he comes from in terms of his political inclination and commitment to the fight for racial justice because of the flashbacks. The flashback informs us how the childhood of Mwambu was uprooted from its fertile ancestral land and pushed to scrubby, stony, hilly and barren land where nothing could grow.

One outstanding flashback in *Upon this Mountain* is when the omniscient narrator suspends the story and later on another page relates how he caught Reverend Graves and Nambozo in a sex scandal in the chapel.

Like Kaana, Mwambu, in *Upon this Mountain*, is much damaged and disillusioned person at the end of the story, he is on the verge of attaining adulthood if not a clearly defined manhood. Struggling to be faithful to a Christian moral spirit that his teachers betray, Mwambu discovers that "manhood is pain" in a fashion quite different from what is meant in the indigenous culture. The headmaster sends Graves on home leave "to renew his mind and spirit" and makes Mwambu's graduation depend on his recanting. The author is able to carry along the reader through plot development, and the broad day injustice on Mwambu, the mockery from his own people wins sympathy for Mwambu, as the reader experiences similar disillusionment and disappointment. This association makes the Ugandan novel worth reading.

2.1.2. Setting as an Aspect of Beauty

The environment in which the selected Ugandan novel is set is real and natural which helps the authors to successfully convey timeless tales thus beautiful pieces of work that can stand the test of time. The author uses both spacial and temporal settings that correspond with the events and activities and the major concerns in the narratives. In *Cassandra*, the setting is an urban centre. This setting is realistic considering the activities of the main character. Cassandra is depicted as an aberrant corporate woman who is an editor for a publishing company. Barungi appropriately sets the story in an urban area.

The urban setting also suits the main concerns of the novel, namely emancipation of women. While all women, both urban and rural want to be emancipated, the level of awareness of their enslavement is not the same. Consequently, the strategies for fighting against male domination

differ. Those in the country side will use indirect rebellion, such using witchcraft as we see Kaana doing in *Milking a Lioness*, while those in the urban centers and are highly educated apply a subtle line of attack such as cheating on the men, denying them parentage of their children, querying and undermining the cultural norms that render women victims of men. A case in point is Cassandra. For example, Cassandra has attained a high level of education which is unconventional for women. She has a good job which has accorded her financial independence. She is also seeking to woo instead of being wooed by men. She produces a child out of wedlock. She rejects the money bequeathed to her son and she has the power of telling her lover number one that her son is not his child.

Furthermore, the urban setting also suits attitudes of the people, for instance, in the novel *Cassandra* which is set in the city brings out the people's attitude towards the urban dwellers. The city is mostly regarded as a cursed place that corrupts the innocent. In *Cassandra* we find ladies who must sleep with the boss to get promoted or to be sent on errands where they can get extra money without working for it. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o affirms the assertion in *Devil on the Cross* (1987) when he shows a young villager: Waringa being exploited by the corrupt city dwellers. It reinforces the general perception of the people that the city is a putrefaction factory. Despite their fondness for rusticity, it differs from the type of pantheistic attachment Western authors portray as in the case of Wordsworth's "*Prelude*".

Mary Karoro describes her setting in *Milking a Lioness* as a village; her main character either moves by a "boda-boda" or walks long distances to reach her destination. The description of the area inhabited by the lion shows there is a game park in her geographical setting. To a reader who knows Western Uganda or Eastern Uganda, it is easy to identify with the place in the novel, those

foreign to the geographical setting are given a tour into the rich beautiful natural Uganda which succeeds in making the Ugandan novel successfully beautiful.

Similarly, Violet Barungi, on the other hand, gives her novel *Cassandra* an urban setting. It all begins with the encounter of Cassandra and Agutamba at a party which is brought to the reader's notice in a flashback technique. As Cassandra walks home, a car screeches to a stop missing her by a hair's breadth. The main character is determined right from the start to tackle the male dominated society and its rules. Violet Barungi confronts issues of inter-gender power struggle in a brief but broader sense. Much as Agutamba and Cassandra had met previously at a party and although she had had a crush on him, she rejects his offer for a lift home as though to say even women can manage on their own, they can be independent, strong willed and determined. This calls for women to move against all odds and be focused in their struggle for emancipation. The Masaaba region of Mbale for instance, the center of the setting in Wangusa's novel *Upon This Mountain* is an existing geographical area in Eastern Uganda where mountain Elgon, a renowned Mountain of Uganda is found. The people in the story, the Bamasaaba are a tribe that hails from Mbale and does exist till today. Wangusa's *Upon this Mountain* has a setting which portrays the African life in the post-colonial era, a time when communities were drawn through special religions and cultural occasions like baptism and circumcision. Growing up, Mwambu is fascinated by the presence of the ever-towering mountain Elgon. To him reaching the top of the mountain means touching the heavens and that marks the end of the world. Wangusa brings out the rear setting and life of the people on and around mountain Elgon which brings out the aesthetic success of the novel.

The names of the characters in Ugandan novels are part of setting. These names are sourced from the natural geographical settings of particular novels. Kaana the protagonist in Karoro's *Milking a*

Lioness is a name that will only be found named in parts of Western Uganda where the novel is set. Characters such as Kasemiire, Kyamanywa, Byaruhanga and the title Kaaka to refer to Kasemiire's grandmother have their heritage in the Western part of Uganda, where the story of *The First Daughter* is set. Likewise, the names of Mwambu, Masaaba among others used in the story of *Upon this Mountain* will not be found on anyone who does not hail from Bugisu land, which is the geographical setting of the novel. This trend not only makes the Ugandan novel unique, but also beautiful.

The second element of setting is time or what is technically known as temporal setting. The depiction of the concept of time in the works under study makes the work realistic.

2.1.3. Character and Characterization

Characterization has been identified by Western critics as the force that propels the plot. It is important that Literature presents two types of characters, he/she can be deemed to be a round character or a three dimensional character (full, rich and complex). If all these aspects are reflected in his/her creation, and if the writer seems to emphasize certain attributes at the expense of others, then such a character will come out as a caricature, unbelievable. This implies that writers determine the type of characters they create. A major character is expected to be three dimensional whereas a minor character is often two dimensional. However, some writers may purposely choose to make their central characters flat in order to underline particular aspects, they are simple to recognize due to their one-sidedness. Characters are also said to be dynamic/round or static, they develop and are able to change as the story progresses, and these are three dimensional. While static characters do not change, they are essentially flat.

In his analysis of the novel, *Upon this Mountain*, (Sicherman) argues that the central character Mwambu is crafted to display moral, physical, and intellectual strengths admired by the African

culture and community. Sichertman compares Mwambu with Okonkwo, the main character in Chinua Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1956). *Okonkwo's* tragic, fatal flaw, overweening ambition coupled with frenzied desire to excel ruins him. Similarly, Mwambu's desire to prove his manhood brings his downfall. The pleasantness of the text partly comes from the dynamism of the characters. The stronger and complex the characters, the more pleasant the work.

In *Cassandra*, Violet Barungi creates a character that is rare in Ugandan Literature. She is beautiful and therefore fits in the general stereotype of the Western heroine, but she is also strong willed and independent minded. People who are close to her, like her mother, sister and Marie consider her arrogant as expressed by Marie when she invites her for lunch and adds that the former boyfriend would pay for their meal.

