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Editor's Preface

Femininity and masculinity are social constructions. They depend on time, culture and space. This is the one of most important narratives of the Journal of Gender and Power. But they are not only socially constructed, they are constantly re-thought and re-written. Every interpretation of men's and women's identity and history are also the social constructs. I have understood why, writing my recent book the *Femininity as a origin of socio-cultural anxieties. Crystallizations and Dispersions* (AMU Press, 2019). I have devoted much time and energy to analyzing various historical and present interpretation of images of women in timeless paintings and other products of art and culture. And I was surprised so many times when the same woman (for example Ophelia) or the same object (for example high heels) can be perceived simultaneously in the context of subordination or emancipation, freedom and imprisoning, inner-directed or outer-directed, etc. The interpretations of femininity and masculinity can be so contradictory and relative that sometimes "everything" seems to be "everything". History of femininity is re-written by every new generation of thinkers and of course I am aware that the Journal of Gender and Power is a part of this process.

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik
Editor-in-Chief



ARTICLES



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The intercultural *Bildungsroman* as a platform for a hybrid feminist epistemology in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990): The (im)possibility of a unified feminist movement

ABSTRACT. This article analyzes *Lucy* (1990) by Jamaica Kincaid in terms of the intercultural *Bildungsroman* basing on Mikhail Bakhtin's characterization of the coming-of-age genre. Focusing on the relationship between the characters, it highlights the tension between contrasting feminist views. Seeking to emphasize how an intercultural vision contributes innovative perspectives on society, this paper argues that the eponymous protagonist of the novel has to find a way to reconcile the American culture with her Antiguan culture in her own feminist and postcolonial terms -an intercultural perspective. On the one hand, the relationship between Lucy and Mariah—her employer—reflects a tension between second-wave and third-wave feminism, which, the heroine eventually reconciles opening up the path for a unified vision of the feminist movement. Lucy's postcolonial vision, in particular, is similar to that articulated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. On the other hand, the strain between Lucy and her mother is related to the heroine's endorsement of second-wave feminist views as articulated by Betty Friedan and other feminist theorists of the 1960s and 1970s. In general, this novel develops an important vision for the global feminist movement.

KEYWORDS: Interculturalism, Bildungsroman, Feminist waves, Postcolonialism, Caribbean literature

Introduction

This article analyzes Kincaid's third novel *Lucy* (1990) in terms of the intercultural *Bildungsroman* offering a novel perspective on the book. From the perspective of the coming-of-age genre, it focuses on Mikhail's Bakhtin's characterization of this genre in his writing "The Bildungsroman". This paper argues that published in 1994, at the height of the third-wave feminist movement, *Lucy* also reflects earlier feminist per-

spectives. Focusing on a postcolonial and feminist interpretation of the novel, this paper propounds that the novel presents an intercultural perspective, which is based on reconciling a post-colonial feminist perspective with a Western/American feminist point of view. Such reconciliation allows the eponymous protagonist to find her way in American society. Although this book is well-known, through a critical intercultural reading of the text, this article contributes an innovative perspective to existing scholarship on this work. It shows that *Lucy* offers a hybrid perspective, which revisits the American literary canon traditionally grounded on an “essentialist” viewpoint if articulated by minority writers or on an “exclusionist” one if conceptualized by Anglo-Saxon authors (D’haen 1997). Furthermore, it suggests that the text opens up a new path for the feminist movement. The aim of this paper is not to discuss the plot of *Lucy*, something that has been at length by numerous scholars, but rather to suggest a novel ground to reflect on this book. This objective is accomplished through a structural and post-structural analysis of *Lucy*.

Whilst there is a consensus that this text is a *Bildungsroman*, there are diverging interpretations on the type of coming of age narrative that it represents. For example, the protagonist’s maturation as a woman and her development as a “resistant postcolonial subject” have been considered characteristics of the diasporic *Bildungsroman* by Ferguson (Ferguson, 1994, p. 164). In contrast to Ferguson, Tolchin focuses on emotions in the novel. She contends that it does not describe any “hysterical moments or manic episodes” but it presents passages “saturated with the protagonist’s great dissatisfaction and dramatic emotions” (Tolchin, 2007, p. 92). Although they categorize this *Bildungsroman* in different ways, critics generally agree that *Lucy* shows a post-colonial perspective in her dialectical relationship with the various social contexts in the United States or Antigua. There is also a general agreement among scholars that the protagonist seeks to gain independence as a woman from circumstances that oppress her because of her gender—it is often mentioned as a “female” (see for example, Ferguson, 1994, p. 164) since a feminist perspective on the book is not always clearly articulated by these critics.

Even though it agrees with the above-mentioned perspectives on Kincaid’s novel, this article seeks to emphasize that, in the book, there is a tension between a post-colonial and an American feminist perspective, which, however, is reconciled by the protagonist through a critical intercultural vision. We contend that, on the one hand, *Lucy* employs a third-

world feminism point of view to deconstruct Mariah and her friends' narrow feminist standpoint from which she feels excluded. This perspective, we argue, is akin to Spivak's critique of second-wave French feminism. Although apparently Lucy assesses her situation in the United States through a postcolonial feminist perspective, on the other hand, we note that in order to eventually conquer her own place in American society as a feminist woman and as a post-colonial subject Lucy, however, has to analyze her culture through a critical lens and find a balance between her own culture and the American culture. In other words, we observe that Lucy constructs her identity in the United States around a hybrid perspective that combines a critical perception of both the American Society and her own culture using both postcolonial and second-wave feminism.

1. *Lucy* (1994) as an intercultural *Bildungsroman*

Kincaid was born on May 25, 1949, in St John, Antigua in the Caribbean. At the age of sixteen, she moved from Antigua to New York City to work as an au-pair. Later, she won a scholarship to study in New Hampshire but within two years she returned to New York City. In 1983, her first book was published, which was entitled *At the bottom of the river*. It was followed by *Annie John* in 1984 and *A Small place* in 1988. *Lucy* was published in 1990. In 1996 Kincaid published *The autobiography of my mother* and *My brother* in 1997. The book *Talk stories* (2001) collects her "Talk of the Town" columns for "The New Yorker". In the same year came out *My garden book*. In 2005 the book *Among flowers: A walk in the Himalaya* was printed. Her latest novel is entitled *See Now Then* was published in 2013. Kincaid is well-known for her provocative and critical voice, however, the importance of her criticism has probably not been fully assessed.

Kincaid's fourth literary work entitled *Lucy* (1990) describes the migration of the eponymous character from Antigua to the United States to work as an au-pair for an American family—the husband is called Lewis and the wife is called Mariah. Her journey starts in a position of servitude within the household where she works; however, this position is a privileged one. The room which has been assigned to Lucy is the maid's room, just off the kitchen. Her position, however, is beneficial because the family is kind to her. She recognizes her privilege when she

considers “How nice everyone was to me, though, saying that I should regard them as my family and make myself at home (Kincaid, 1990, p. 7). She then adds: “I believed them to be sincere for I knew that such a thing would not be said to a member of their real family. After all, aren’t family the people who become the millstone around your life’s neck?” (Kincaid, 1990, p. 8). What Lucy implies with these words is that sometimes there is enmity within family members but we can choose to make strangers we like part of our family.

Furthermore, this book portrays the idyllic life led by the American family where Lucy is employed. The heroine recognizes the privileged position, in which this family lives, for instance, when she wonders: “Couldn’t human beings in their position—wealthy, comfortable, beautiful, with the best the world had to offer at their fingertips—be safe and secure and never suffer so much as a broken fingernail?” (Kincaid, 1990, p. 85). The quoted words reveal the extent to which the couple Lucy works for is privileged. Because this couple is affluent but also kind, Lucy’s staying with them could be perfect. Lucy, in fact, dreams about Mariah and Lewis and she relates this dream to them. After making the duo part of her dream, she reflects: “I had meant by telling them my dream that I had taken them in because only people who were important to me had ever shown up in my dream. I did not know if they understood that” (Kincaid, 1990, p. 15). With these words, Lucy admits that she has made the pair part of herself and that she feels the three of them belong together.

Although time spent as an au-pair in New York City could be idyllic for the main character, the protagonist has to endure a very tense relationship with her employer, Mariah, and also with her own mother. The tension between Lucy and Mariah can be explained in terms of a contrast between second-wave and third-wave feminism, which, however, Lucy reconciles. On the one hand, Lucy’s relationship with Mariah throughout the novel suggests a tension between a postcolonial feminist interpretation (third-wave) and Western second-wave-feminism; on the other hand, it illustrates the view that Lucy does not reject second-wave feminism altogether. Moreover, Lucy has to deal with a difficult relationship with her mother, which ultimately causes a breakup in their relationship. This breakage between mother and daughter is due to Lucy’s endorsement of theories elaborated by second-wave feminism.

To understand these tensions we need to analyze the novel from the perspective of the *Bildungsroman*. *Lucy* is a *Bildungsroman* because Lucy

"emerges along with the world" (Bakhtin, 2007, p. 23 cited in Steinby, 2014, p. 113) in the sense that the development of the protagonist throughout the novel reflects the rise of the anti-colonial struggles in the Caribbean region. As Steinby notes, the emergence of the protagonist along with the world as a reflection of the historical emergence of the world is a characteristic that Bakhtin ascribes to the *Bildungsroman* (Steinby, 2014, p. 113). This view is consistent with Bakhtin's understanding of the "chronotope" as "the right moment of time and place for human action but the action itself 'makes use' of time to become reality" (Steinby, 2014, p. 113). In the context of the *Bildungsroman* specifically, "time appears to be the medium for performing human action" (Steinby, 2014, p. 113).

What is central to Lucy's *Bildung* is the heroine's struggle in the socio-cultural environment, an aspect which, according to Bakhtin, characterizes the novel of development (Golban, 2018, p. 74). In her work *The myth of the heroine: The female bildungsroman in the twentieth century: Dorothy Richardson, Simone De Beauvoir, Doris Lessing, Christa Wolf* (1986) Labovitz argues that "the heroines of the female Bildungsroman challenge the very structure of society, raising questions of equality not only of class but of sexes, as well" (Labovitz, 1986, p. 35, cited in Japtok, 2003, p. 27). According to Japtok, however, the protagonists of the ethnic *Bildungsroman* "negotiate both ethnicity and gender" (Japtok, 2003, p. 27). This view finds validation in *Lucy*, where the protagonist negotiates gender and, to an extent, ethnicity. Another important reflection on the ethnic *Bildungsroman* is offered by Braendlin, who argues that the ethnic *Bildungsroman* "[p]ortrays the particular identity and adjustments problem of people whose sex or color renders them unacceptable to the dominant society; it expresses their struggle for individuation and a part in the American dream, which society simultaneously offers and denies to them" (Braendlin, 1983, p. 78, cited in Japtok, 2003, p. 27).

Braendlin mentions that the heroines of the ethnic *Bildungsroman* want to be defined by their own culture and not by an outside culture. In line with Braendlin's view on the ethnic *Bildungsroman*, we can observe that Lucy wants to be free not only physically but also psychologically and to define her subjectivity in terms of her own culture. Lucy's desire to define her subjectivity in her own terms is evident especially in her relationship with Mariah. Mariah is described as "kind, warm, generous and well-disposed towards Lucy" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 19). However, Lucy interprets every word that Mariah utters through her colonial exper-

ience and, as a result, Lucy understands Mariah's words in a different way than they are intended. For example, the daffodils that Mariah wants Lucy to see remind Lucy of a poem she had to learn when she was ten years old. This flower is not native to Antigua but Lucy had to learn this poem as a result of the British occupation of her country. Thus this poem reminds Lucy "of conquered and conquests" "of brutes masquerading as angels and angels portrayed as brutes" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 30). Based on her experience as a colonized woman, Lucy subverts the colonial discourse and refers to the British as brutes and the Antiguan people as angels (who, in colonized Antigua, were traditionally portrayed as brutes by the British colonial forces). Equally, Lucy takes with contempt Mariah's attempt to establish a closer bond between them by asserting that she has Indian blood. Lucy considers "My grandmother is a Carib Indian. That makes me one quarter Carib Indian. But I don't go around saying that I have some Indian blood in me" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 40). The quoted sentence exemplifies Lucy's inability to establish a common bond with Mariah due to her employer's inability to recognize the heroine's colonial experience.

Concerning Lucy's point of view, Schultermandl argues that Lucy is not a "naive third-world immigrant at the threshold of a benevolent motherland" (Schultermandl, 2013, p. 46). Instead, in Schultermandl's view, Lucy displays an unsympathetic perspective through which she "expresses her hopes and dreams as well as her disappointments and misconceptions" (Schultermandl, 2013, p. 46). Schultermandl's view agrees with the vision of the ethnic female—feminist *Bildungsroman* proposed by Braendlin and they both suggest that despite living in a privileged environment the protagonist increasingly refuses to conform to the American Culture. She makes this choice because she comes from a different culture, she has a different point of view from the American one (according to O'Callaghan "Lucy observes her new home through the filter of the cultural values of the old" (O'Callaghan, 2001, p. 86) and she misses home (what O'Callaghan defines as "not simple immigrant nostalgia" (O'Callaghan, 2001, p. 86). In addition, as observed by Braendlin and Schultermandl, she wants to retain her own critical perspective. These circumstances induce the protagonist to be judgmental towards American society.

Whilst Braendlin and Schultermandl understanding of the heroine places this book in a critical context, it is necessary to emphasize that, as Schultermandl also argues, Lucy's reception of Mariah's words and her

attitude towards the United States can be read in terms of a transnational memory. A transnational memory is a “transgression of the geopolitical boundaries that contain Lucy’s memories in two national contexts: an American and Antiguan one” (Schultermadl, 2013, p. 49). In Schultermadl’s view, even though Lucy was initially determined to forget her past and to create a new one, ultimately she decides to neither “reinvent herself in purely American terms” neither “to excavate an identity that is purely Antiguan” (Schultermadl, 2013, p. 49). According to the line of analysis suggested in this article, Schultermadl illustrates a seminal aspect of Lucy’s *Bildungsroman*; namely, how memory works in reconciling the culture of the past (the native culture) and the culture of the present (the culture of immigration) as it shapes Lucy’s identity and growth.