The dialogue between Marie and Cassandra clearly brings out Cassandra's strong feelings about herself and her desire to have space in a male dominated society. Whereas women like Marie think that it is a woman's "right and privilege to have a man pay for her meals, Cassandra "prefers to pay for [her] own meals." In fact, Marie declares Cassandra "a superior being" to them "poor simple females who sponge on men." (15)

The point of contention here is whether there are base or inferior and superior women. Marie, unlike Cassandra is aware of some facts of life which the latter's arrogance disables her to concede them. By referring her to the natural law and the history of creation, Marie is reminding her to be aware of some naturally ordained laws which she is arrogantly abrogating in the mighty name of achieving emancipation. However, Cassandra has some-set emotional weaknesses that greatly surprise and even please other characters when they surface. When she embraces Tonia, her brother's bride, she is described as stepping out of character (p.85). Significantly also, she sometimes finds herself helpless in the face of inter-gender power complications, and has to uncharacteristically resort to tears. She is reduced to such a situation by a confrontation between

her lover Raymond and his former wife Belinda. It is in this state of utter helplessness that she first meets Samantha, in a washroom. Samantha correctly assumes that behind the tears, there is a man. She therefore instinctively offers her the advice below: “You don’t have to let him know that he has that much power over you. Never let a man know that he is the beginning and end of everything for you. ... They are bad enough without our going out of our way to inflate their egos” (p.44). The softer side of Cassandra also surfaces when her sister Melinda loses her husband. She sets everything else aside and stands by her, and is the epitome of the compassion that Melinda needs to survive the storm of Horace’s death (pp.67-8). Also, she later breaks down and cries when her mother gives her the hard mother’s talk on the subject of getting emotionally involved with a married man. But all this is nothing compared to the way her feelings for Raymond shake her. In her desire for Raymond, she literally throws herself at George and as good as begs him to make love to her. Later that same night, she brushes aside Raymond’s scruples and prevails over him to break her virginity, and thereby usher in a relationship that is to prove quite turbulent for her. This end appeals to the reader; it is tragic but for a cause. Thus characterization contributes to the aesthetic success of a given work of art.

Characterization in the four texts is not accidental. Every character, major, support or minor has an aesthetic value. In *Cassandra* for instance, characterization is employed to exhibit some potentiality of the womenfolk. Together then, the women characters demonstrate the latent abilities of female human being who had all along been dismissed as a deficient, lesser person who could not accomplish certain feats. This usually applies to prose fiction, for example in *Cassandra*, Barungi creates a character that has not been seen before in Ugandan Literature. She is beautiful and therefore fits in the general stereotype of the beautiful heroine but she is also strong willed and independent minded. People as close to her like her mother and sister even consider her as arrogant. She pours out all that she feels. No matter the method of delineation, as

we have seen characterization will inevitably, inalienably contribute to the content in every respect and it will automatically enhance literary aesthetics.

Like their counterparts in the rest of Africa, Ugandan writers whose works I have studied, owe much to African oral tradition and particularly to those authors who have occupied the space between the two traditions in an area of creative interaction. This is well depicted in characterization of Kyamanywa, the father of Kasemiire, the main character in the novel, *The First Daughter*. Kyamanywa desires modernity brought by a Whiteman. This is why he works hard to take his children to school.

However, Kyamanywa still clings to traditional values. Namely, he evades keeping a close relationship with his children. Throughout the book, he remains a strict disciplinarian who heads his family by providing their needs only when they do what he desires as he maintains a distance as a sign of strength and authority. He is also a drunkard and a womanizer who deserts his family for another woman who provides his drinks.

All in all, whatever type of character a writer uses, the characters must be seen to be consistent. Aristotle advises that even those characters that are purposely designed to be inconsistent must be portrayed as consistently inconsistent. This contributes to proper understanding of content while at the same time enhances literary aesthetics.

In *Cassandra*, for instance, the most amusing character is the main character, Cassandra. In *Cassandra*, the writer creates an aberrant character with unusual attributes. Rugambwa Otim (1997) in his *unpublished English and Literature Journal Makerere University* observes that Violet Barungi's *Cassandra* employs Cassandra an independent minded, self-confident, and ambitious girl, who is determined to reach the top without using men's-coat tails to do so. She believes women have more going for them than the subservient role designated for them by

society. But what happens when she is waylaid by love with all its power to subdue and overwhelm is a lesson in self-discovery. Thus, Rugambwa Otim says “*Cassandra*” offers a delightful reading. It dramatizes a rare experience that invites and compels the reader to hold to their breath.

Apart from propelling the plot, characters represent the themes as well. When a work of literature is to function successfully, ‘pleasure and utility’ according to (Anena, 2015) should co-exist and coalesce. The seriousness and instructiveness of literature should be pleasurable seriousness; an aesthetic seriousness, a seriousness of perception.

According to Aristotle (1965) in *Classical Literary Criticism*, works of fiction are imitations of real life in the world (p.33). So a writer has to work vigilantly in order to depict the characters and scenes worth imitation. The respective writers have artists have aptly selected those facets of the subject which she/he wishes to treat in detail and which suit her/his treatment of the chosen idea or matter. This is because as Wilson (1973) avers, everything in a literary work is intentionally geared at persuasion of the reader/audience.

Full development of characters provides an impetus for persuading the audience to buy the writer’s point of view. The narratives focus not on events, but on individual personalities. This use of characterization is a subject of aesthetic consideration although it also has a positive moral impact on the reader; such is used to embrace and promote intelligence, rational thinking, hardworking, courage and vigilance in the young. Social life and knowledge on family relations is equally taught through characterization in African novels.

An author’s distinctive view of how people relate and how they ought to relate will be reflected in the representation of every character while other details such as status, dressing, manners,

conversation, historical situations and others add to authors' view of the characters who as members of society are part of a broader pattern. Essentially then, characterization is the relationship of characters to content.

2.1.4. Language and Style

Literary style is an aesthetic quality of a work of literature, the distinct voice that makes each author unique. It's the way we string words together, the rhythm of our prose, the catchphrases that pepper our language. Stylistic devices make speeches, essays more interesting and livelier and help to get and keep your reader's/listener's attention. Literary style includes every element of writing in which an author can make stylistic choices from syntax and grammar to character and plot development.

Seasoned writers have cultivated a style of writing that can be identified by a snippet of prose alone. For example, a common English literature test gives you excerpts from several authors whose works you have studied. The challenge is to identify the author who wrote each excerpt-not because you have memorized each author's repertoire but to show that you can identify each author by his or her voice. Style can be contained in a single work, such as a novel, or it can be observed across an author's entire body of work. One author's style might be Spartan minimalistic in nature while another author's style is rich with vibrant language. An author can also exhibit a range of styles, adjusting the aesthetics for each project, depending on what works best for each piece.

According to Wordsworth, content which is matter cannot be expressed through a vacuum; it cannot just fall from heaven like manner, rather it can only be expressed through utilization of particular linguistic items in a particular way that adds flavour and thus arrest the interest of the

reader. Furthermore, Yeibo (2012) argues that Language is the medium through which the literary art is communicated; the literariness of a text will derive from the creative linguistic manipulation inherent in a text (Yeibo 2012). The respective writers of the works under study have endeavored to produce new exciting and stimulating ideas through imaginative use of language.