While in agreement with Schultermadl’s understanding of the heroine as an intercultural character, in what follows we emphasize, however, another aspect of her intercultural *Bildung*; namely, her feminism. Specifically, we point out that the heroine seeks to reconcile a radical third world feminist perspective with a critical American/western feminist perspective. Confirming the importance of a feminist reading of *Lucy*, in several interviews, Kincaid stresses the feminist aspect of this book. Emphasizing the similarities between her own mother Annie Drew and the mother described in the novel, Kincaid remarks that “My mother [...] was a betrayer of her sex” (Listfield, 1990, cited in Bouson, 2005, p. 67). She also contends that *Lucy* is full of “thick female stuff” (Listfield, Perry, 1990, p. 506, cited in Bouson, 2005, p. 67). The author furthermore asserts that *Lucy* is not about “race and class” but rather it deals with “a person trying to figure out how to be an artist, an artist of herself and of things” (Kennedy, 1990, p. 85, cited in Bouson, 2005, p. 67).

An analogous line of analysis to the one we are following has been shortly developed by Paravisini-Gebert (1999). Paravisini-Gebert emphasizes how *Lucy* reflects traditional feminist values and an African-American, postcolonial/third world feminist exegesis. Paravisini-Gebert also maintains that Lucy “fits the traditional description of the feminist heroine” who is “conscious of the unfairness of traditional gender relationship, aware of the exploitative nature of sexual practices” vows “to make a life for herself that does not include submission to a man” and search for equal power relationships (Paravisini-Gebert, 1999, p. 141). However, she is also aware of the movement limitations in terms of

“class and race differences” (Paravisini-Gebert, 1999, p. 141). According to Paravisini-Gebert, Lucy, “a feminist in the accepted sense of the term, is also a character whose thoughts and actions are oriented toward a critique of feminism’s slowness to incorporate class and race differences in its approach” (Paravisini-Gebert, 1999, p. 141).

Focusing like Paravisini-Gebert on the topic of feminism in this novel, in her discussion of third-wave feminism, DeCaires Narain posits that *Lucy* provides “a comprehensive catalogue of the ways in which expansive gestures, however, ‘well-meaning’ are often complicit with oppressive structures” (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 248). As such, the novel can be viewed “as a stark exposition of the ways” in which liberal feminism “fails unless it interrogates its motives with scrupulous rigour” (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 248). This liberal feminism—American second-wave feminism—in *Lucy* is represented by Mariah, who seeks to establish a sisterhood bond with the main character but fails to acknowledge Lucy’s colonial background and in general, does not recognize the presence of racism in American society. Lucy, instead, seeks to make Mariah aware of her limitations.

In agreement with *both* Paravisini-Gebert and DeCaires Narain’s perspectives on *Lucy* which offer diverging interpretations of her feminism, in what follows we argue that the heroine employs a *hybrid* feminist perspective, which combines both second-wave and third-wave feminism. On the one hand, her point of view is grounded in postcolonial thinking, as it offers a similar perspective to the one offered by Gayatri Spivak in her critical interpretation of French feminism but it is framed within the Caribbean context. On the other hand, it reflects a second-wave feminism perspective akin to that elaborated by Betty Friedan and others.

2. Lucy and Gayatri Spivak’s postcolonial feminist vision

According to Abdalkafor (2015), Spivak read second-wave French feminists, among others Kristeva, and “wrote for two American journals, *Critical inquiry* and *Yale French Studies*,” which demonstrated an interest in French feminism (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 38). However, she subsequently refused to continue writing for these two journals any longer. Her dilemma during the 1980s was consequent to “her being a Bengali woman who realizes that the ‘native subaltern female’ did not have

a position to speak from and could not participate in the feminist struggle (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 39). Spivak concluded that there is a discontinuity between “the struggle of the feminist” and that “of the racial other” that she read “in Kant’s third critique” (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 39). Spivak’s realization that French feminism failed “to embrace” the “‘native subaltern female’” cause her to shift her interests and to write “French feminism in an international frame,” as well as translating “Devi’s short story ‘Draupadi’ in 1981” (Spivak, 1990, p. 167–168, cited in Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 39). In “French Feminism in an International Frame,” Spivak criticizes French feminism “for its complicity” with imperialist discourses “in that it excludes “‘the native subaltern’” woman from “the feminist passage to freedom” (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 39). As a result, according to Spivak, French feminists’ involvement of “the ‘Third-World’ woman” in the feminist struggle does not entail a “genuine other-directed politics” because the true aim is the consolidation of “the self” (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 40).

As Abdalkafor observes, by “highlighting the heterogeneity of women’s struggles in her readings of literature” Spivak places herself among third-wave feminists. In *Politics and Feminism* (1999), in fact, Arneil describes third-wave feminism as encompassing “the diversity and differences in perspectives among ‘women’ (Arneil, 1999, p. 186 cited in Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 44). Shelley Budgeon defines third-wave feminism as a “deconstructive impulse” “to start from multiple differences among women” rather than dealing with the categories ‘man’ and ‘woman’” (Budgeon, 2011, p. 4 cited in Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 44). Spivak does indeed utilize “deMan tropological deconstruction” to demonstrate “the complicity between Anglo-American feminism and imperialism in foreclosing ‘the native subaltern female’” (Abdalkafor, 2015, p. 40). According to DeCaires Nairein, Spivak highlights the ways in which “second-wave feminist scholarship has often compounded the distortions and misrepresentations of dominant discourses, constructing ‘the’ Third World woman as homogeneously victimized by (traditional) patriarchal culture and in need of rescue by Western feminism” (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 242). In alerting feminist women “of the danger of *speaking for* ‘the other woman’, Gayatri Spivak and Chandra Mohanty have generated “productive anxieties and produced a welcome degree of self-consciousness about how feminist research should be defined and conducted” (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 242). The challenges made by “black/postcolonial feminists have been one of several powerful forces”

that “have fractured ‘the women’s movement’ and generated the desire for other forms of feminism including ‘third wave’” (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 242).

One can reasonably posit that—in a similar vein to Spivak—Lucy (aka Kincaid) deconstructs Mariah’s argumentations using a postcolonial feminist perspective. While Spivak’s analysis is based on her background as a Bengali woman, Lucy’s criticism is grounded in her experience in Antigua. It can be argued that employing a postcolonial feminist perspective similar to Spivak’s, Lucy deconstructs Mariah’s Eurocentric “logos” from a post-colonial and feminist perspective to challenge Mariah’s narrow Western perspective, which does not acknowledge racial disparities in the United States, as well as Lucy’s different cultural background. Lucy operates such criticism by emphasizing the connection between Mariah’s words and her colonized background to offer Mariah a more inclusive perspective on the world, which grants recognition to the female colonized and subaltern subject. Kamada (2010) observes that talking about her first published collection *At the Bottom of the River* (1983), Kincaid comments: “I can see that *At the Bottom of the River* was [...] a very unangry, decent, civilized book and it represents sort of this successful attempt by English people to make their version of a human being [...] out of me” (Kamada, 2010, p. 22; Perry, 1993, p. 698–699). Mentioning this quote, Ferguson contends that “by her own admission, Jamaica Kincaid views her first publication [...] as the text of a repressed, indoctrinated subaltern subject” (Kamada, 2010, p. 22; Ferguson, 1994, p. 7). While Kincaid may appear as a “repressed subaltern” writer in her first publication in her subsequent work she certainly changed her gaze. Lucy is a subaltern subject, but she is neither “repressed” nor “indoctrinated”, rather she is antagonistic because of her intercultural perspective.

3. Lucy and Betty Friedan’s feminist thinking

Although, as we have previously stated, Lucy seeks recognition of her Caribbean colonized background from Mariah and she resists marginalization to the position of the repressed subject in need of liberation by Western feminism, on the other hand, we highlight that, as suggested by the intercultural *Bildungsroman*, which recognizes the immigrant’s need to harmonize the culture of origin with the culture of immigration, that Lucy, has to reconcile herself to some problematic aspects of her

cultural background. These aspects pertain to her mother's Annie patriarchal and colonial views on women, which have encouraged her to relegate Lucy to a subordinate position within the household throughout her childhood. Because Annie has marginalized Lucy throughout her upbringing in favour of her brothers, this *Bildung* would not evolve to its ultimate end and Lucy would not gain her independence unless she cuts ties with her mother since Lucy's final pursuance is freedom (Brown-Guillory, 2008, p. 137).

As an illustration of this argument we note that in the novel the heroine laments that her mother knew her "as well as she knew herself" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 130)—Lucy even thought of the two of them as "identical" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 130); yet her mother did not have the same aspirations for Lucy that she had for her brothers. For Lucy, her relationship with her mother had been a "love affair," "the only true love affair" in her "whole life," which was interrupted by the birth of her younger brothers and her mother's subsequent complete devotion to them (Kincaid, 1990, p. 132). Furthermore, Lucy deplores that her mother wants to control her psychologically and inform her future according to traditional visions of women—she comments to Lucy: "Oh, I can just see you in your nurse's uniform" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 92). However, Lucy rebels against her mother by not replying to her letters, thus ending any contact with her (Kincaid, 1990, p. 90–91) until she receives news of her father's death (Kincaid, 1990, p. 122).

According to DeCaires Narain (2004), Lucy's relationship with her mother and with Mariah can be regarded as a third-wave feminist battle "with her mother figures and the second-wave feminism they represent" (DeCaires Narain, 2004, p. 248). While DeCaires Narain's interpretation of Lucy is illuminating and applies to Lucy's relationship with Mariah, this analysis suggests that Lucy's dealing with her mother follows the patterns of second-wave feminism. Third-wave feminism was, in fact, born as a daughter's reaction to the second-wave feminism of her mother—the term was in fact coined by Rebecca Walker to take distances from her the feminism of her mother (Alice Walker) (Higgins, 2016, p. 9, 28; Miller, 2017, p. xiii); hence; it was a confrontation between different generations of feminist women. As Lucy emphasizes in the novel, however, her mother Annie is not feminist but she is rather partial towards her brothers. For this reason, it would seem more appropriate to frame this mother—daughter relation within the context of second-wave feminism, when *Lucy* is actually set. In the 1960s—1970s women

were in fact, rebelling against traditional roles assigned to women, for example, as suggested by Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).

If, as we have just maintained, the relationship between the main character and her mother reflects ideas developed by second-wave feminism, so does, in some respects, the heroine's relationship with Mariah. Although there is a contrast between Mariah and Lucy, the latter regards Mariah as a substitute motherly figure, as DeCaires Narain contends. In the novel, in fact, Lucy remarks: "Mariah was superior to my mother for my mother would never come to see that perhaps my needs were more important than her wishes" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 64–65) and also states that "the time I loved Mariah it was because she reminded me of my mother. The times that I did not love her it was because she reminded me of my mother" (Kincaid, 1990, p. 58). Personal dynamics between Lucy and Mariah reflect important concepts articulated in the 1970s by second-wave feminists. For instance, Hirsch observes that "throughout the 1970s, the metaphor of sisterhood, of friendship or of surrogate motherhood has been the dominant model for female and feminist relationships" (Hirsch, 1989, p. 164). Hirsch also adds that during the 1970s "the prototypical feminist voice was, to a large degree, the voice of the daughter" trying "to separate from an overly connected or rejecting mother, in order to bond with her sisters in a relationship of mutual nurturance and support among equals" (Hirsch, 1989, p. 164). Furthermore, she comments that in "functioning as mutual surrogate mothers, sisters can replace mothers" (Hirsch, 1989, p. 164). Hirsch very importantly also observes that "in the feminist movement sisterhood has served not only as a fantasy, but also as an ideal of relation and as an actual practice" sometimes arising as a consequence of difficult relations "feminists had had with their actual and their professional mothers" (Hirsch, 1989, p. 164). In other words, it can be noticed that at the same time that Lucy seeks to make Mariah aware of the limitations of her narrow second-wave feminist point of view using third-wave feminism, she recognizes the worth of some of the perspectives elaborated by second-wave feminism.

5. Final remarks: The road that lies ahead

In light of the analysis elaborated so far in this article, which sought to emphasize the tension between second-wave and third-wave feminism as well as Lucy's ultimate reconciliation of these two perspectives,

one can reasonably argue that “as commentators such as Lisa Jarvis” (“founding editor and publisher of “Bitch” magazine [a popular magazine created in the 1990s]” (Higgins, 2016, p. 29) have emphasized—that the distinction between the different waves of feminism is not altogether clear. As *Lucy* suggests, it is possible to envision a unified feminist movement, which involve “white”, as well as “black” and “brown” women (to use a widely employed terminology in the United States) but to be successful such movement has to adopt an intercultural and “intersectional” (Crenshaw, 1989) perspective and to challenge multicultural propositions (*Lucy* suggests that view that “the assertion of differences multiculturalism proposes re-instates at a meta-level, the same unitary consciousness it claims to undo” (D’Haen, 1996, p. 4). On the one hand, this book invites all women to recognize the need to adopt an intersectional perspective within the feminist movement, on the other hand, it reflects the importance of embracing an intercultural perspective by women of *all* colors when communicating with one another and seeking to establish a common bond. An intercultural position entails to “no longer symbolize the otherness in a mythological, religious” political “or metaphysical elsewhere” but to view it “as a structure and sufficient reason for” her “existence” (Kagha, 2018, p. 9). The suggested definition invites reflection on the possibility to establish a common alliance among women of different colors, social, and cultural backgrounds on the bases of intercultural discourse. This task is not something that one should take for granted but it is rather something that has not yet been achieved. Groups of women who consider themselves feminist are still working on it (see for, example, Bernacchi, 2012).

6. Conclusion

In this article, we have analysed *Lucy* (1990) by Kincaid from the point of the view of the intercultural feminist *Bildungsroman*. We have postulated out that throughout the novel *Lucy* develops a hybrid perspective, which reflects her cultural background but also the culture of the place where she migrated—the United States. At first feeling alienated in the new environment she gradually manages to reconcile her culture of origins with the new culture. Following a struggle in the socio-cultural environment because of her culture, gender, and class status the protagonist breaks up with restrictive ties and gains personal and emo-

tional independence. The heroine's vision is characterized by a radical feminist initiative that combines a postcolonial feminist point of view and a second-wave feminist outlook. In other words, throughout her journey, Lucy foregrounds the notion of 'third space': a vision, "which can neither be reduced to the *self* nor to the *other*, neither to the First nor to the Third World [...]" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 36, cited in Wolf, 2000, p. 135)

We can conclude that *Lucy* serves as a platform for social protest in line with the female/feminist Ethnic *Bildungsroman*. However, citing Härting (2011) we observe that this novel shows that as "both a literary trope and material experience, migration challenges notions of cultural authenticity, foregrounding the ways in which identities emerge instead through the complex politics of representation" (Härting, 2011, p. 1224). This perspective agrees specifically with the canons of the intercultural *Bildung*, which identifies an emerging perspective in migrant literature created by combining multiple cultures and point of view while fighting against alienation and marginalization and which offers innovative visions on several topics discussed in contemporary societies, such as "race" and feminism. In general, *Lucy* anticipates the limits of a multicultural perspective and the importance of an intercultural alternative, which have been mostly debated since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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***ErzieherIn*. Preschool teaching staff in German gender equality policy**

ABSTRACT. The aim of the article was to analyse the policy of gender equality in Germany, here centered around the specifics of the function of (fe)male preschool teachers, which at its source was a profession directed exclusively at women, and as a result is now feminised. These circumstances, unchanged for almost 200 years, have their roots in disregard towards this professional group in the political discourse, apparent in it being treated as “invisible”. Current governmental policies aim at supporting the employment of men at the preschool educational level. The article analyses the federal government’s gender policy through the prism of centrally supported model projects implemented in Germany since 2010, taking into account the broad context of preconditions. General issues present in social debates (such as gender) have been linked in this article to the specifics of a particular professional group of *ErzieherIn*, such as the rise of the rank of early care and education combined with serious staff shortages hindering the implementation of political guidelines. As a result, these two groups of conditions intertwine, forming a very interesting image, in which tradition gives way to contemporary social expectations.

KEYWORDS: preschool teacher, feminisation, gender equality policy, preschools

Introduction

Preschool teachers (*ErzieherIn*) are part of professional teaching staff predominantly identified with the educational work at preschool institutions. Hence, the formerly used colloquial professional term of *KindergärtnerIn* (female preschool teacher). In 1967, men were granted formal permission to work in the profession. The scope of employment opportunities for this professional group was also expanded and professional qualifications valid to this day were defined. After the required

2–3 years of professional training in the socio-pedagogical sector at the level of higher education, female and male preschool teachers can now be employed not only at preschools or nurseries, but also in school clubs, as well as work with adolescents, which significantly expands the scope of professional activity. Due to the low ratio of male preschool teachers, only a female denomination: *Erzieherinis* used in Germany, even though preschool teachers are currently one of the most sought after professional groups. In 2016, as many as 107,000 jobs were not filled¹. It is also a professional group which is not obliged to further professional development and falls into a group of lower-status occupations. In 2018, 417,475 preschool teachers were employed in Germany, only 5.2% being male (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018).

In Germany, teachers in possession of state qualifications (*Staatlich anerkannte Erzieher*) are part of teaching staff. This is not the only professional group performing educational functions at preschool institutions. Pedagogical staff can also mean social educators with state qualifications (*Staatlich anerkannte Sozialpädagogen*), or state-approved child carers (*Kinderpfleger*). This position is present in some German states, such as Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, North Rhine-Westphalia and Thuringia. It is sometimes referred to as social assistant. Childminders can work with children from infancy until the end of primary school, i.e. up to the age of approx. 10. Staff employed in early care facilities are usually people who have obtained qualifications at vocational schools (*Fachschulen*). An important step towards professionalisation of the *ErzieherIn* profession would be to incorporate vocational training courses into university education system for preschool employees known as “Childs pedagogues” (*Kindhetsypädagogoge*), as a response to the demand for high-quality preschool staff.

The aim of the article is to draw attention to the policy of gender equality in Germany, here focused on the specificity of the profession of preschool teachers, which at its source was a profession directed exclusively at women, and which is feminised to this day. The debate around gender equality in relation to this professional group, long present in German-speaking traditions and achievements of Friedrich Wilhelm Fröbel, a German educator, theoretician and leading creator of preschool education, seems extremely interesting. It focuses on both

¹ [Online] Available from: <https://www.azubify.de/ausbildungsberufe/erzieher/> [Accessed: 1th July 2018].

general issues present in social debates (gender), but also on the specifics concerning the particular professional group of *ErzieherIn*, such as the increase of the rank of early care and education not only within academic circles, but above all within state educational policies, as well as serious staff shortages, seriously impeding the implementation of political guidelines. As a result, these two currents of both political and social debates have been overlapping, creating a very interesting image in which tradition gives way to contemporary social expectations. As a result, the profession of preschool teacher is opening up to male candidates and every year there are more and more male employees.

The profession of preschool teacher. Traces of history

Institutions for young children, formed at the turn of the 17th and 19th centuries, were part of social welfare system. This tradition survived in Germany until the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, when preschool institutions were included in the education system. However, there was a serious turn towards the educational situation of preschool children after the publication of the the PISA results in 2000, unfavourable for Germany, which initiated a social educational debate (the so-called “PISA-shock”) and began a still ongoing reform process in all areas of the education system. This phenomenon also encompassed preschool institutions, with particular regard to issues related to teaching staff, to the extraction of the forgotten and stereotypical gender roles, including social behavioural patterns or rights and obligations considered appropriate in preschool work. There was loud talk about the problem of horizontal segregation and social acceptance of preschool teachers being solely females. The policy of equal opportunities for men and women was in this case directed at the former, focusing on ensuring equal access and equal participation of both genders in preschool teaching.

It is worth recalling that the emergence and the development of a profession related to care and upbringing of non-school children was closely linked to the first women’s movements in Germany. It was supposed to be a kind of educational opportunity for women, enabling them to obtain qualifications in the profession and, as a consequence, paid employment, a luxury hardly obtainable for women at that time. In this way, women could gain financial independence, which was also an

attribute of emancipation (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2013, p. 91). In shaping the profession of preschool teacher, researchers of this period point to the accompanying social arguments. Employment of women in child-care institutions was interpreted as their natural duty, with motherly feelings obliging women to take up the role of childminder (Aden-Grossmann, 2011, p. 198–199). Therefore, women were “perceived as not career-oriented, highly valuing family life and not paying attention to status or prestige” (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2013, p. 91).

Wilma Aden-Grossmann draws attention to two arguments in favour of the value and legitimacy of women taking up work at preschool and early-school education institutions. First of all, it was argued that the profession was basically the same as female nature, their duties as mothers, and thus belonged to women. In this way, in line with “the ideal of a mother-woman, it did not question the dominant views on femininity and was not a threat of masculinisation” (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2013, p. 91). Secondly, the need for paid employment was discussed in the context of the possible financial security of women, defining their independence, resulting not only from their marital status, but also, which in this period particularly concerned widows, allowed families to maintain decent living conditions (Aden-Grossmann, 2011, p. 198–199). Due to the intensified women’s movements, certain institutions were created to enable the education of women who wanted to work with children who, due to their age, were not yet subject to compulsory education. The approach to the functions of pre-school institutions also changed, in which “storing” children gradually began to give way to their education and required reaching beyond the very “female nature”. In a short time, the following were created:

- In 1837, Theodor Fliedner was the first to teach preschool female candidates 2–3 month courses in Kaiserswerth, from 1854 they were extended to one year.
- In 1847, Friedrich Fröbel—founder of the first “kindergarten” established an educational institution for preschool teachers.
- In 1872, in Leipzig—the first seminar for preschool teachers (*das erste Seminar für Kindergärtnerinnen*) was created by Henriette Goldschmidt, later transformed into the Freblow school for women (*Fröbel-Frauenschule*).
- In 1873, Henriette Schrader-Breymann, Fröbel’s niece and student, created a so-called House of Fröbel and Pestalozzi in Berlin, in which future preschool employees were educated.

- In 1893, an association called ‘Girls’ and women’s social assistance group’ (*Mädchen- und Frauen gruppen für soziale Hilfsarbeit*) was established in Berlin, which initially offered annual courses for preschool teachers.

The prerequisites for candidates in the profession of preschool teacher (*Kindergartnerinnenbildung*) were very general and defined the following: minimum age, secondary education—for example, a college diploma for girls—a CV, health certificate and payment of tuition. In this case, gender was important, because the specifics of the expectations were in full extent consistent with the then recognised “natural” predispositions of women. The training courses lasted one year and covered both theoretical and practical subjects, such as: Pedagogy, Anthropology, Religion, History, foreign languages, Drawing and Singing. Seminars were offered as a form of support for preschool teachers. It is worth noting that completing the courses did not limit their graduates to public education of young children, but they could also obtain employment in private homes of middle-class families (Gary, 1995, p. 88 and more). Preschool teachers, according to Fröbel’s concept, understood their functions broader than just being carers supervising children’s physiological functions, but as educational experts who organised child-friendly education. At that time, a new scope of duties was combined in the triad of didactics, upbringing and care. Creating preschools as educational institutions required different preparation of the staff (Derschau, 1987, p. 67–81). The creation of this new understanding of the profession began, unfortunately, due to the difficult social situation of the profession which was limited as a typically female occupation.

Diversity management—new state policy

Among the many problems currently raised in the arena of German education policy, the issue of staff and the quality of services provided as part of pre-school education occupies one of key positions. Within this spectrum, the issue of gender equality was opened to the political sector as one of the alternatives to improving the difficult staffing situation at preschool institutions. It is worth adding that candidates from other countries encouraged to work in German preschools constitute a similar alternative. Although this is not so clearly justified in the political discourse, the coincidence of the dates of the initiatives introduced and the

inclusion of the issue of employment of men at preschools along with the “package” of other important issues requiring immediate attention, such as serious employment shortages, does not seem accidental. We may suppose that in the employment policy for the early care and education sector, gender issues were not taken seriously until after the educational crisis recognised by politicians and the need for corrective initiatives. This opened the debate on gender equality with regard to the German preschool sector, which is an important area of the adopted diversity management policy. As a result, federal authorities have made it one of their priorities to overcome the existing hierarchical two-gender classification (Pfau-Effinger, 2005) (*zweigeschlechtlichen Klassifizierens*) (Andresen, Dölling, Kimmerle, 2003, p. 33).

Among pressing problems that require immediate attention in the preschool area were the issues of ensuring that children in early care and education facilities have contact with gender-diverse teaching staff. One of the arguments was that children spending most of their day at preschool, separated from mothers and fathers, have the right to establish relationships with teachers who are at the same time a type of authority and models conveying appropriate male models which are as important as female. A similar position is presented by entities responsible for running institutions, as well as their employees and parents.² They clearly emphasise the need to increase the number of men employed at preschools and even in nurseries (for 0–3 year-olds).

For several years, the number of men choosing the profession of preschool teacher has increased significantly compared to previous years, and this trend has continued until now. In Germany, in 2016 there were a total of 27,144 active male teachers and apprentices employed at the preschool level³, which represents 5% of all employees. This means an increase of another 0.3 percentage points, i.e. by 2,177 more men were employed compared to 2015 (The reports of the Bertelsmann Foundation, 2008). An interesting phenomenon is also the process of selection of workplaces by men who most often choose those institutions where the teaching staff is heterogeneous. At this point, we may ask ourselves

² Questionnaires implemented for the ESF-Modellprogramm (*More men in preschools*) programme run by the „Eltern-Kind” initiative in Augsburg.

³ In the case of preschool teachers, it is possible in Germany to take up employment while pursuing vocational training. Then it is the position of trainee for which remuneration is secured.

whether the choice of a given facility and the value assigned to it are determined by the “masculinity of its employees” (Bourdieu, 2002).

Preschool is still feminised. Women predominate in nurseries, preschools or mixed facilities. The number of male pedagogical staff employed at the preschool level, however, shows a very different picture in individual federal states. Disproportions range from 10.9% in Hamburg, 8.9% in Bremen or 9.6% in Berlin, where almost every tenth pedagogical employee is male, to federal states, such as Bavaria, where the number of men preschool teachers is negligible and amounts to mere 2.9%⁴. For example, in 2008⁵, out of 47,711 employees representing the total number of teaching staff employed in early care and education institutions in Bavaria (0–6 years of age), only 720 employees were men. In addition, a large proportion (10%) were employed in common rooms. Researchers indicate that this diversity is significantly felt in practice: in Berlin, at least one man is employed in each early care and education institution, while in Bavaria, where the demand for the male part of the teaching staff is the largest, only 16.1% of institutions employ male teachers (Statistik der Kinder und tätigen Personen in Tageseinrichtungen, 2016).

Table 1. Preschool and managing staff with gender differentiation—figures from 2006 and 2018

Bun- desland	Male	Female	In total	Male	Female	In total
	Numerical data			Percentage data		
2018						
BW	4.570	87.862	92.432	4,9	95,1	100
BY	4.343	92.518	96.861	4,5	95,5	100
BE	3.367	27.178	30.545	11,0	89,0	100
BB	1.647	19.358	21.005	7,8	92,2	100
HB	474	4.485	4.959	9,6	90,4	100
HH	1.799	13.527	15.326	11,7	88,3	100

⁴ Ministerium für Soziales, Integration und Gleichstellung Mecklenburg Vorpommern, Neue Ausbildung: „Staatlich anerkannte/r Erzieher/in für 0- bis 10-Jährige“ [Online] Available from: <https://www.regierung-mv.de/Landesregierung/sm/Familie/Kindertagesf%C3%B6rderung/Kita-Ausbildung-Fachkraft-Kindertageseinrichtungen/> [Accessed: 1st July 2018].

⁵ Data collected by Forschungsdatenzentrum der Länder im Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, Statistik der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe.