In *Cassandra*, the writer uses a language that creates an ultra-modern urban world which is even new to the protagonist's mother (112). The language style includes colloquial expressions common among modern urban Ugandans such as: "hi", "Gee" petty names like "Bev", "Dome", and "Ray" "Benjie". The language also captures the modern time high stress and high tech. For instance, Cassandra talks about having her "hands full" and holding one meeting after the other' in urban spaces like "hotels'. Perhaps the strongest indicator of high stress is when Dominic asks Cassandra to watch over the hospitalized Raymond, brother to her husband, for a few minutes, as he goes out to stretch his legs. Cassandra puts in: "what's your idea of a few minutes... ten, twenty, not more than that. Let us fix exactly fifteen minutes. If you stretch it beyond that you will not find me here." Yet the patient was critically ill and could not be left alone even for one second. By this imaginative manipulation of the language, Violet Barungi effectively paints appropriate setting and action that will elicit correct responses from the audience or readers.

Similarly, the language use in *Upon this Mountain* transports the reader into an idyllic rural setting of hills and valleys and spring of water, "banana leaves, mattresses", on one hand and the automatic aristocratic worlds of "Elgosec" where Mwambu went to school. Almost in every chapter there is reference to country side activities like: "herd boys shouting and singing for cattle", "mothers nursing their babies", girls becoming women and boys getting ready for circumcision (49) a process that makes them men upon the mountain (1). One reads descriptions

of women gossiping at the village wells (5). There are many instances of mothers telling stories to their children (7). There are familiar African comparisons of people to countryside objects like “as black soot on a cooking pot and eyes red as those of a cock” (5).

On the other hand, the writer uses upper-class idioms such as witnessed when Mwambu shifts from the rural to aristocratic suburban setting. This language ranges from theological to secular studious language. Concerning the theological, the writer alludes to objects like “chapel, the tree of God that represented the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Reverend James Graves, Old Testament, baptism, vision of hell, the devil thrown out heaven” (109). The secular aristocratic language included references to Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*: “I dare do all that becomes a man/who dare more is none” (108). The writer cleverly uses the language to capture the three forces that led to the downfall of the protagonist: circumcision, Shakespeare and religion. One; Mwambu had evaded becoming a man through circumcision. Two; Mwambu had read Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* urging him to dare do what he as Mwambu, makes him a man. Three; Mwambu repudiated Christianity by deciding to expose Nambozo and Reverend Graves, instead of forgiving the couple. He identified himself as a “Past Christian student” a phrase which shows he had given up on Christian values (109). Thus the writer manages through language to depict the forces at play in Mwambu’s life. He is a failure as a Christian, failure in the traditional set up and in the academic world.

Since content is meant to be expressed by the writer through sheer linguistic and paralinguistic devices, a literally writer must choose appropriate language to ensure that what he wants to put across to his or her audience/reader is effectively done. This does not only enhance semantic meaning, neither does it only elicit correct responses from readers, but also adds unique flavour, thus contributing to literally aesthetics. It is in this regard that in the novel, *Cassandra*, for

example, Violet Barungi sets out to narrate the awful story of a young beautiful lady. Cassandra's story is embedded in a revolution that saw women abused and suffocated by men. Cassandra vows to change this status-quo. The story starts in a very dynamic manner to capture the paradox that the nature of a woman and the real atmosphere at that time was-punctuated by a mixture of hope and desperation.

In the above scenario, the writer carefully plots the story to prepare the mind of the reader for the social jumble, blended with moments; a mixture of optimism and pessimism, sorrow coupled with joy and gave it a rhythmic flow for literally aesthetics. That it was the best of times because young people like Cassandra had finally realized that they had to salvage themselves by fighting patriarchy and male chauvinism. But it was also the worst of times because many people were not aware of the need for the revolution. They wanted to maintain the status quo. Hence the perplexing nature of the whole situation would not have been captured better except through such creative use of language, the paradoxical situation.

CHAPTER THREE

BLACK AESTHETICS IN UGANDAN FICTION: ORATURE, THEME AND LANGUAGE USE

3.1. Introduction

According to Pio Zirimu, one of the main distinguishing features of African aesthetics is the use of orature (oral literature) in African literature. In this chapter I examine the use of orature, as an aspect of black aesthetics in Ugandan fiction. These include the punctuation of the narrative with proverbs, songs, odes, storytelling and sayings etc.

3.1.1 Use of Proverbs and Proverbial sayings

A proverb is a short sentence that people often quote, which gives advice or tells you something about life. Appealing to conventional wisdom while talking, conversing or making a speech, is a common practice in Africa. In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe observes that the “proverbs are the palm oil with which the kola nut is eaten” (p.3). The statement implies the importance of the use of proverbs among the Igbo. It is a tradition to use proverbs and proverbial sayings in African narratives because these proverbs and proverbial sayings are conventional wisdom that render the immediacy and thereby bring out the message the story teller wants to pass across.

In Wangusa’s *Upon this Mountain*, the writer uses the proverbial saying: “What God keeps for a poor man cannot decay” (99). The saying is made in reference to the protagonist as he works hard to prepare for his terminal exams. This saying is ironical in that it heightens the expectations of the reader, only to dump it at the end of the novel. The reader looks forward to seeing a great Mwambu who has got good grades. But by the end of the story the protagonist has inappropriately left “Elgosec and the chapel and the tree of God and the God of the Graves for

good” (109). The unceremonious departure would cost the withholding of his results. Besides, the world he returned to as a man, considered him “half a man” owing to his “recent quiet hospital circumcision” (116). This irony enhances the aesthetics of the novel.

In *The First Daughter*, the writer uses proverbial sayings like, “I am just opening the bag and you want to focus on the crumbs” (67). This proverb is used by Kasemiire’s grandmother to caution her to be patient when she is telling her a story. In fact, for failure to be patient, Kasemiire’s grandmother rebukes the latter and threatens to stop telling the story all together if Kasemiire does not heed.

Another proverb in *The First Daughter* is; “even those crowing were once eggs.” (32). The proverb refers to big important people who were once as helpless as the children. This proverb is said by Kasemiire’s head teacher as Kasemiire is starting her humble journey to the secondary school. This proverb serves two purposes. One; it is prophetic. The proverb prepares the reader to wait for the success of the protagonist. Despite the difficulties that the main character will encounter, she will become somebody. Indeed, this prophesy comes to pass. Kasemiire becomes a lawyer despite the innumerable huddles she goes through. The second purpose of the proverb is to encourage the protagonist to move on. In this respect, the head teacher acts as a support character for the protagonist. At the point when the proverb is said in the story, Kasemiire is at the turning point. The reader needs to know where she gets the courage to move on to the next stage.

In *Milking a Lioness*, Karoro uses the proverbs; “*biguru bibiri binura biguru bibiri binura*”. The proverb translates as; “two legged is tastier than four legged”. This means that the lion will prefer eating the meat of a human being to eating that of a goat. The writer uses this proverb to heighten the irony. Kaana had worked so hard to get the goat meat, leave alone transporting it to

the zoo. But instead of appreciating the woman, the lion wants to eat Kaana. Furthermore, the proverb intensifies the tension as well. The lion is a beast. This being the case, the lion cannot reverse its desire to eat Kaana. So it is the latter who has to be tactful to escape the trap and in order to meet her goal of finding a solution to her husband's intemperance.

3.1.2. Use of Songs

Songs are defined as texts that give meaning through tonal variation. In Africa there are very many songs depending on the season and the occasion. Each song is performed on the occasion or community activity taking place in the community (Gioia 2006). We have the initiation songs which initiate the young people into adulthood. The patriotic songs, love songs, dirges, lullaby, children play songs, harvesting songs etc.

Songs are a strong tool employed by the Ugandan novelist to add unique flavour and beauty to their art as well as convey desired messages. Such songs are carefully composed with flowing rhythm, and in local dialects which are in most cases translated for the readers. For instance, in *The First Daughter*, Kabainara's mother sings to him as he disappears with the tree into the forest;

Mother: Kabainara, Kabainara, tabaara endongo yawe

Kabainara: Kabainara come for your guitar.

Mother: Kabainara, Kabainara, tabaara endongo yawe

Kabainara: Kabainara come for your guitar.

As Kabainara: sings back thus;

Kabainara: Oraikaliza Kabainara kanagire endongo yange.

You keep on calling me, why did you throw it away?

Omuti gw'omujuma-nkuba simbura twegendere.

Please tree, take me off and we go. (22)

This kind of a song brings Kabainara and his mother onto some sort of stage for the reader to watch some action. It strongly succeeds in not only shocking but also thrills the reader to see

Kabainara's mother beg her son to return to her while Kabainara continues to disappear in the midst of the reader on a tree. This kind of style drives the reader into a world of imagination and fantasies. Such is the beauty of the Ugandan novel.

Similarly, Timothy Wangusa brings out the pleasantness of the text by using songs and dance. A case in point is the circumcision song below:

Nami I luteka

(I am coming from bamboo land)

Ho! xc

Nekha I mayo

(I am descending to the plain)

Ho!

Ise nakhesa Manafwa

(I am saluting Manafwa river)

Ho!

Yino imbalu yange

(This is my circumcision turn)

Ho!

Wo.....o

Wo.....o (60).

The author creates pleasure in three major ways. First; through the words said from the first person point of view: "Yino Imbalu yange" (This is my *circumcision* ceremony), the song activates the text by enabling the reader to envisage the candidate and to hear the crowd around the candidate echoing "Ho! Wo-----o". Second; the words also said from the first person point of view, enable the reader to penetrate into the mind of the candidate. In the words: "Nekha I mayo

ho----o” (I am descending to the plain), one reads the dauntlessness as well as the triumph of the candidate.

The third way in which the author creates pleasure through songs is to enhance the triumphant tone of the novel. The title of the novel, “*Upon this Mountain*” suggests the braveness of the Mountain dwellers. The words of the song correspond well to this tone of braveness. The songs also contribute to the breaking of the monotony of the prose by linking one episode to another. After reading for a while, one is happy to come to a song which lightens up the mood in the novel. This is coupled with the use of Lugishu language in some expressions and songs. This gives the novel a musical touch as well as providing a vivid narrative packed with imagery.

The circumcision songs give the candidates an inspiration to face the knife without fear. These songs given in Lugishu, sometimes with an English translation as indicated above in brackets make the story more real and traditional. They portray the pride that the people have in their culture and traditions, while at the same time depicting a rich tradition laced with strong cultural values and languages.

Mwambu’s mother tells a story of how the monster married the beautiful Sera. The story is accompanied by a song (9). The group of girls sings a nuptial song for Khalayi as she is being taken to her new home (93). The purposes of the songs are many. One is for self-defense. Sera is singing in appeal for help. The nuptial song is to counsel the newlywed that Masaba’s house (her father’s home) is no longer her home, she must grow up. In another nuptial song the new bride is cautioned about the provocations of the senior wife in a polygamous marriage.

The songs break the monotony. Two, the songs reduce the duration of the stories so the audience can concentrate on the short plots. Three, the songs extend the theme(s) in the story or the novel.

3.1.3 Story Telling

Storytelling is another narrative technique used for gripping the mind of the reader in some of the selected works. Stories enhance the sensory union of image and idea, a process of re-creating the past in terms of the present (Ramadan); the storyteller uses realistic images to describe the present, and fantasy images to evoke and embody the substance of a culture's experience of the past. These ancient fantasy images are the culture's heritage and the storyteller's bounty: they contain the emotional history of the culture, its most deeply felt yearnings and fears, and they therefore have the capacity to elicit strong emotional responses from members of the audiences. During a performance, these envelop contemporary images, the most unstable parts of the oral tradition, because they are by their nature always in a state of flux and thereby bring the past on the present.

Story telling is a practice common to traditional Ugandan society. There are three storytelling techniques: the forward match, the total storytelling, flashback or the zig zag, where you can go from past to present or vice versa. Each of these literary techniques has advantages and disadvantages. Luckily, Lamb includes both sides for each approach, which helps to organize writing and helps to create a sound structure for stories. Such stories are characterized with songs, proverbs, but above all, lessons to learn. Storytelling describes the social and cultural activity of sharing stories, sometimes with improvisation, theatrics, or embellishment. Every culture has its own stories or narratives, which are shared as a means of entertainment, education, cultural preservation, or instilling moral values; and all these add to literary aesthetics.

Throughout the novel *Upon This Mountain* Mwambu's mother is telling the children stories at night. The most outstanding story is in chapter two; and runs from page 8-10. It's a story that depicts Sera's pride. She rejects all the genuine suitors in the village claiming to be waiting for the

most handsome suitor who eventually comes, enchants her with lies and later reveals his true nature as “*Wanesirikhhe*” the monster. Timothy Wangusa thus employs a story within a story to tell his story. This does not only make the story interesting, thrilling, and shocking, but also teaches the reader that all that glitters is not gold; and that a book should not be judged by its cover. Thus, through the story Wangusa warns the modern “Sera”s to take caution and avoid being duped by unscrupulous people.

3.1.4 Use of Ogres

As stated before, good and pleasant literature is one that thrills on one hand but also shocks on the other. The authors in Africa while telling stories and other narratives employ ogres as means of mesmerizing the audience especially young children. Ogres are narratives about monsters that are neither human nor animals but have qualities of both. The authors employ and describe grotesque figures and portray them as treacherous and stupid creatures. However, despite their superior physical features, man triumphs over them. They are usually evil and like interacting with human beings and marry them. Their motif is to make friendship, deceit and discovery.

They are used in African literature to portray the braveness of the characters as they overcome these monsters, and to mesmerize the audience as the brave heroes encounter them. The Ogre stories told to Mwambu and Khalayi by their mother as well as Mrs. Nabwera’s Biblical stories of the creator give the novel a pleasant poetic style.

Wangusa uses an element of monstrosity in his novel under study to mesmerize the readers. For instance, Mwambu fights monsters (giants) to save his sister Sera in the story of the giants. The monster had swallowed up Sera. The quick witted Mwambu slits the belly and rescues Sera despite the size of the monster. This breaking of the laws of nature is a deviation from the norm and it mesmerises the audience because it is a deviation from the ordinary.

Similarly, Mary Karooro uses the technique of monstrosity in her novelette *Milking a Lioness*. She creates a character of Kaana, who on an early morning journey to the diviner freezes in her steps on seeing an object that appears to be a monster. She is relieved, however, when she realizes that the “ogre” that scared her was actually a stump of a tree that they used to call “Walinga” as kids. This amuses the reader because the author tactfully raises the temperatures and pressure of the reader through her description of the movements of the ‘ogre’ alongside Kaana in the bush during the middle of the night. It is surprising how the tension is immediately brought down as Kaana realizes that the “ogre” is a stump of a tree. This is not only a humorous aspect of the Ugandan novelette, but is also unforgettable.