Bun- desland	Male	Female	In total	Male	Female	In total
	Numerical data			Percentage data		
2018						
HE	4.012	46.010	50.022	8,0	92,0	100
MW	776	11.717	12.493	6,2	93,8	100
Ni	3.342	52.583	55.925	6,0	94,0	100
NW	5.665	108.896	114.561	4,9	95,1	100
RP	1.634	29.895	31.529	5,2	94,8	100
SL	334	6.271	6.605	5,1	94,9	100
SN	2.752	31.854	34.606	8,0	92,0	100
ST	1.016	17.507	18.523	5,5	94,5	100
SH	1.712	18.336	20.048	8,5	91,5	100
TH	781	14.432	15.213	5,1	94,9	100
Germany	38.224	582.429	620.653	6,2	93,8	100
2006						
BW	1.093	45.262	46.355	2,4	97,6	100
BY	744	44.048	44.792	1,7	98,3	100
BE	993	14.994	15.987	6,2	93,8	100
BB	194	12.336	12.530	1,5	98,5	100
HB	316	3.013	3.329	9,5	90,5	100
HH	659	7.622	8.281	8,0	92,0	100
HE	1.396	28.623	30.019	4,7	95,3	100
MV	105	7.963	8.068	1,3	98,7	100
Ni	986	29.611	30.597	3,2	96,8	100
NW	2.773	71.184	73.957	3,7	96,3	100
RP	535	18.909	19.444	2,8	97,2	100
SL	105	4.005	4.110	2,6	97,4	100
SN	334	20.607	20.941	1,6	98,4	100
ST	116	12.704	12.820	0,9	99,1	100
SH	564	10.666	11.230	5,0	95,0	100
TH	93	10.218	10.311	0,9	99,1	100
Germany	11.006	341.765	352.771	3,1	96,9	100
Differentiation 2006–2018						
Germany	+27.218	+240.664	+267.882	+247,3	+70,4	+75,9

Source: I. Nowosad, K. Tomasik-Abdelsamie, (own study based on:) German Statistical Office, Statistisches Bundesamt: Statistiken der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe, 2006 und 2018. (in:) Fachkräftebarometer Frühe Bildung 2019, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, München 2019.

Projects supporting the employment of men at preschool institutions

Many questions were asked in the forum of socio-educational debates. For example: What role does gender play at preschools? “Gender-friendly preschools”—what exactly does this slogan mean? How can gender equality be translated into teaching practice? How can the teaching staff, but also administration: managerial bodies and supervisory institutions, as well as other entities responsible for the quality of pre-school education, develop the gender equality policy? How can preschools consciously and honestly implement the idea of equal opportunities for men and women, without a stereotypical approach to gender? How can the implementation of this idea enrich everyone? In 2010, these questions and the accompanying disputes led to the establishment of the “MEHR Männer in Kitas” (Budrach, 2012) initiative by the federal government, as a coordinating body for 16 model projects financed by the European Social Fund, which were planned for the next three years and implemented in 14 federal states. After the end of this project in 2013, another federal initiative promoting a specific movement for gender equality policy in both pre-school and nursery institutions in all federal states was opened⁶.

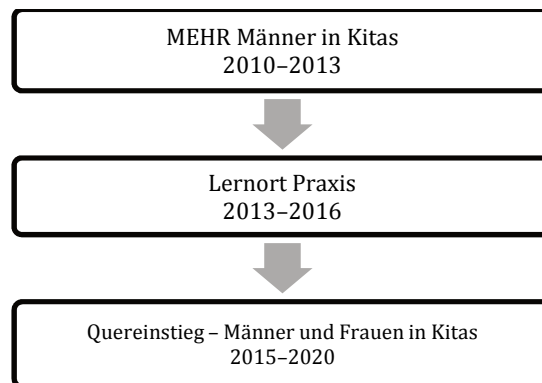


Figure 1. Federal projects supporting the employment of men at preschool institutions

Source: I. Nowosad, K. Tomasik-Abdelsamie, own study.

⁶ These are projects targeted at the group of children aged 0–6 and institutions providing care for them, defined as institutions for early education, upbringing and care.

The first of the nationwide projects was “MEHR Männer in Kitas”, evidently focused on increasing the recruitment of men. In social promotion, eight areas of activity were highlighted as being particularly important in both the social campaign and the checking/analysis of factors favouring the employment of men at preschool institutions, or and even more broadly at early education and care facilities (0–6 years of age). The areas exposed by the government were also the subject of informational publications and leaflets about the implemented project, such as⁷:

- gender-oriented professional orientation, including activities promoting preschool teaching as a profession also for men, i.e. convincing young men to join preschool teams (*Jungen und Männer für den Erzieherberuf gewinnen*);
- promotion of volunteering on the part of both men and women—“Federal volunteering, voluntary year of social work and school internships”;
- shaping social gender sensitivity, especially in relation to the profession of preschool teacher and, as a result, an increase in the number of men employed at preschools (MEHR Männer in Kitas);
- promoting gender-oriented activities organised by preschool institutions under the slogan “Various preschool activities for fathers”;
- promotion (information campaign) by preschool institutions in which men were employed;
- protection against the so-called “general suspicion” as creating safe working conditions for the male part of the teaching staff;
- development of gender diversity taking into account gender in the employment of preschool teaching and management staff;
- implementation of improvement courses: gender-sensitive pedagogy and publications on ‘gender-specific pedagogical work in preschools’.

Lernort Praxis was another nationwide program. A project focused on the development of processes changing daily learning practices implemented in the years 2013–2016. Within this framework, the Federal Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) allocated eight million euros to support 76 projects in seven federal states (Berlin, Hamburg, Hessen, Lower Saxony, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Schleswig-Holstein). The funds were used to guarantee (and pay for) an

⁷ Analysen, Erfahrungen und Strategien [Online] Available from: <https://mika.koordinations-maennerinkitas.de/unsere-themen/praxis-handreichungen/> [Accessed: 4th November 2019].

additional number of positions for mentors to facilitate the implementation of the main project assumptions. Mentors, together with heads of particular institutions were trained and prepared to achieve the project's objectives. The program was implemented in a total of 170 institutions that embarked on the introduction of three priorities: strengthening qualifications, especially in the area of practical activities and instructional concepts (*Qualifizierung im Bereich Praxisanleitung und Anleitungskonzeptionen*); strengthening cooperation between educational establishments (*Verstärkung der Kooperation der Lernorte*); unblocking and linking underrepresented groups of people as qualified employees (*Erschließung und Bindung bisher unterrepräsentierter Personengruppen als Fachkräfte*). In this case, a third of the priorities indicated could be related to the increase in the number of male jobs in pre-schools.

In 2015, another federal initiative was undertaken to increase the social attractiveness of the profession and was directed at recruiting people who were thinking of changing their career. It was recognised that professional areas related to the education system, including pre-school, are a huge challenge for middle-aged people who want to change jobs. The results of research conducted for the use of the project revealed the following justifications:

- retraining takes a long time,
- no remuneration is received during retraining,
- the conditions for receiving a state subsidy for training are not determined individually and it is often unobtainable,
- financing of loan-based qualification courses/training is associated with a high risk of subsequent debt.

It is no wonder then that most people, despite initial interest in working in pre-school settings, quit and look for work in other sectors. The emphasised value of the project is to facilitate the acquisition of qualifications along with the implementation of paid work. i.e. maintaining income continuity and not interrupting it during education. Thus, the project implements another important idea of lifelong learning.⁸ As part of the project “Quereinstieg—Männer und Frauen in Kitas (2015–2020)”, which can be translated here as “Side entrance—men and women in daycare centres (2015–2020)”, 16 up to 20 “project points” oriented at

⁸ Analysen, Erfahrungen und Strategien. [Online] Available from: <https://mika.koordination-maennerinkitas.de/unsere-themen/praxis-handreichungen/> [Accessed: 4th November 2019].

recruiting interested parties interested in changing their profession were to be created in all federal states from March 2015⁹. It is worth adding that the continuing coordination office “MEHR Männer in Kitas” accompanies this program both in scientific and practical dimensions (Ibidem). The aim of the “Quereinstieg—Männer und Frauen in Kitas” program is therefore to implement adult-friendly, part-time education enabling the acquisition of state qualifications to practice the profession while receiving a salary. This model enables remuneration for internships completed during retraining. This way of delivering education is already bringing some results as statistics confirm the increase in the number of male pedagogical staff at the preschool educational level.

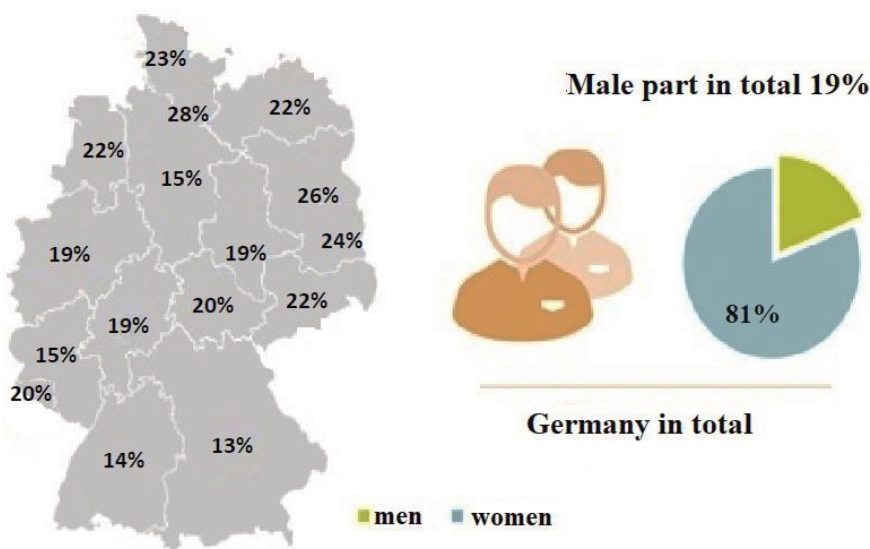


Figure 2. Students of the first year of teachers' school with gender differentiation in 2017–2018 (in %)

Source: Koordinationsstelle „Männer in Kitas“¹⁰

⁹ BMFSFJ secures funds from the European Social Fund of 33,8 mln EUR in total, cf.: Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, ESF-Bundesmodellprogramm Quereinstieg—Männer und Frauen in Kitas. Kurzinformation, Stand: November 2014, p. 6. [Online] Available from: https://www.esf-bw.de/esf/fileadmin/user_upload/Foerderperiode_2014-2020/Der_ESF_FP_2014-20/Der_ESF_auf_Bundesebene/Kurzinformation_ESF-Bundesmodellprogramm_Quereinstieg.pdf [Accessed: 1st September 2019].

¹⁰ See source: [Online] Available from: <https://mika.koordination-maennerinkitas.de/forschung/maenneranteil-bundeslaender/> [Accessed: 1th July 2019].

Summary

An interesting thesis put forward by Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik that “it was not the feminisation of the teaching profession which brought about his degradation, but the feminisation was a consequence of the loss of attractiveness by this profession” (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2013, p. 86), seems to be absolutely justified in relation to its situation in German preschools. The statistical dominance of women is a testimony to the historically low prestige of the job in the professional structure of the market, which was inscribed in its constitution as a continuation of women’s home chores. However, it is also the result of regarding this professional group in political discourse as “invisible” for the next 200 years. As a result, for social and economic reasons, no increase in prestige was possible and the gender division was maintained. Working in the profession was expected to be full of maternal feelings, but was not seen as an achievement; was to replace mothers, but not to be career-oriented. Qualifications for the profession were interpreted as „given by nature” and not acquired in the education process (Paster-nack, Keil, 2013).

Among the professions that developed in parallel with the profession of preschool teachers and had a similar genesis, were occupations of social worker and primary school teacher (*Wohlfahrtspflegerin* or *Fürsorgerin. Volksschullehrerin*). However, their feminisation had its reasonable limits (Ebert, 2006, p. 76). Nonetheless, despite the still existing statistical dominance of women, there is an interesting upward trend in the number of men choosing to work at preschools and at day-care centres. This process is reinforced by the academic support for the profession, but not only. Also, the re-discovery of the rank of childhood supported by neurophysiology (Hüther, 2008) and psychology (Dornes, 1997), could no longer be ignored by politicians (Köster, Balluseck, 2008).

Significant changes adopted all over Germany, recognising the education of children in preschools, were approved by the 1991 Child and Youth Care Act. Undoubtedly, pre-school education was already of great importance at that time. However, translating this into everyday practice was implemented by individual federal states very differently and at a different pace. The discourse on the quality of preschool institutions only began in the first decade of the new century as a reaction to the results of PISA research. The debate on gender equality and the re-

quirement to implement new processes and methods ensuring equal opportunities for the development of girls and boys also made its mark. It is indeed about being able to experience differences as an enriching, rather than hindering process. In preschool teachers' work, this basically has meant an increase in the importance of the requirement for competence in coping with heterogeneity, which has not only changed vocational training programmes, but has also opened preschool facilities to the need to employ male staff as well. In Germany, this process has gained undisputed political support since 2010 and draws attention to the search for and verification of the effectiveness of their new forms of implementation in the *ErzieherIn* profession and gender equality policies.

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Folktales about The Tatras in children's literature

ABSTRACT. In my contribution I will discuss the folktales about the Tatras and their reference in children's literature. I will focus mainly on the stories that appear in the textbook of Slovak literature for the 5th year of elementary schools. Specifically, the tale of Tatranská Kikimora, but also others are discussed. Through this and other individual stories, pupils can learn and get to know more about the environment in which they live.

KEYWORDS: Children's Literature, Folktale, Folk Literature, The Tatras, Kikimor

Folkloristic and literary-scientific research emphasizes that folk literature have very much influenced the development of artistic literature. Verbal art in the earliest period was evolving in connection with the work process and the magical acts and rites that should help the man in the struggle with the natural elements. During this period, the foundations of family and calendar and ceremonial folklore were built. They were mostly dominated by the songs usually associated with e.g. dancing, wedding customs, funeral speeches, etc. From other parts of folklore, there were riddles, adages, weather proverbs, fables and magic fairy tales. Verbal art was mainly a literary manifestation of simple people.