3.2 THEME AND LANGUAGE USE

In this section, I discuss Africanisation of universal themes and the language as an aspect of black aesthetics. I argue that the beauty of the selected works is anchored in how the writers try to map the African mindset on the universal one by using a foreign language. According to G.A Heron (1971), African writers “express African ideas...in a non-African” medium. Hence there is “aesthetic dualism”. The Ugandan fiction for this study is a good illustration of what Professor Mazrui calls ‘aesthetic dualism’ (p.32) in African literature³. The selected writers have written about Ugandan experiences in both European and African styles.

3.2.1 Adherence to African Values

According to Pio Zirimu (1971) one aspect of the African aesthetics is the hanging on the traditions and the values. Zirimu urges that “in acculturation the conquered people assimilate at least part of the new civilization but not the values and the taste” (4). By this statement Zirimu means that even if the Ugandan writers under discussion wrote in the form of a novel which is Western, and treated themes like gender equity which is a hot spot in Western civilization, the representation of these themes remained very African, i.e. the gender battles are fought according to the expectations of the Africans. A case in point is Cassandra. This educated woman vows to break the traditions of her ancestors: the women who are condemned to produce children and stay in the kitchen forever. Cassandra vows to be independent, to be a corporate manager who has a job and who can employ other people to do the house chores for her. Ironically the ropes of the traditions pull Cassandra back to her position as a woman in society. For instance, Cassandra is naturally attracted to men. She even begs them to rape her. In a way, the writer is confirming male domination which is a traditional belief in Uganda and many countries in Africa.

The First Daughter closely examines traditional conceptions of the women's role and place in a society that is greatly conservative. It opens with the expression of a variety of views about women by male villagers, some of which sound incredibly callous, such as the following: a drunken villager attacks Kyamanywa, "the only damn thing I have ever seen you do is sending your daughters to school. A woman's place is in the kitchen" (p.8).

The work also has grim descriptions of the violence of men against their wives and daughters. The barbaric violence vested upon Kasemiire's mother by her father when he suspects that she has been up to some mischief with a young man is quite memorable. It is as a result of this that Kyamanywa, the young man in question, decides to marry her. Kyomuhendo also describes the Okonkwo-like character of Kyamanywa in detail, and presents him to us as the real personification of the oppression against women. Kyamanywa is also a man who believes strongly in male chauvinism. For instance, he believes that women are put on this earth solely for men's pleasure and he therefore holds a very low opinion of them.

His principle is that a man should acquire as many women as he wishes so long as he can maintain them. Women and children have no say according to the Banyoro custom and he always makes sure that this custom is strictly observed in his household (p.6). Elsewhere, Kyamanywa says to Kasemiire's mother that: "Women and children are a yardstick to measure a man's wealth!" (p.23). When his second wife disobeys him by going to visit her parents when he had refused, his reaction is according to pattern. He beats her thoroughly, until she cries for mercy; then he leads "her to bed and" orders "her to spread her legs wide apart, then" spends "a full month without visiting her bed chamber" (p.7). Everything about Kyamanywa shows that he is a standard male chauvinist. This makes it difficult to understand why he decides to take his daughters to school; but he does, and this is in spite of the disapproval of his male village-mates. For Kasemiire's mother however, the education of her daughters, especially Kasemiire,

represents an opportunity to escape from the position in which fate has placed her as a woman in this society. Indeed, when the girl passes her primary leaving examinations very well, the mother's hopes are strengthened. Kasemiire would go to secondary school, get a good education, and later rescue her from her misery. But this requires both the blessing and financial commitment of the husband. And yet she dares not raise the matter with Kyamanywa, because she knows for sure that he would bark at her (p.11). The power to decide on financial matters lay with the man, and the woman has no say - a matter that Kyomuhendo keeps returning to in various parts of her work. Kyomuhendo also tackles other features of male-female power relations, and simultaneously protests against the injustices inherent in the way they are taken for granted and further propagated. One such feature is the direct gender programming that young members of society are subjected to at a very early age.

When Kasemiire, at the age of nine, has a fight with her brother Mugabi who is two years older, her mother does not listen to the reasons for the fight. She gives her daughter a very strong beating, and as she does so, she asks her: "Since when did women start beating men..." (p.21). So even when the woman has reason and opportunity to fight back, society says women must not fight men. What is even grimmer is that it is the women who enforce this "law" upon their daughters. The ever-protesting voices in *The First Daughter*, which are characterized by constant finger-pointing against males, are set against a deeply rooted patriarchal socio-cultural system. There is a powerful interplay of the experiences of men and women of different generations like; Mukaaka (Kasemiire's grandmother), Ngonzi (Kasemiire's mother) and Kasemiire. They all relate differently to the system whose definition of power tilts in favour of the male. The female characters in the work such as Mukaaka, Ngonzi, Kasemiire, and even Mrs. Mutyaba, all

experience forms of suffering that directly result from the way the system defines them; but their responses are dictated by their temporal entry points.

On the other hand, the themes in *Upon this Mountain* center on the challenges of a society in transition. They focus on the division between tradition and culture on one hand, and education and Christianity on the other. The novel shows how challenging it is to straddle on both sides. The theme of manhood and masculinity as brought out in the novel is thrilling and shocking. Manhood is the self-actualization stage of development, and to come to this stage, one must face the knife (be circumcised). Among the Bamasaba people of Uganda, boys are not considered men until they are circumcised. In this novel, the main character, Mwambu, desists the process his friends Kangala and Wabwire undertake in order to proceed to the stage of adulthood. This is the most prominent part of the book that stands out to me, as it highlights the idea of masculinity as strength without emotion or weakness.

The process starts with the boys having to gather items, then dance vigorously, and finally endure public circumcision. Crying or wincing during the ceremony would contradict the strength and manhood they are attempting to prove. This is to be a major theme in most African novels, as it is deeply embedded in traditional culture. It is explored even deeper in Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* in regard to the main character Okonkwo. In both texts, a man is not considered great if he shows weakness, fear, humility or emotion. Instead, men are meant to be strong, tough fighters who control with an iron fist. From the book under study, Wayero who is Mwambu's constant bully feels envious of his academic success and thus uses his failure to face the knife to humiliate him at the party of baptism. He says; "Tuck in your shirt like a good little school boy... But never you be the first to open your mouth in the council of real men." (Pg. 116)

This shows that he couldn't stand the knife and therefore he is not his equal despite his academic success.

In addition, *Upon This Mountain* touches on the themes of cultural clash during the post-colonial era, along with education and its influence on the native populations. Wangusa also uses his book to expose the theme of religious hypocrisy involved in the white man's religion and the church. Wangusa depicts a Reverend (and school leader) who has sex intercourse with a young girl during lent. These sorts of themes make for an interesting read because they touch the issues or concerns of the people. It is this relevance that makes the story fascinating and educative for the audience.

In the same novel *Upon This Mountain*, sexual permissiveness is manifested as Mwambu is tempted to sleep with his cousin Kuloba's wife. They have a kid together and this haunts him for long. During the season of lent, the Reverend James Graves and his sexual encounter upon the holy table cloth is frowned upon. Kangala and Mwambu get embarrassed when they agree to test big grown women when Mayeku's wife reminds them that they were still uncircumcised. It is clear that although the rest of the people do not mind the permissiveness, Mwambu expresses guilt as a Christian. When the staff at Elgon Secondary sympathizes with Reverend James Graves and curses Mwambu for accusing the Reverend, the author succeeds at not only making the reader laugh really hard, but also creates a feeling of disgust as one draws a picture of the real act on the holy altar cloth.