Demonology can be described as a typical folk religion which has been preserved in oral tradition almost until the present time. Manicism is associated with a cult of ancestors. Animism rests on the concepts of a lively or animated nature and a realm of spirits which are based in the nature and have an influence on a daily life of ordinary people. In case of Slovans because of their relatively weak development of official mythology, demonology is basically the main area of the original religious imaginations. Demonological concepts have settled through time into oral tradition in various forms such as fables, legends, and fairy tales, and were firmly embedded in Slovak folklore, especially in superstitions and customs (Pius, 2012, p. 42).

When dealing with folklore, in a broader context it can be discussed as a literary folklore, as stated by Peter Liba:

Literary folklore is a constructional process of a literary work in which we aesthetically apply poetological principles, rules, stylistically-compositional shapes and genre patterns of creation and reception of verbal folklore as a folk art in its various developmental stages, even in present ones (Liba, 1991, p. 45).

Miroslav Pius adds:

After leaving (Urheimat—old homeland), the Slavic tribes have arrived to the neighborhood of other ethnicities. These ethnic groups had to necessarily influence their myths, stories, fables, and fairy tales. Before Slavic tribes disintegrated, they formed their basic worldview which they later presented in verbal art—i.e. also in fairy tales (Pius, 2012, p. 207).

From the historical aspect, in the period of Middle Aged literature, the magic and ceremonial elements were gradually disappearing and societal, family and historical themes became more prominent. Also the Christian thinking was being deepened. In a conceptual and artistic differentiation, a varied range of verbal genres was formed. The core of the verbal art was formed by a calendar-based ceremonial poetry, in which there was a dominant position of the ceremonial and love songs, jokes, puzzles, proverbs, riddles, adages, proverbs and weather sayings. An important role was played mainly by family ceremonial poetry with the predominant genres of wedding and lament songs and burial texts. In the Middle Ages, through a historical context, there is an emergence of military, recruiting, and historical songs and songs with outlaw and bandit themes, as well as the texts relating to specific historical events. The accompanying feature of this literary production were social themes, in which a poor man was generally rewarded and a rich man was usually punished. Epic and balladic works were dominated by anti-Turkish struggle, recruiting and military songs. In addition, animal and legend narratives, local stories, and magic fairy tales had been developed. At the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, there was a rise in the development of war-related themes and the theme of resistance against Vienna. There is also unfolding of more realistic stories in which the main hero is a simple person.

According to a significant scholar of the older Slovak literature Ján Mišianik, out of the prosaic genres the following ones were cultivated (Mišianik, 1958, p. 284):

- 1) magical fairytales that later shaped their appearance by specific features such as the battle of the hero with the dragon (Lomidrevo and Valibuk), socially focused themes (e.g. Popoluška, *O dvanástich mesiačikoch*), merging the real and miraculous world, living and unliving nature (e.g. Zakliata hora, Radúz and Mahuliena), the help of fairy-tale characters to the heroes (e.g. *Zlatá podkova*, *Zlaté pero*, *Zlatý vlas*) and the victory of good over evil (e.g. *Sol' nad zlato*);
- 2) realistic, adventurous fairy-tales that took inspirations from everyday life and their hero was a simple man;
- 3) humorous and satirical fairy-tales which fully developed only in the next period;
- 4) folk drama, weather sayings, proverbs, and adages.

For a Slovak folklore—a family is of the highest importance. It takes care not only of the livelihood and housing, but also of the spiritual development of young people. It does this in the form of a tale that teaches and educates children. Tales also preserve spiritual wealth. In the second half of the 17th century and particularly in the 18th century, lyrical songs were developed more intensely, mainly love, military, shepherds and humorous songs. Furthermore basic ballad features and basis for basis for children's folklore, recitations, number songs, and fun games were created. This creation also reflects social tension, especially in socially-tuned songs.

According to literary researchers, verbal art has the following features:

1. It reflects social and cultural relations of the environment—it is the expression of “folk ideology”.
2. Selection and improvisation dominate in the individual approach to realization of verbal art, while selection is the result of the application of folklore phenomena in a particular situation.
3. Improvisation is the carrier of innovative tendencies in the interpretative process, especially in folk narratives.

From the basic types of the verbal folklore (lyrics, epics, drama), the most frequent epic works include the stories of King Mateus Corvinus, who successfully fought against the Turks, and also those about Juraj Jánošík, who represents the courage, bravery and wisdom of a simple man. Jánošík theme is also associated with the folktales of the High Tatras, which mention three thieves—besides Jánošík it is Michal Vdovec and Karol Poroňský. The poetry based on the theme of thieves has inspired many literary works—as Andrej Melicherčík said:

its basic form of celebrating the mountain men, admiring of their fighting courage and valor, coupled with the dreamed desire for liberty and freedom, is developing as the predominant and characteristic feature of the Jánošík tradition in our literature during this period (1955, p. 19).

Folktales have many common features with legends and myths, since supernatural or spiritual beings are often involved in the plot. Stories are related to the specific historical events or characters. If the plot and the characters are invented, the story is localized to a certain place, within a certain time. Historical folktales and ballads particularly depict the period of Turkish incursions into the Slovak country. In addition, local folktales emerge, and include almost all the stories about the Tatras that tell us how various natural formations—hills, ponds, waterfalls, gorges, etc. have been created. Such stories are: *Prečo je Kriváň krivý*, *Studenovodské vodopády*, *Mních*, *Skok* and others. In addition, development of adventurous, satirical, and humorous folktales, similar to fairy tales is evident. In the folktales, folklore is the main motivational basis, with which the folkloric plotlines, poetics and language are much related. The author transmits the whole way of life into his work, which is also reflected in fine arts, music, theatre, dance... etc.

According to Viliam Marčok (1978, p. 78), folktales are divided into:

1. Eponymous, etiological folktales explaining the origin and meaning of cultural and historical phenomena (cities, castles, coats of arms, churches, etc.).
2. Heroic folktales about the actions of historically significant personalities (about Jánošík, King Matej, Bátory, bandits, etc.).
3. Chronical folktales talking about the events that have affected the fate of a wider collective (wars, uprisings, natural disasters, epidemics, etc.).
4. A socio-utopian folktales discussing a better future of people and their paths towards this future (about underground knights, Jánošík treasures, the emergence of a new Jánošík, etc.).

In the historical process of their mutual coexistence, the folk art and artistic literature have been constantly converging. In the older period, a lot of church themes are becoming more and more included in the calendar-ceremonial poetry. Slovak folklore (folk art) has a specific relation to literature. They have been influencing each other since the old times. Records and editing of folk art usually formed the basic degree /material basis for literary and artistic creation. National folklore is

often associated with music, gestures and other expressions. As Peter Glocko (1991, p. 54) says:

Editing of fairy tales is necessary, we have no doubts about that. More precisely: edits might be called "inserts", that is, what I have already said—the writer's entering into a group of narrators. Today's writer should give his talent to the services of a fairy tale, without shyness, without fear, because the fairy tale has nurtured him. The authors who were not nurtured by it, can be spotted easily—their language lacks something; they lack emotion, they have a fear of simple narratives, they are somehow incomplete, they are cold [...].

Folk poetry belongs to the most widespread kinds of verbal folklore. This is also confirmed by the fact that, since the end of the 18th century, renowned Slovak writers and educators have turned their attention towards folk art as an inexhaustible source of creative stimuli. In the period of the Slovak National Revival, Pavol Jozef Šafárik with Ján Blahoslav and other collaborators issued a collection called *Songs of the worldly people of Slovakia in Uhřích 1, 2* (Pest, 1823, 1827); after them Ján Kollár published a monumental collection of *National songs* (Budín, 1834–1835). In the following, richly developed and so called *Štúrperiod*, the folk song became the basic phenomenon of poetry. Several educators paid special attention to folk art, traditions and folklore as a whole. Jan Francisci Rimavsky published *The Slovak legends* (Levoča, 1845), Pavol Dobšinský and Augustín Horislav Škultéty issued equally entitled *Slovak legends* (Rožňava, 1858, Banská Štiavnica, 1859–1861). Folk art played an inspirational role in the production of significant so-called *Štúr poets* (such as Samo Chalupka, Ján Botto, Janko Kráľ, Ján Kalinčiak, Ľudovít Štúr and others) as well as in the literature production of the next/following generations. They were *Štúr followers* who had been looking for the image of the nation and its history and culture in the legends.

Legends show us the power of a certain motif that had lived through centuries in the nation. Every nation has its heroes, brave monarchs, or warriors who are against iniquity and vanity. Such narratives always helped people to survive spiritually and to be renewed again in difficult moments [...] (Čupka, 2018, p. 9).

Folk literature and in particular legends were also transferred to children's literature and thus influenced its form. According to Benedi-

ková (1991) we can classify literature for children from different points of view, e.g. according to the age of an addressee, or the literary types and genres or by typological criteria. A typological classification is that one which takes into account a type of a book publication, a ratio of the text and images, a graphic layout, a ratio of paper and other book components, a format of the book, etc.

Benediková (1991, in Vitězová, 2016) distinguishes these basic book types:

- 1) visual (genres with a focus on visual and verbal communication);
- 2) visual-textual (genre with a focus on visual, verbal and literary communication);
- 3) textual-visual (genres with a focus on literary, verbal and visual communication).

We consider the literary genres of the first and second categories to be the priority in the child's pre-reader stage of development. In addition to these, there are optional genres, included in the third category. In relation to the addressee they have to fulfill special functions aimed at forming the literary-reading cultivation of a small child. To these so-called the textual-visual genres we assign all intentional texts and genres for pre-reader age; lyrical, epic and dramatic genres; genres of folk art and modern literature; fairy tales, fables and legends; fiction for young children; dialogised forms of games, etc. A separately taken type is a so called synthesizing publication. Together with the text and illustrations in these publications, there are included music materials, sound recordings, educational and artistic sound media, etc. (Vitězová, 2016, p. 25–26).

The storytellers were the people who had a certain gift—good memory and great narrative skills. And people liked listening to them. [...] Narration of stories, either from real-life or from the world of fantasy, had a great value. Stories taught children virtues and moral laws (good always win over evil). Narrating for adults made winters more pleasant. During the time when there was less work on the farms, people grouped together, often just to listen to the narrator. Folk storytelling helped people to survive bad times, modelled their universal moral and ethical values, and taught them to recognize good from evil. In the folk storytelling, there is strongly rooted a fantastical beauty of the ideas, life experience, disappointments and pleasures of the people who had lived centuries before us. We can perceive it and pass it on (Čupka, 2018, p. 1).

As regards children's literature, many legends are included in literature textbooks. They appear mainly in children's books for those aged

between 6–15, representing a younger and older reading age. Legends can be either folk or artificial ones. They belong to epic genres and are linked to specific historical events or characters. This fact differs them from fairy tales. In spite of the real basis of the story, legends contain many fictional elements; besides real characters there are also invented and supernatural ones. Also the story itself is the creation of fantasy. Its dramatic tune is similar to the fairy tale but it more often ends tragically, i.e. by the death of the main hero (Hlebová, 2006, p. 23).

Based on the poetics of the folk legend a new artificial legend has arisen. Its name was originally of much wider scope: referred also to folk fairy tales (*J. Dobšínský—Slovenské prstonárodné povesti*), historical novelas of the “Štúr period” (*J. Kalinčiak—Reštavrácia*), as well as contemporary prose (*M. Kukučín—Dom v stráni*). At present, we prefer a narrower meaning of this genre. It is a story that has a historical background and is bound to a specific place and/or to a specific person. These stories are divided into local (referring to the names of places, hills, rivers, and castles), historical (Great Moravian period, battles with Turks, outlaw stories), and heraldic ones (about coat of arms) (*Žánre detskej literatúry*, 2016).

Legends representing epic narration can be prosaic also in verses. They have much to do with fables and myths and are divided into two basic groups:

1. Local legends—linked to a certain location. They include:
 - etymological legends (explain the origins of cities, names of rivers, hills, and rocks);
 - etiological legends (touching the natural peculiarities of the region, the emergence of certain phenomena, particularities of the region); and
 - legends about castles and mansions (prefer social motifs).
2. Historical legends—describe important events in the national history (Hlebová, 2006, p. 23).

According to the ethnologist and historian Nádaska, regional legends are local—they are linked to a specific location. Historical legends have a wider reach, describing major events and personalities (Čupka, 2018).

Legends are characterized by genre hybridization. There is a crossing of a fairy tale and a legend or they are incompletely processed. At that period, one of the most fruitful authors of this genre, Anton Marec (1953), published his works. He was active especially in the 1990s when

he wrote two freely related cycles of Tatra legends *Zlato pod Kriváňom* (1991) and *Zakliaty hrad v Tatrách* (1993). In these cycles he retained the traditional view of the legend, giving us regional topography of Tatra. Other historical prose is quite poor in the 90s; it is represented only by the standard works of Nora Baráthová, by her biographical novel about Hviezdoslaven titled *Študent* (1991), prosaic works balancing on the frontier of the historical story and a legend: *Hviezdy nad Tatrami* (1995) (Stanislavová, 2018).

According to J. Kołbuszewski (1999, p. 13):

the symbolism of Tatra has become one of the basic elements of Slovak literature and culture, which has come back over and over (in modifications) in many poets' works and entered a widely understood cultural life.

The first book of legends that tells stories about the Tatra is the work of Alfred Grosz titled *Povesti spod Tatier*. Sea eyes, tarns, green valleys and rocks of different shapes make a call for our creative fantasy. Hard-working people, whose world was only mountains and work, cannot be judged for wanting their everyday hardships to be shaken by the world of magic beings. One of the themes of the book is the one devoted to fantastic beings. Alfred Grosz (1885–1973) offers us stories from the mountains where the main heroes were devils, witches, fairies, the Snake king, powerful Vut and other beings who have chosen the Slovak mountains for their home. Many places in the Tatra are bound to legends—some of them are real events enriched by the imagination of folk people, others are fictional stories.

Alfred Grosz has also enriched his book by the detailed landmarks, citations from the books of travellers, or those who published in the chronicles and magazines before him. Because of its authenticity, it does not miss out the names of the ones who remembered and told him all the stories. He also mentions the real characters who tried to explore Tatra—gold-diggers, enthusiastic travellers, mountaineers, or those who had magically become rich in a short time—perhaps because they found treasure. The author worked as a professor of German and Slovak grammar school in Kežmarok and Grammar school in Spišská Nová Ves and today the gorge and pillar in the wall of the Slavkovský shield are named after him (Justová, 2018, p. 5).

Another author who deals with the Tatra says:

The High Tatra. Our only magnates, a unique jewel in the heart of the European continent. Symbol of Slovakia. High Tatra. At first sight, the dead

granite mountains of inaccessible shields, and yet! They and the people living in them have something in common—history (Marec, 2002, p. 8).

In the Slovak literature curriculum for the 5th form of elementary schools, there is a legend or rather a fable about Tatran Kikimore. It explains people's ideas about how some mountains and rivers have been created in Slovakia (mountain ranges: Ďumbier, Kriváň, Mních, Satan, Lomničan). The central character is the most beautiful daughter of Tatran called Hol'a. Witch Kikimora's son fell in love with Hol'a. However, she did not reciprocitate his love, and so the witch transformed the sons and daughters of Tatran into mountains and rivers. She was assisted by the rock, underground, and mountain ghosts and they caused earthquake by this acts. The text of this legend is as follows: "In the region, where the high Tatra shields are situated, a long time ago there was a large plain. And on this plane, the family of giants was living happily. Father was called Tatran and had many sons and beautiful daughters. The oldest of them was Kriváň, followed by Gerlach, Ďumbier, Chabanec... etc. Well, and of all daughters, Hol'a was the prettiest one. She was such a beautiful girl that suitors from the whole world came to ask for her hand and tried to overcome one another in the race to become her husband. One day the son of the witch Kikimora came in between the giants. He had only one eye, even squinting on it, he had hair everywhere and smelled really badly. Well, and such a monster asked for the hand of a beautiful Hol'a! Her brothers, would not give her to him, of course. That's why they beat him up and drove him away back to his mother. But when the evil Kikimora learned how her son had been treated, she was terribly angered and took into her head that the giant family of Tatras must have their revenge! Kikimora immediately summoned all her helpers—goblins, forest spirits, and she also received a help from her most loyal friends: Satan—the ruler of the fire and North—the ruler of the wind. Kikimora pulled dark clouds over the sky and threw huge rocks into giants. Some of them said they should retreat. Almost no one was able to escape. Only a beautiful Hol'a did it, as the strong Ďumbier took her away on his back. Then the angry Kikimora uttered a curse —the entire family of giants was turned into stone. And so, in what position they were when the curse has reached them, in this pose they are leaning over the plain to this day. Some of them were higher and some of them were lower, and so they got their names—High and Low Tatras (Marec, 2002, p. 12).

This legend teaches children not only about rock formations but also leads them to realize what evil conduct means and what is meant by mutual compassion, modesty and hard work. The whole story carries a positive value system that children can adopt. At the same time it teaches them to love their native land through its natural beauties, which they can discover and admire not only with teachers but also with their parents. They can go to Tatras to see where Hoľa, Ďumbier, and many other giants are located.

Another legend with similarly artificially created characters and situations is the legend entitled *Ako dostali Tatry svoje meno (How the Tatras got their name)*. There are also the characters that represent good and those who present evil—the so-called black and white vision of the world.

In the place where the Tatras are today, according to the legend, once upon a time there was only a plain. The myth speaks about the attack of wild Tatars. On the plains between today's Slovakia and Poland, their troops allegedly met with our ancestors. They were losing the battle with experienced Tatar warriors, so men decided to get advice from a mysterious old man. He advised them not to let surrender. A storm came in at night and a mysterious comet emerged, causing the entire Tatar army to turn into rocks by the next morning. In the place where formerly the military camp was located there were only mighty mountains. The legend says that the hills were called Tatars just after the fallen troops, and later the name was shortened to the Tatras (Marec, 1993, p. 11).

As this legend proves, these really are just invented stories. The truth is somewhere else. This is how the legend is interpreted by Anton Marec, who adds an explanation to every legend in his work. As regards this story:

The historians confirm the fact that the Tatars invaded Slovakia in the 13th century but they never reached Tatras. They depopulated and occupied only the southern parts of Slovakia. But when the threat of further penetration arised, the inhabitants of northern Slovakia began searching for shelters in the mountains [...] They were called the Tatras long before Tatars appeared in the history of our country. In the 1086 charter, the mountains are called Trytri, in other writings they are referred to as Tyrtur or Turtur. The name Tatras appears for the first time in the donation letter of Krakow Prince Boleslav from 1255. One thing is certain: The name of our mountains is rooted in the Old Slavonic word trtri. Our ancestors used this term to name a steep rock [...] (Marec, 1993, p. 13).

For children and children's literature, however, such legends are more acceptable, and children are better able to imagine what was happening in the past. It is an easier way for them how to understand historical facts. However, if these facts are presented by an epic style, they are more accessible for children and children can also identify themselves with some of the heroes of the story, with brave women, or men who fight for their nation and their love and they are rewarded for their goodness and help to others. Children get themselves easier into a story in which they can use their fantasy unlike the story in which everything is clear.

The standard educational text in the intentions of children's literature is traditionally represented by a folk tale. In particular, historical stories are the first binders of child readers with the national past. In these tales a child finds a bridge which connects the world of literature and the history. From the viewpoint of school literary education, the educational value of folk tales as well as their cognitive and aesthetic features are beneficial. Current author's take on folk tales oscillates between mimicking of certain patterns, inspiration from folk tales basics, basically only by changing the fate of the characters or the so called historical core in the author's text. In the Slovak literary space there is an editor Jozef Melicher, who approached the story with respect and folklore knowledge and we consider him to be an accurate editor of folklore extensions. One of the stories from his book *From Zobor to Sitno* (Bratislava, DONY 1998) ends with these words: "It may not be quite true, but it is definitely not untrue". He through these words brings out the most accurate meaning and the content of the term folk tale, how to read the story and what to look for while reading it (Vítezová, 2016, p. 26).

As Vítezová says,

it is interesting that the classic repertoire of today's child readers still consist mostly of classical fairy tales, and the literature that sticks with reality does not really speak to them as much. By a gradual psychological development the child begins to differ, what is the reality and what is the fiction in the literature. He/she begins to recognize what really can happen and what is nonsense. He/she does not take a fairy-tale fantasy literary, but subconsciously believes in it in order to give himself/herself a fun ride. This is not just about fairy tales, but also about other genres of children's literature, such as fables, folk tales, animal stories, etc. (Vítezová, 2016, p. 8).

Vítezová refers to Bohuslav Beneš:

The intermediate step between fairy-tales, especially fantastic ones, and the folk tales are superstitious short stories. They include mostly short narra-

tions about experiences with supernatural beings. Different types of phenomena and their effects are often set in historical monuments and in mysterious or unusual places in nature under certain magical circumstances or special occasions. Superstitious short stories are also referred to as demonic folk tales and are part of folk tale research (Vitězová, 1997, p. 65).

The most widespread fabled beings in the Tatras tales are the fairies and the water-sprites to whom many folk tales are devoted. One of the stories is about a girl who fell asleep on the shore of Štrbské pleso (tarn). As she slept, the handsome ruler of the deep waters rose from the tarn. He was so fond of the girl that he had snapped her and disappeared with her under the surface. When she woke up, she was so overwhelmed by the wealth of the ruler's palace that she had turned into a fairy and became his wife. According to the legend, she still lives by the Skok waterfall.

The water-sprites also allegedly lived in tarns and were known of stealing women. Another legend is about a Green tarn water-sprite who was about to fight for the wife of the other water-sprite from the Jamske tarn. Such fights had their exact rules: if during the fight the white foam came out on the surface, it was a veil of water girl and the suitor could take her away. If the red foam appeared, it was a water-sprites blood. The folk tales even reports that the water-sprited do not longer live in the Tatras today because they exterminated each other (Tatranské mýty a legendy, 2018). The tarns are the adorning of Tatras, and so many stories have arisen specifically about them. Scientists say they were the result of glacier activity.

The people living under the Tatras had their own explanation, and therefore they were calling them sea eyes atleast until recent times. They believed that these water areas did not appear in the Tatras by chance and that the underground corridors were connected with the Baltic Sea. The people from Tatras knew about tarns long before the first scholars arrived in the High Tatras. Treasurers and treasure hunters, animal hunters, herbalists and shepherds—all of them stood on the banks of the tarns and listened to the spur of unsettled waters. At that time, however, people did not suffer from such precision as they suffer today, so tarns did not have their names yet (Marec, 1993, p. 69–71).

Folk tales were always interesting for children, and in a reasonable way they showed them how different natural phenomena arose, but also what fairy-tale beings could have lived around them, though they were

predominantly the expression of the fantasy of ordinary people. They invented the stories mainly because they could not explain various natural phenomena.

When we talk about folk tales and legends as opposed to fairy tales, these two kinds of oral narratives are distinguished by the fact that we do not believe in the fairytale *a priori*, we will immediately think-ah, this is invented. As regards the folk tales, we say—well, there may be a piece of truth in it. For example, we are listening to the story—our “grandpa” told me that there was once a well, but it was backfilled together with a treasure. And why would not that be true when our “grandpa” said it? So, unlike fairy tales, the folk tales are believed to be true more by the one who speaks and the one who listens to it. And indeed, so many stories are linked to real events and specific, historically documented characters (Kiliánová, 2016, p. 4).

Children are gradually withdrawing from the literature for children and youth and begin to realize what is fantastic and what is real in these works. Subconsciously, they are beginning to incline towards realism in literature. This is also the stance of the authors who are beginning to deal with literature for youth or other genres. Feldek claims:

My sail away from the beautiful island of children literature I often justify by the private paradox which I have built for the need of my friends and myself: I did it for the children. The ship on which I was sailing away (I think it was in 1976) had the proud name: *Báseň na obranu detí* (= the Poem on how to defend children). There are simply things that—for the sake of children, and for the sake of their physical and mental health—we adults have to make right among one another. I still expect that it will be already figured out, that it will be so normal and natural, that I will no longer be needed (Ďurinová, 1991, p. 35).

In the past, legends influenced the whole human life, the view of people of the world and the countryside around them. Based on legends, they shaped their own view of the entire life. Nowadays, legends are perceived by children as fantastic fairy tales which they encounter during their learning process at school. Thanks to them, teachers are able to raise children's interest in nature, in their native region and in everything that surrounds them. They use legends to bring people's lives in the past closer to children. Thus the legends give them the opportunity to link the past with the present and show the children the beauties of Slovakia.

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The role of men in promoting breastfeeding in Nigeria

ABSTRACT. Globally, breast milk has been recognized as the best nutrient for newborns and infants. It is also known to be very nutritious in providing all the necessary elements needed for infants' health during the first six months of their lives and thereafter, essentially for their growth and survival. Recently, the high morbidity and mortality rates of babies and infants in Nigeria have re-awakened this interest of scholars; health practitioners as well as the general public who started the agitation for exclusive breastfeeding for babies at least for six months. While mothers play their part in providing breast milk to their babies, the role of men (fathers) role as one of the strongest influences on the success of breastfeeding among mothers has been overlooked. In Nigeria, it is still believed that breastfeeding is an exclusive responsibility of the nursing mothers alone. It has been found that father's support has a strong influence on a mother's decision to initiate and continue breast feeding in the developed countries. Though mothers recognize fathers as a primary source of support for the continuance of breast feeding in Nigeria; little is known about the nature of this support. This is because fathers are poorly informed and educated about the role they should play in successful breastfeeding of their children. There is need therefore; to document the extent their role can affect successful breastfeeding in their women in Nigeria. This paper describes the role men (fathers) should play in promoting successful breastfeeding in Nigeria. It suggests that men (fathers) should support their wives by providing assistance during pregnancy and after the baby is born. It also proposes that men (fathers) should encourage their pregnant wives to feed well, help in carrying babies while the mother is resting, look after the older children as well as providing assistance in domestic chores. The paper concludes that playing such supportive roles will go a long way in making breast-feeding campaign successful.

KEYWORDS: Men's Role, Breastfeeding, Promotion, Under-Five Mortality, Nigeria

Introduction

Adequate breastfeeding support for mothers could save many young lives (Kaalu, 2019, p. 1). If father has a sound knowledge base around the health benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and baby and understands the necessity of mother and baby needing to be together, he is more likely to prioritise the activity and give breastfeeding a strong endorsement (Neifert, 1998, p. 656–675).

In every human society, the importance of children cannot be over-emphasized. In many developing countries; particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, having children after marriage is considered to be the greatest thing that could happen to any couple. In Nigeria where much value is placed on children, parents ensure that they are well nurtured, taken care of and provided with necessary support until they are old enough to take care of themselves. In other words, such family does all within its powers to ensure their protection and survival to adulthood. It is therefore, not surprising that traditionally, Nigerian mothers would continue to breastfeed their babies until they were ready to have other children.

Breastfeeding is one of the age long practices ever known to man that safeguard or guarantee the survival of children. It is also one of the major characteristics of mammals. Breastfeeding is so critical that the World Health Organisation acknowledged that it is exceptionally vital in sustaining the growth, health and survival status of the newborns (WHO, 2003). According Okafor, Olatona and Olufemi (2014), it is the most inclusive nutritional source for infants because of the essential fats, carbohydrates, proteins and immunological factors it contains that the infants need to thrive and resist infection in the formative first year of life. Breastfeeding is so important that World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) recommend exclusive breastfeeding until a child is six months old. They further recommend that breastfeeding should continue for at least 12 months, and afterward, for as long as the child mutually desired (ACOG Committee, 2007; WHO, 2001).

Although breastfeeding remains the exclusive sphere of women, evidences have also demonstrated that the role of others, particularly the practical and emotional support from men (fathers) is an essential ingredient to successful breastfeeding, as their role will enhance the

mother's confidence and assist her to maintain sufficient milk supply. Gill, Reifsnider & Luck (2007) also argue that fathers (husbands) have a role to play as their strong influence on wife's (mother's) decision to start and continue breastfeeding cannot be over-emphasized. Other studies have further established that apart from the mother, father is the key source of support for the continuance of breastfeeding (Sheriff, Hall & Pickin, 2009). However, in spite of the enormous benefits of breastfeeding poor breastfeeding practices have been widely documented in Nigeria particularly among the urban employees. Similarly, little is known about the men's (fathers') role in breastfeeding in Nigeria.