In Violet Barungi's *Cassandra*, the central focus is on male brutality and female servitude and vulnerability as well as women's endeavor to survive in a male dominating society. Cassandra who is a young woman as portrayed in the novel is very ambitious and determined to conquer the world. She strongly believes in women's ability to achieve even what society perceives as "Men's", implying only men can achieve. The writer depicts an intelligent woman, Cassandra, who is not only aware of women's subordination, but also identifies the real cause why "thousands of other women are behind a kitchen sink and a line of dripping nappies. Men are the reason why majority women are still lagging behind in social, economic and political

development". Cassandra is therefore determined to change this status quo by living independent of the men, so she can achieve her goal of living a meaningful life.

The exchange between Cassandra and Jane illustrates the theme of women emancipation which drives the writer. Barungi forces this concern in the throat of Cassandra, the heroine who portrays her distastes for male domination, and hence alerts all women to join in the fight.

3.2.2. Realism

Realism is seen in the manner in which the writers depict the people, their attitudes, their life style, and their practices in marriage, in upbringing the children as well as treating the women.

In *Upon This Mountain* Timothy Wangusa depicts challenges of living in a changing society where tradition is strong and yet education and modernity are setting in. This is portrayed through Mwambu, the major character who finds the demands of traditional customs as challenging as the education he is pursuing. The central role of the storyteller ranges from the uneducated Kangala and Wabwire and even Mwambu, Namboozo and Rev. Graves. By using both the educated and the uneducated, Wangusa reconciles the tension between the oral tradition and modernity, demonstrating that combining both makes a worthy contribution to the contemporary African society (Gale 2016).

Alongside education, Christianity is portrayed as a threat to the traditional set up. It is one of the colonialists' tools in transforming Africans. Christianity provides a fresh look at life. Unlike tradition which is clouded in mysteries and threats to life, Christianity offers a positive and bright outlook to life. Young converts like Mwambu are fascinated by the benevolence of the Creator who is portrayed as loving and merciful. The baptism of the converts in which they are initiated into Christianity, is parallel to the traditional circumcision. However, baptism is delightful, awe inspiring and painless requiring no physical courage but spiritual will. On the other hand,

circumcision requires physical strength and it is very painful. At baptism Mwambu becomes a man in Christ but fails to become a man by the knife as tradition requires. Although Christianity has taken root in the society, tradition still reigns as many young men brave the circumcision knife.

It is the use of realism that enables authors to capture the political, social, physiological, economical and emotional realities of their respective regions (Danermark, Ekström et al. 2019).

As it is the case with the oral tradition, written literature is a combination of the real and the fantastic. It combines, on the one hand, the real (the contemporary world) and history (the realistic world of the past) and, on the other, myth and hero, with metaphor being the agent of transformation. This is the experimentation of the literary experience. Basing on the author of *Upon this Mountain*, Mwambu will climb the mountain where he hopes to touch heaven, but his journey from naïve curiosity to adulthood will reveal unexpected contradictions as traditional values collide with western values. This is one of the many novels that portray African real life in the post-colonial error, focusing on the Bagisu people of Eastern Uganda, on the slopes of Mount Elgon. *Upon this Mountain* also describes quite vividly what goes on during the Bagisu circumcision ceremony and how important it is in its culture. Circumcision is an initiation ceremony into manhood, so if a person does not go through it well, he is not initiated into manhood and, by default ends up being dubbed a woman like Mwambu was referred to, but that is not the focus of the novel. It focuses on a young man's transition to adulthood which involves disillusionment in many aspects of his life. It brings out the struggle Mwambu and many like him at that time faced: finding the perfect balance between the indigenous and colonial values. As a boy, in Mwambu's case the traditional culture and the western culture were not always compatible, which caused problems for him. This matter becomes more crucial as the time passes

because, as an adolescent he is becoming a man. Only he is not so sure what being a man means because whenever he thinks he has figured it out, something happens to disprove it as it is clearly portrayed in the novel.

3.2.3. Figurative use of Language

The authors use descriptive and comparative language that is packed with imagery and a descriptive narrative whose vividness makes the reader feel part of the story. This language appeals to multiple senses by creating mental images. Wangusa for instance uses figurative language to present objects, actions and ideas in such a way that they appeal to our physical senses. The omniscient narrator compares Wanesirikhe's laughter to a "noise of thunder or a sound of a mighty river tumbling down a steep mountain side and his giant mouth a blacksmith's forge" (p. 9).

Similarly, in *Cassandra*, the narrator describes "a silence that is vibrant" (152), of somebody Tonia falling asleep as being "out like a candle" (151), and a woman as the axis around which the fabric of the admirer's dreams hung (155).

Kyomuhendo equally uses similes to compare lovers "to actors from a romantic movie" (50), comparing their happiness to that of "a toad in a pail of mud" (53).

Last but not least, Karooro's narrator uses metaphors like; Kaana's referring to her husband as a "gnasher" (12-14) to depict the violent manner of Kaana's husband, and thereby explain what prompted Kaana's adventures with the old one. The narrator also describes Kaana as being "drunk with excitement" that she even forgot to disguise herself. This account prepares the reader that we are nearing the climax of the story. The old one advises Kaana to "befriend her lion" and Kaana repeats the command to herself that she has to "befriend her lion"...The metaphor of the

lion underscore the fierceness of the man. The repetition emphasizes this fierceness as well. The beauty of using imagery is invested in its immediacy to convey the message. The reader is assisted to identify the message by comparing one thing to another, which has connotation or meaning familiar to the audience. This vivid rhetorical effect as seen in Wangusa, is very useful in the appreciation of the work of art.

In *Upon this Mountain*, a number of images have been used. One and perhaps the most outstanding one is the towering mountain Elgon. The mountain gives an image of people's destiny as well as epitome of life. The mountain is an inspiration to the people, a source of food. Most importantly, the towering symbolizes the ultimate goal of Mwambu, the hero of the novel; his life's journey to reaching at the peak of the mountain. Climbing Elgon is an enviable task in his life and in every climber's life; because it's like reaching at the top of the world the climbers achieve their heart's desires. Therefore, Wangusa effectively uses Mount Elgon as a symbol of manhood. The huge mountain that towers over the land gives a feeling of the power acquired by those men who are circumcised in its shadow. The rationale for use of imagery is that it is a way of adopting the character's world by drawing what the character imagines. Since imagery does not occur on the page but in the reader's mind, it helps to indicate the points which seem the most vivid and important to the writer. The pleasure of using imagery arises from the fact that imagery makes an immersion to the novel by a reader more enjoyable, resulting in giving the best setting so that the characters are not acting in a vacuum but within a setting.

In *Milking a Lioness*, Karoro uses the image of the lioness to represent the intemperance of Kaana's husband. Several times the lioness attempts to devour Kaana in the same way the husband attempts to destroy the life of Kaana. So the relationship between Kaana and her husband is full of fear not of love. Kaana has to bribe him to have peace in the home. The

husband can only be calmed by the service and favours provided by his wife. The process of taming the lioness is extremely spectacular. It leaves one imagining each step. The mental picture of Kaana's adventure with the lioness just to get hairs off its mouth as well as milk from its udders, sends chills down the spine of any reader. Kaana's determined actions to tame her husband are not only very funny, but the author manages to raise tension of the reader and maintains interest to the end. Kaana is very disappointed that all her efforts to tame the lioness yield nothing but words of advice from the old lady. Although it is disturbing to the reader who identifies with her during plot development, the end is hilarious.

3.2.4. Didacticism

According to Pio Zirimu, the beauty of African literature partly lies in its purpose. The purpose of this literature is to educate people and not just to please. So, the cleaner the literature, the more useful it is pedagogically.

According to Henry Ibsen, African literature is functional. The theory of functional beauty relates that beauty originates in an object when that object performs its functions, achieves its end or fits its purpose, especially when it is done particularly well, that is, excelling at the task of achieving that end. In an ancient philosophical context, this idea is also often associated with the notion of dependent beauty, which means an object is beautiful if it excels at functioning as the kind of object it is. Therefore, this literature, as Ibsen describes it, is short and to the point, and characterization tends to be flat or black and white because the characters are representing the morals that the writer wants to represent. As noted before, African literature is literature written by Africans and on issues pertinent to Africans. The beauty of the work from the African perspective is twofold. One, the relevance of this work to African setting enables the readers to identify themselves with the work. Two, the work must be functional. According to Pio Zirimu,

in *Black Aesthetics*, beauty from the African perspective resides in what the writer has to say. By implication, Zirimu refutes the theory of art for art's sake. Zirimu further notes that, the beauty of the work is that quality that captures the mind of the reader, that shocks and thrills. The capacity to impress the reader comes from the content or the theme that the audience is familiar with. As Debbie Notari explains, a theme is the underlying message. This message is usually on what is critical about the life of the people.

In Africa in general, among the critical issues is gender inequality and the battles that emanate from it. Violet Barungi, on the other hand, gives her novel *Cassandra* an urban setting. It all begins with the encounter of Cassandra and Agutamba at a party which is brought to the reader's notice in a flashback technique. As Cassandra walks home, a car screeches to a stop missing her by a hair's breadth. The main character is determined right from the start to tackle the male dominated society and its rules. Violet Barungi confronts issues of inter-gender power struggle in a brief but broader sense. Much as Agutamba and Cassandra had met previously at a party and although she had had a crush on him, she lets down his offer for a lift home as though to say even women can manage on their own, they can be independent, strong willed and determined. This calls for women to act against all odds and be focused in their struggle for emancipation.

Therefore the beauty of the work lies in the ordinariness and simplicity with which this theme is rendered. Any gender equity activist reading the story of Kaana will easily relate with the novelette. Gender equity or rather women emancipation is the central theme of *Cassandra*, *Milking a Lioness*, and *The First Daughter*. In the three works, the writers criticize male domination and show women struggling for emancipation. Cassandra, Kasemiire, and Kaana in the respective works are the voices of women in Uganda crying out to fellow women to stand out to be liberated. Kaana for example does what every woman would do to tame the intemperate

husband. She falls a victim of the diviner who takes her money for nothing because after directing her to cut the whiskers of the lioness, the diviner simply laughs at her and tells her to tame her husband the same way she tamed the lioness.

In *Cassandra* the theme of women emancipation is expressed through the character of Cassandra. In the character of Cassandra, the writer Violet Barungi voices the answer to the question every feminist would want to ask: Which is: What is the meaningful emancipation of a woman? The answer is to control one's wayward heart. According to Cassandra, "the majority of women were still lagging behind in social economic and political development. Once you let a man into your life, it was goodbye to ambitions of meaningful existence." (p.3) In *Cassandra*, Barungi provides a strong woman who manages to make it to the top of society because she repudiated the company of men during her school days. Cassandra shuns granting men sexual favour for promotion. When she is denied promotion to a managerial position at her workplace on the basis of gender, she starts her own company. The beauty of this story is in providing a solution to gender equity.

Similarly, in *The First Daughter*, Gorette Kyomuhendo depicts a character Kasemiire who wants to gain freedom to be liberated through education, but she allows a man in her life, instead of concentrating on her books. Kasemiire becomes a victim to her own sexual desires and becomes pregnant. In this way, she becomes a victim to male power. When she becomes pregnant her own father denies her protection and a second chance, she is sent away from school and home and her dream of getting education is shattered. Thus, the three works present the lot that every woman experiences and the meanness that men exhibit in the gender wars.

3.2.5 Ugandan English -Indigenization of the English Language

In the selected Ugandan novels, there is use of Ugandanised colloquialism what Zirimu terms as “indigenization of English”. This phenomenon is characterized by many Ugandan idioms and images, in most cases directly translated from vernacular.

In *Upon This Mountain*, one encounters African allusions such as; the “masculine hand” as the right hand, and “the feminine hand” as the left hand. There are phrases such as “Many Millet granaries ago...”, “three hills later”, “he reckoned that he would reach home before the sun reached its own” which is used in *Upon This Mountain* to signify the duration or passage of time and measurement of distance respectively. Other instances of direct translation are the reference to the Ten Commandments as ‘the moral code of God.’ (7), and the colloquial reference to Jesus as a “person baby or Baby God” (13). The fourth is reference to the heap of dry banana leaves as a “mattress.” (112). The fifth is “mother mine” referring to a person’s mother. The sixth and perhaps the most humorous indigenized expression is the “germination of the pubic and moustache hair (p.44) in reference to the growth of Mwambu, the main character in *Upon This Mountain*.

In Kyomuhendo’s *The First Daughter*, women are gossiping about their colleague’s daughter who had been caught having sex in Kyamanywa’s plantation. An older woman uses a colloquial phrase: “girls of today” to register her disgust about modern girls who are so impatient that they cannot wait for their marriage nights. “Holy Virgin”, to refer to Mary mother of God while making exclamations on the indecent action by Rwakaikara. “ka-skirt” to refer to a womanizer Pg.4. The author deliberately uses directly translated words to register commonly used expression by less educated people. By this register, the author succeeds in not only characterizing the woman as old and uneducated, but also in bringing out African realism. This is how the majority

of the Africans, educated or uneducated, talk as they express their disappointment in the new generation.

These phrases captured above are aspects of what Ali Mazrui in Pio Zirimu's (1971) *Black Aesthetic* calls "acculturation." (p. 32). By using them, the writer succeeds in capturing the manners and thoughts of the Ugandan people as they portray the real picture of the people who are adopting the English culture while at the same time want to retain their own culture, thus, making the situations more authentic and the stories extremely appealing.

3.2.6 Use of Local Code

One element of African aesthetics (in their use of language) is code switching. Here, the writer deviates from the main medium of delivery and employs words from the local (mother) language for various reasons which range from: lack of corresponding equivalence in English, narrowing the gap between Africa and Europe, creating a sense of realism, characterization, to exposition of setting.

At times a culture has no equivalence in the tradition of the owners of the medium of delivery. In the selected books some foreign words are written and used exactly in the same way they are used in Ugandan local languages. For example, in *Upon this Mountain*, circumcision is constantly referred to as "Imbalu"; a traditional dress for men is referred to as "Kanzu". Similarly, in the short story: *Milking a Lioness*, the boda boda cyclist refers to Kaana as "Nyabo" a Luganda word normally used when addressing a woman. Kaana has covered herself with a cloth referred to as a "Lesu" a long normally light sheet-like cloth used by women in Uganda. In Kyomuhendo's *The First Daughter*, the first chapter clearly introduces the reader to the society in which the author originates. She carefully code mixes the language by using Lunyoro words like, "kisojos" to mean

the green grasshoppers; “*kati komire*” which implies a dry tree and refers to the grasshopper which is brown in color and looks like a dry tree.