Studies have shown that in Nigeria, breastfeeding practices have over the years continued to fall well below the WHO/UNICEF recommendations for developing countries (Okafor, et al., 2014). Furthermore, available evidences have shown that in Nigeria many children die every year of different illness such as diarrhoea, pneumonia and malaria before reaching age 5. Malnutrition is also identified as one of the underlying contributing factors in about 45% of all child deaths, making children more vulnerable to severe diseases (UNICEF Report, 2013). Consequently, Millennium Development Goal 4 (MDG 4) calls for reducing the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. SDG 3 also calls for increasing life expectancy, reducing maternal and child mortality and fighting against leading communicable disease. Although many countries in both the developed and developing world have made substantial progress in this regard by reducing the under-five mortality rate by 47%, from 90 (89, 92) deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 48 (46, 51) in 2012 (UNICEF Report, 2013), the same cannot be said of Nigeria as historical trends have showed that progress for Nigeria has been too slow and was unable to achieve MDG 4, with an average annual rate of reduction of 3.9% (WHO, 2015). With this current trend, it is also doubtful that Nigeria will be able to achieve health for all by 2030. According to the maternal and child health survey by the UNICEF in 2013, Nigeria loses about 2,300 under-five years old in a day, making it the second largest contributor to the under-five mortality rate in the world.

To address the issue of death due to malnutrition among the under-5 infants, the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), also known as Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI), a worldwide programme of the World Health Organization and UNICEF was launched in 1991 (UNICEF, 2011; WHO, 2011) following the adoption of the Innocenti Declaration on breastfeeding promotion in 1990 (UNICEF, 1990). The initiative is a global effort

for improving the role of maternity services to enable mothers to breast-feed their babies for the best start in life. Its aim is to improve the care of pregnant women, mothers and newborns at health facilities that provide maternity services for protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding, in accordance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes. Breastfeeding was recognized as one of the important strategies in ensuring child survival and promotion of child health (Kramer et al., 2001) as it is considered to be highly nutritious (Population Reports, 1975; Jimoh, 2004). The UNICEF, the World Health Organization and many other national government health agencies recommend that babies be breastfed exclusively for their first six months of life. Studies have also shown that breastfed babies are less likely to suffer from serious illnesses, including gastroenteritis, asthma, eczema, and respiratory and ear infections (Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, 2012; Greer, Sicherer & Burks, 2008; Mahr, 2008; Thorax, 2008). The BFHI aims to increase the numbers of babies who are exclusively breastfed worldwide, a goal which the WHO estimates could contribute to avoiding over a million child deaths each year, and potentially many premature maternal deaths as well (WHO, 2011; Schwarz et al., 2009; Bartick et al., 2013).

While efforts are made to achieve successful breastfeeding, the role of men (fathers) should play was underplayed if not totally ignored. Researchers at Brunel University and the Mother and Infant Research Unit at the University of York have found that in many of the Western countries, fathers perceive breastfeeding to be 'natural' but problematic. They assumed that breastfeeding involves excessive exposure and attracts unwanted male attention. Thus, bottle feeding is seen to be convenient and safe (Brunel University, 2011). Renfrew, Fisher and Arms (1990), also argue that in Western culture, many men do not accept their partners to breastfeed in public. They also stress that some men feel jealous by the closeness of mother and baby and feel excluded and thus advise their wives to bottle-feed so that he can also form bonding and others feel that the breast is only a sexual object (Castello, 1990). However, studies by Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council (2012) found that mothers who have the support of the infants' fathers are more likely to initiate breastfeeding and breastfeed for longer period of time.

It has been observed that in many Nigerian communities, men's opinion is an important factor in mothers' decision of whether to breastfeed

or bottle feed. Yet the perceptions of men have rarely been explored in Nigeria. Evidences have shown that in many households men make major decisions that affect the entire household. Thus, they are in the best position to decide whether a child should be breastfed or bottle-fed and thus in a better position as to whether to provide support to women (wives) who are breastfeeding (Otilie, 2007). However, previous studies on men's knowledge and attitudes towards breastfeeding have shown their poor knowledge about breastfeeding, especially those who do not attend prenatal classes to receive information on the subject by health personnel. Giuliani et al. (1994) cited by Otilie (2007), undertook a comparative study in the United Kingdom among 92 breastfeeding and 89 non-breastfeeding newborns to determine father's knowledge of breastfeeding, and to see whether they are prepared to encourage their partners to breastfeed. They found that fathers with previous breastfed children had attended antenatal classes and received information on the topic had better knowledge than their counterparts. The study suggests the need for fathers to be prepared during prenatal to assume their new role as breastfeeding supporters and to improve their knowledge of breastfeeding. Freed, Fraley and Schanler (1992) carried out a study among 268 men at five private hospitals in Houston, Texas to examine expectant father's attitudes and knowledge regarding breastfeeding and found that the majority of fathers had good knowledge and attitudes on breastfeeding and do even participate in decision-making in feeding option of the child.

Although breastfeeding initiation rates in Nigeria are high, with more than 83% of women leaving the hospital breastfeeding, Agho, Dibley, Odiase and Ogbonmwan (2011), found that only 16.4% of infants younger than 6 months postpartum receive exclusive breast milk, which falls short of the international guidelines for infant nutrition (ACOG Committee Opinion, 2007; American Academy of Pediatrics statement, 1997). Challenges that influence the duration of breastfeeding include community attitudes to breastfeeding (Hector, King, Webb & Heywood, 2005). The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) both recommend exclusive breastfeeding until six months of age. Although they recommended that breastfeeding should continue for at least 6 months, and thereafter for as long as it is mutually desired (World Health Organization, 2001), breastfeeding trends in Nigeria have remained largely unchanged over the past decade (Amir & Donath, 2008).

Thus this paper, empirically demonstrated work of Arora, Mcjunkin, Wehrer and Kuhn (2000); Swanson & Power (2005) and Britton, McCormick, Renfrew, Wade and King (2007) that father's support in breastfeeding has been a strong influence on a mother's decision to initiate and continue breast feeding. Though researches with mothers have identified fathers as primary source of support for the continuance of breast feeding; little is known about the nature of this support (Sherriff, Hall and Pickin, 2009). There is therefore, the need to know and document how this role will affect successful breastfeeding in their wives in Nigeria. The main objective of this paper therefore is to discuss the role of men in successful breastfeeding. The specific objectives are to

- 1) examine the importance of breastfeeding to mother and child;
- 2) identify the roles men should play in successful breastfeeding and;
- 3) suggest what can be done to encourage men (fathers) to partake in successful breastfeeding in Nigeria.

Importance of breastfeeding to mother and child

The importance of breastfeeding as a determinant of infant nutrition, child mortality and morbidity has long been recognized and documented in the public health literature. Studies have shown that the breastfeeding relationship is not only the healthy choice for mother and baby; it also promotes a close, loving attachment between the mother and baby (Baldwin, Kenneth & Friedman, 1996). The mother's bond is born of biology. After spending nine months inside the mother's body, the baby continues to depend on mother for nourishment and protection after birth. It is not until the second six months of life that the baby even recognizes that he or she is a separate person from the mother. The more responsive a mother is, the more secure the attachment. Many experts have said that having a close relationship with a primary attachment figure is critical to a baby's health and well-being. Although there are some experts who argue that attachment needs are not all that crucial and that children are resilient and can bounce back from having no attachment figure or having a close bond disrupted, they all agree that ideally, every child should have this close primary attachment (Baldwin et al., 1996). Other scholars believe that when this bond is disturbed or not allowed to form, serious psychological disturbances in a child's development may result. In addition, the research indicates that the children

who do better later on in life are the ones who had secure attachments in the early years, and a significant factor in developing secure attachments is responsive parenting. Breastfeeding therefore, promotes responsive parenting, thus encouraging secure attachments. In order to be successful, breastfeeding requires the mother to be responsive to the baby's hunger, sleeping, and crying signals. Lengthy separations from the mother can seriously jeopardize the breastfeeding relationship when the baby is young. Given the potential health benefits to both mother and baby, continuance of this relationship should be a priority in family law cases (Baldwin et al., 1996).

A wide range of other benefits of breastfeeding have been identified in the literature. For instance, according to CDC (2000) report, breastfed infants have lower risk of respiratory and gastro-intestinal illness as breast milk contains all the nutrients an infant needs for the first 4 to 6 months of life and more resistant to disease and infection early in life than formula-fed children. It concludes that they are also less likely to contract a number of diseases later in life, including juvenile diabetes, multiple sclerosis, heart disease, and cancer before the age of 15. Other studies have shown a number of important health benefits of breastfeeding to both the mother and child. Many of these studies have indicated that breastfeeding results in a reduced risk of infant mortality e.g., (Victoria, 1997), morbidity from infection (Huffman & Combest, 1990; Lucas & Cole, 1990), enhances infant immunity (Spady & Pabst, 1990), and reduces the risk of breast, uterine and ovarian cancer among women, lessens osteoporosis, benefits child spacing, promotes emotional health, postpartum weight loss and costs less to breastfeed (CDC, 2000). Thus, mothers who breastfeed have a reduced risk of Type 2 Diabetes and certain cancers such as breast cancer, may find it easier to return to what they weighed before they got pregnant and strengthen the bond with their children.

According to CDC (2000), babies who are breastfed are generally healthier and achieve optimal growth and development compared to those who are fed formula milk. If the vast majority of babies were exclusively fed breast milk in their first six months of life—meaning only breast milk and no other liquids or solids, not even water—it is estimated that the lives of at least 1.2 million children would be saved every year. If children continue to be breastfed up to two years and beyond, the health and development of millions of children would be greatly improved. Infants who are not breastfed are at an increased risk of

illness that can compromise their growth and raise the risk of death or disability. Breastfed babies receive protection from illnesses through the mother's milk. Huffman and Combest (1990) and Lucas and Cole (1990), also found that lack of breastfeeding is a risk factor for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Other identified benefits are that breast milk helps keep newborns healthy, supplies all the necessary nutrients in the proper proportions, protects against allergies, sickness, and obesity and protects against diseases, like diabetes and cancer, protects against infections, like ear infections. Thus, the health benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and child are firmly established, making it a key public health issue globally (Dykes, Moran, Burt & Edwards, 2003). However, in modern societies, conditions of life and work do not favour breastfeeding. This is especially true of place where many women are engaged in industrial work away from home, long period of working hours and their day to day activities in general reduce the time that women could otherwise devote to infant care and breastfeeding. Infant food industry and marketing, the advertising and promotion of breast milk substitutes particularly in health facilities, many have contributed to the decline in breastfeeding.

In recognition of these benefits, the Nigerian government established the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in Benin, Enugu, Maiduguri, Lagos, Jos and Port Harcourt with the aim of providing mothers and their infants a supportive environment for breastfeeding and to promote appropriate breastfeeding practices (Salami, 2006; Agho et al., 2011). Thus, a solution to improve child survival and reduce child mortality was proffered and implemented.

Until recently, breastfeeding is regarded as involving only the nursing mothers. It has been realized that men have great role to play for their wives to achieve successful breast-feeding. Interestingly, many men and women do not know that men can be very instrumental in successful breast-feeding. It is at this juncture one would ask, what are the roles of men in successful breast-feeding.

What role should men play in successful breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding is a vital approach in the promotion of child health. Support from others, especially from fathers, is a major factor affecting breastfeeding success. It is a fortunate baby that has a close, loving rela-

tionship with both of his parents (Laleche, 2014). A lot of fathers erroneously believe that breastfeeding is a role confined to mother and baby. Thus, they can feel excluded from breastfeeding, or may even feel they are a passive player. However, fathers play a very significant role in breastfeeding and are germane in order to make a successful family unit. Father is uniquely placed to promote a positive family attitude towards breastfeeding. If father has a sound knowledge base around the health benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and baby and understands the necessity of mother and baby needing to be together, he is more likely to prioritize the activity and give breastfeeding a strong endorsement. There is a difference between a partner who accepts his partner is breastfeeding and one that deliberately creates a successful atmosphere for this (Neifert, 1998).

Studies have shown that breastfeeding is hard work and can be physically and emotionally demanding (Laleche, 2014). Thus, all new mothers require help and support to allow them to achieve success with feeding, and to overcome doubts or fears that they may have. This in turn will encourage breastfeeding to continue. In the early days after birth when mother is lacking in sleep and coping with hormonal changes, fathers are ideally placed in order to provide encouragement when mother may be wavering with the breastfeeding approach (Laleche, 2014). During feeding times there is plenty a father can do to help mother. Providing mother with all the fluids she requires or making a snack for her are two important tasks he can do. Bringing pillows to help with positioning of the feeding is also important. Father can also take charge of winding baby between changing breasts and at the end of the feed. They can also change baby at the end of the feed and soothe him to sleep.

Laleche (2014) highlighted many activities that father can do in order to create a strong bond with his baby. Skin to skin contact is not an exclusive activity for mother and fathers can and should regularly undertake this e.g. allowing a full breastfed baby to lie on father's chest (Laleche, 2014). There is a huge body of research to suggest that human beings have a neuron-endocrine behaviour and depend of sociality and "bi-parental care". Research further suggests that babies that have regular skin to skin contact with both mother and father possess better resilience in later life both physically and psychologically. The value of a father to a baby's life is evident. Building a strong attachment with baby in the early days greatly improves the relationship between father and baby as the infant grows and has an impact upon the socio-emo-

tional development of a child. Health visitors should be encouraging a cohesive family approach to breastfeeding as part of the Healthy Child Programme, and providing support and encouragement to both mothers and fathers.

Studies have shown that in Nigeria where infant mortality rate is among the highest in the world due to high level of malnutrition. According to WHO (2008), infant and child mortality in Nigeria is 196 deaths per 1000 live births. This figure is worrisome compared to other smaller African countries like Togo, Botswana and Mauritius with lower infant mortality rates. Improving the nutrition of infants and newborns through breastfeeding should not be left alone for women.