The beauty of code switching relies on giving the audience a sense of belonging. A reader who knows the language feels glad to meet and interact with familiar allusions. Secondly, the employment of local dialect is a technique for characterization and exposition of the physical setting of the text. Knowledge of setting enhances one’s appreciation of the text. For instance, upon reading *Milking a Lioness*, one can easily tell that the character is a young lady whose life style is like that of women in suburban environment in East Africa. These young women are usually addressed as “*nyabo*” and they characteristically wrap the “*lesu*” around their waists as they work. Both words are used by the Bantu language speakers of Uganda.

Furthermore, the local words also give a text a local flavour so that it is an African situation reflected through the medium of the English language. The incorporation of such words gives the text African realism. This why Chinua Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, employs Igbo words such as “*Chi, ogwugwu, agbala ogbanje*”. Such words refer to purely contextual traditional concepts with reference to gods or spirits. These do not exist in the western mode of thinking” (Cooper 2013). Achebe therefore decided to retain the words in their original form. The same rationale applies to the use of local language expressions in the selected works.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Introduction

The study set out to examine the aesthetics of Ugandan prose works with reference to three representative novels and a novelette. The purpose of the study was to establish the respective criteria for determining the beauty of the representative works.

4.2 Summary

The study recognized that although the works are set in Uganda and are about Ugandan people, their fauna and flora, the works were written by writers who studied in European modalities and have studied western literature. Naturally their works were to a great extent influenced by the western aesthetic standards.

To achieve the purpose of the study the researcher set three objectives. First, to apply the western principles to assessment of the beauty of the selected works. Secondly, to use the African principles of art to judge the exquisiteness of the selected works. Thirdly, to establish what constitutes the charm of the selected Ugandan works.

By examining the works' aesthetics from the Formalist point of view, the researcher discovered that the works subscribed to those western determinants of beauty: organic plot, complexity of characterization, universality of themes, pertinent setting and exquisite narrative style. The selected writers used the typical European plot with a pyramidal structure of: exposition, complication, climax, falling tension and denouement in the telling of their respective stories. They had fully developed characters that organically propelled the plots and developed the themes. The writers used settings that commiserate with the events. They used narrative

techniques such as flashbacks, suspension, omniscient narrator and drama all of which are European narrative styles. This narrative order makes the works universal, that is, readable by both African and non-African readers.

With regard to African aesthetics, the study used Zirimu's views as an anchor to determine the pleasantness of the selected works. Zirimu emphasizes that in African aesthetics, the focus is on what the writer wants to say and how he says it. The African style has many dimensions that range from earthly realism, adherence to African values and traditions, orature (storytelling, songs, proverbs, use of ogres) to indigenization of the language.

Concerning the content, the purpose of this content is didactic. For majority literature, there must be a moral lesson to learn in order to qualify as good literature. Due to the didactic nature of this literature, the characters were well developed and not two dimensional as the critics had designated it. They are also not mere dowels upon which the message of the writer is hanged.

An application of the African standards of beauty to the selected works reveals that the works in some respects, correspond to the description given by Zirimu cited above. They are replete with Africaness on one hand, and on the other they sound like European works. Indeed, as Heron (1971) states, the writers "wish to express African ideas. But they have chosen a non-African tool to express them." Hence the "aesthetic dualism" of the resulting literature. The Ugandan fiction for this study is a good illustration of what Professor Mazrui calls 'aesthetic dualism' in African literature. The selected writers have written about Ugandan experiences in both European and African styles.

The language used, English, is appropriated to depict the reality of the experiences. For instance, in *Cassandra*, the writer seems to write for a corporate audience and as such, the characters who are young graduates, men and women use a register that is appropriate to their level of education

and their urban culture. They allude to cars, restaurants, offices, all of which are a reality of modern urban setting.

Regarding the African style, the writers create African realism by indigenizing the English language. This style customizes English which is a foreign language. The characters express their feeling in a jargon that has been translated in their own setting. For instance, in *Upon this Mountain*, the omniscient narrator describes the protagonist's friend, Kangala as a youth with "a faint moustache" which "was just beginning to germinate upon him" (44). This metaphorical language does not only please but also concretizes the situation. Both an African and nonreader feel transported to the very scenes and events being described.

Furthermore, the selected works are replete with African allusions which range from names of characters and physical setting, description of customary ceremonies such as funeral rites, rites of passage such as circumcision, communal harvests all of which spell the setting concretely. The answer to the question, "What is black literature?" is well addressed by the style which I have described above. It is that literature that is written by Africans and is about the issues pertinent to the blacks in a black context and moreover expressed in a language close to their experience.

The effect of the style therefore is to provide a context in which, the judgment of beauty of the respective works could be made.

4.3 Conclusions

The study established that the most pleasing aspect of the black style used in the selected works is the use of orature and the indigenization of the English Language. Orature forms a badge and traditions for black aesthetics. According to Pio Zirimu, good African literature must be one that celebrates what is African; the values and beliefs. In this way the audience can identify with the work and not merely be transported into the other world. One way of celebrating Africa is the

adherence to traditions. If the setting is mountain Elgon, circumcision has to be part of it to make the picture complete and believable. If the setting is Africa, one must expect communal harvesting in *Upon this Mountain*. Other traditions include clan gathering at the last funeral rites in *The First Daughter*. Making errands to the diviners to consult about family matters, in *Milking a Lioness*. Inclusion of such incidents serves to enhance realism.

The language, English, is indigenized in two respects: code-switching and direct translation. According to Zirimu, the effect of indigenization is to narrow the gap between the West and Africa, thus, bringing the Western World to our fire place, for bed time stories. This phenomenon creates pleasure in two ways; one is the rendering the concepts in familiar language; and two is engaging the imagination of the reader. Both qualities of indigenization cause laughter and enjoyment as one reads.

It is a commonplace thing for story tellers, poets and singers in Africa to use simple conventional wisdom (aphorism) to make their points. This is often in terms of proverbs and proverbial sayings. The African way of telling stories is to keep it short but punctuated with songs and use of animal characters such as ogres. These genres of oral literature serve many aesthetic purposes. The use of songs serves three purposes: to clarify or to mediate the messages in the works, to break the monotony, and to enhance the enjoyment of the work. The stories, like songs have been used to break the monotony or bridge between episodes in the novel. The use ogres is an old African method of shocking, mesmerizing the reader or the audience in the novel. A case in point is Mwambu's mother telling the story about an ogre as its central character. The children pay attention just as the reader does to see what will happen next.

When all aspects were examined, the study established that the pleasantness of the selected works springs from aesthetic dualism. According to Taban Lo Liyong, in Pio Zirimu (1971), if any

literary piece of work is going to succeed in its intentions, it must deploy recognizable features of aesthetic value, but must equally capture something that makes it stand out from products of different authors, geographical location or subject matter. So by analyzing the selected Ugandan literary works, I have established that the selected works adhere to western standards of beauty, but also have an African touch which renders this literature unique. Hence, the charm of the selected works depends both on the writers' adoption of the indigenous and western forms of art as discussed above.

4.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that:

- i. The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) should include substantial literary texts that reflect African aesthetics so that students are able to appreciate the role of African oral tradition, values and beliefs in both the production and study of African literature.
- ii. Aestheticism forms an integral part of literary theory and criticism at both undergraduate and graduate levels of literary scholarship given its remarkable influence on African creative production.

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