The role of men in successful breastfeeding of newborns in the Nigerian society can therefore, not be overemphasized. Their role is as important as the mother's with regard to babies' growth and survival. According to Smith (2008), daddy's love is very important but attention is often focused on mothers when discussing breastfeeding. Smith argues that understanding men's role in breastfeeding will start with having some understanding of men's role in pregnancy, women's reproductive health and women's health generally. She concludes that male factor in breastfeeding is of significant importance within the broader area of reproductive health. Adewuyi (1999), observes that while women are the carriers of pregnancy, they contribute minimally to decisions on when they can be pregnant, and the number of children to have throughout their reproductive life. This is so because according to Bongaarts & Brude (1995), in sub-Saharan Africa, many women who do not want more children still do not use contraception because of opposition from their husbands. Many cases abound in Nigeria where, the husband's permission is required before a woman can take any step regarding her health (Murphy & Baba, 1981). Stock (1983) commented on the reluctance of some husbands to grant their wives permission to go to health centres particularly, if she has to go there unaccompanied. Stock (1983) is therefore, of the belief that in Nigeria and elsewhere in sub-Saharan African countries, understanding men's role in reproductive health and breastfeeding could go a long way in addressing the problem of unsuccessful breastfeeding. The author suggest that men should support their nursing wives by encouraging and praising them that by exclusively breastfeeding their babies, they have served good examples to other mothers in the community and as such contribute to cultural belief about breastfeeding.

Other scholars have argued that for successful breastfeeding, women need their husband's support. In her article titled "Daddy's Love", Smith (2002, p. 3) explains that she got encouragement from her husband to breastfeed their son. She states thus:

My husband supported me as I slowly worked up to nursing in public, he shared the same concern and trepidations for me; he has understood our son's nursing schedule and brings him to me to nurse early in the morning so I didn't have to get out of bed early in the morning on weekends. My husband reminded me every day if I had taken my vitamins and he always brought me water to make sure I stayed hydrated. The joy of my husband's support, encouragement and pride in our son being breastfed made me declare my husband an equal partner in providing our son with the best possible start in the world.

Women need more calories when they are breastfeeding. They derive a substantial part of this calories from stores built up during pregnancy. Any increase in calories will help the breastfeeding mother retain her health, as such; a balanced diet including protein sources is highly desired during periods of breastfeeding. Nursing mothers also need vitamins, which should be supplied through diet or supplements (Worthington-Robert & Williams, 1989). According to Labbok (1991), if a woman is undernourished and breastfeeds, she may run the risk of energy depletion. Thus any intervention in the postpartum period should include feeding the mother during the period in which she is breastfeeding the infant. According to Riccitiello (1998, p. 1), providing food and drinks are great ways to help new mothers keep their milk supply up. Many new mothers are so busy with their babies that they don't take the time to eat properly and they don't realize that they are not drinking enough to allow their bodies to make adequate supplies of milk. Riccitiello (1998, p. 2), states further:

While I was breastfeeding, my husband would bring me water or juice and a book or magazine. Sometimes, we would just sit and talk, that was the best.

A woman who is breastfeeding also needs adequate rest. The husband can help by relieving her of certain duties at home so that she could conserve enough energy for her infant. According to Lisa cited in Riccitiello (1998, p. 2):

My husband would get up early with Tom and play with him for a while to give me extra sleep time.

Riccitiello (1998) suggests that first time fathers especially, need to be encouraged to hold and play with their newborns because they are often hesitant to hold the tiny babies. He also advises that there is need for men especially new fathers to know that the breast is also a purposeful and functional device to nurture infants and as such they should learn not to be embarrassed when their wives breastfeed in public. Cleary (1998) posits that a guy that becomes a father of a baby should insist on nursing 15 times a day. Nursing through the night, at meal times, most significantly nursing at bars, restaurants, planes, trains and other public places, they should realize that the breast of a breastfeeding mother is primarily a means of giving baby the best nutrition. Father's support is therefore critical especially if a mother is breastfeeding for the first time.

According to Riccitiello (1998), a surprising number of fathers are getting out of bed to get the baby and change a diaper before handing the hungry bundle to the mother. According to him, 'a dedicated breast feeder and mother of two described her husband as being great about picking up their child in the middle of the night and bringing him to her for breast feeding, changing his diaper and cuddling and holding him'. Unfortunately, many fathers are left out when it comes to breastfeeding. They cannot feed the baby themselves and they are helpless at the closeness the mother and the baby share when nursing. Some of them may object to their wives breastfeeding out of breast envy. They feel left out and useless because the mother is doing all the parenting. Though they may not realize it that their support often makes the difference in whether a woman sticks with nursing and succeeds or gives up before she really learns how. Without their partner's help, many women don't make it through sometimes—rocky first days and weeks of nursing.

It is observed that when a father makes the effort to encourage, and reassure the new mother, she tends to feel more confident in her choice of breastfeeding. It is the husband who is always with the nursing mother most that knows her the best. If he is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and supportive, it makes all the difference in the world as to whether or not breastfeeding will be successful and enjoyable for mother and baby (Riccitiello, 1998). Fleiss & Hodges (2005) corroborated this when they said that without the support of an informed and courageous husband, young mothers who want to breastfeed may find their efforts undermined.

To make breastfeeding successful, there is a host of other things that fathers must do. Supports in several forms received from a husband by a nursing mother can make a whole lot of difference in whether such a woman can achieve successful breast-feeding.

According to Riccitiello (1998), in trying to do so, some fathers use themselves as human shields to give their wives privacy while they nurse in public'.

Discussions

There is much that fathers can do to help with the baby. A baby has a vital need for his/her father to hold and caress him/her, sleep and walk with him/her, bathe and change diapers, sing to him/her and countless other demonstrations of fatherly love and devotion. The father can also perform vital role of caring for the baby while the mother showers and attend to her personal needs. Father can prepare meals, do housework and shopping, deal with the finances, take responsibility for the care of the older children and perform many other tasks that will earn him respect and fulfillment.

However, there are many factors that militate against fathers being of much help to their breastfeeding wives. It has been highlighted that women do not participate in the decision-making concerning pregnancy and childbirth in spite of the fact that they are the ones that bear the burden. This corroborates Adewuyi (1999), that male factor in breastfeeding is of significance importance within the broader area of reproductive health; while women are the carriers of pregnancy, they contribute minimally to decisions on when they can become pregnant and the number of children to have throughout their reproductive life. This is an extension of women's powerlessness in the home because women do not participate in the decision making in other areas of family life. This subjugation of women is due to the patriarchal nature of our society, which relegates women to the background, and treats them as second-class citizens.

Furthermore, some men object to their wives' breastfeeding due the fear that the breast will sag, flop and look unattractive. This fear is totally untrue. According to CDC, 2000, it is not the breastfeeding that makes breast to sag rather; it is pregnancy that causes it. Also, the support of husbands of breastfeeding mothers is very essential especially in terms of providing adequately for the women so that their nutritional requi-

rements are met. This would go a long way in keeping the women and their babies healthy. According to Labbock (1991), if a breast-feeding mother is undernourished, she may be at the risk of energy depletion. Apart from this risk of energy depletion, the woman and her baby are vulnerable to diseases and infections and this is one of the causes of the high incidence of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality in Nigeria.

It is very important that men show understanding because of reduced attention from the wife as soon as the baby arrives. They should not complain rather, they should try to help the woman so that she can nurse the baby successfully. The hardest thing for many fathers is feeling left out in the first days and weeks of the baby's life. But that is the best time to jump in and learn to do other things that will bond them with their babies by singing to their babies, and bathing them. A great way for fathers to bond with their new born is to put the infant—dressed just in a diaper—on his bare chest so that baby can feel his warm skin and learns how his/her father smells. Many breastfeeding mothers are not encouraged by their husbands to breastfeed their babies. This means that the babies in this case may not be breast fed well there by exposing them to diseases and sometimes death. This corroborates Roccitielo (1998), that men do not realize that their support often makes the difference in whether a woman and succeeds or gives up before she really learns how to. Without their partners' support, many women do not make it through the rocky first days and weeks of nursing. Smith (2008), corroborated this and said that there is need to encourage women especially if they are doing it for the first time.

The issue of husbands' reluctance in granting permission to their wives to go to hospital is a very important one. The husband granting wife such permission is based on whether the husband regards the wife's complaint as serious enough to merit hospital attention. It will also depend on how much the husband loves the wife because if he loves the woman and would not want any harm to come to her, he would grant her the permission but if otherwise, she can as well die so that he would go and marry another wife. Murphy and Baba (1981) observed that in Nigeria in many cases, the husband's permission is required before a woman can take any step regarding her health.

It is equally very important for the husband to make the wife as happy as possible because the emotional state of the nursing mother affects her baby and has serious implications for successful breast-feeding. I wish to tell you about a personal experience I had with

breastfeeding and nursing mother's emotional state. When we were young girls, a friend of mine got married and had her first son. After the birth of the child, his father died. My friend was so bitter and angry and wept all the time. To our greatest shock, anytime she tried to breastfeed the baby, the baby would refuse until elderly women around told her to cheer up if she did not want her baby to die. When she managed to cheer up, the baby started breastfeeding again. This is an indication that babies easily notice when their mothers are not happy and it affects breastfeeding and the general well being of the child.

Conclusion

This study has corroborated empirical evidences that the father is a primary source of support to the breastfeeding mother and can influence and/or contribute to decision-making regarding initiation, continuance, maternal breastfeeding confidence, and weaning (e.g. Binns & Scott, 2002; Earle, 2002; Sherriff et al., 2009; Swanson & Power, 2005). The paper found that to date, there has been no attempt in the Nigerian literature describing what role fathers should play in promoting breastfeeding in Nigeria. This may be attributed to the fact that in Nigeria it is still culturally believed that breastfeeding is women's exclusive responsibility. Any man who tries to support his nursing wife is labeled. This paper has explored the concept of 'father role' in relation to maternity services and broader health settings, aimed at clarifying its meaning to enable comprehension and application in practice and research. From the foregoing discussion, it has been established that breastfeeding is very crucial in the survival, growth and development of a child as it gives a child the fortification he/she needs to fight infections and grow normally. Moreover, it was also found that breastfeeding brings about a stronger emotional bond between the parents and child. This paper has also highlighted so many important areas of supportive roles which husbands can play in order to help their wives attain successful breastfeeding. These range from provision of food, encouragement and help with home chores and older children, giving her permission to go to hospital and allowing her to participate in decision making.

As stated earlier, in many Nigerian communities breastfeeding is still regarded as a child/mother relationship while the role of fathers' in attaining successful breastfeeding is disregarded. Recently, it has been

realize that a father has a great role to play in the development of his child and his role in breastfeeding is part of it. The role of practical and emotional support from fathers is an essential ingredient to successful breastfeeding, increasing the mother's confidence and enabling her to maintain an adequate milk supply. In-fact, what the father can do to help in breastfeeding is limitless. A father does not need to breastfeed his baby to form a close loving bond but he needs to spend time holding, loving, playing with and just being with his baby. A father who really wants to help can always discover ways of helping in the care of his baby.

Sometimes, men who want to be part of the parenting role need information and knowledge. This would give them the opportunity to synthesise the information and apply the knowledge to feel confident and competent in their new role as an involved parent. Interestingly, the review has revealed that many husbands are rising up to the occasion of helping their breastfeeding wives but most of these literatures are not Nigerian. As such, it is not yet clear what the Nigerian situation really is. A follow-up research on this issue in the Nigerian context needs to be carried out in order to know the role of men in promoting breastfeeding in Nigeria. In acknowledging the importance of paternal support for successful breastfeeding, scholars found that mothers would like more help from their partners, but were sometimes unclear what type of help they wished to receive (Scott, Landers, Hughes & Binns, 2001). They also found most fathers wanted to help mothers but did not know what they could do to help, which again reflects the fathers' views in the sub-theme "Learning the role" The sub-themes of "Encouragement to do your best" and "Being an advocate" were supported in the literature by Susin and Giugliani (2008) and Scott and Binns (1999), who identified the father as the most important support person to give encouragement and advocacy. Thus, unless fathers are included in breastfeeding education programmes and breastfeeding campaigns, to be made aware of benefits of breastfeeding, they will remain barriers to exclusive breastfeeding.

What can be done?

Based on the paper, the following recommendations are made:

1. In Nigeria where infant mortality rate is among the highest in the world due to high level of malnutrition, father's role in breastfeeding should be encouraged. Understanding the role men in

breastfeeding is therefore the first step to be taken as their roles in breastfeeding is very crucial. The paper recommends that the New Birth Visit is the perfect platform to discuss the ways father can contribute, what his role is and encourage a cohesive unit between mother and father.

2. It also recommended that a mass campaign be mounted to educate men and women to know that the role of men in breastfeeding is as important as breastfeeding itself and should be taken seriously by men. Like what obtains in Brazil, Nigerian male singers and male role models should be included in advertisement campaigns asking fathers to support breastfeeding.
3. There is also the need to involve fathers and educate them on benefits of breastfeeding. This is to be done at doctor's office, prenatal classes or in delivery room. Involving fathers in decision making of infant feeding, at least from early stage will also go a long way in changing their perceptions and attitudes towards breastfeeding.
4. Nigerian government should intervene by initiating the Baby Friendly Community programme in every community. Men should be included in the programme since they are the major actors in decision making in the homes. Involving mothers alone without the support of their husbands may not yield the desired result on exclusive breastfeeding.
5. The role of men (fathers) in successful breastfeeding campaign can be achieved if they allow their working wives to take their children to crèches, which are very important to exclusive breastfeeding. Establishment of crèches near a working place will enable nursing mothers to shuttle between crèches and their offices to breastfeed their babies from time to time. If this is achieved, there is no doubt that children and parents will be happier for it.
6. Finally, like what obtains in Sweden, fathers should be allowed to go on paternity leave so as to assist the nursing mothers and their newborns at least for the first three months. Doing so, will go a long way of reducing the stress on their wives.

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Silence, a Yell from Self towards Nothingness in Neshani Andreas' *The purple violet of Oshaantu* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple hibiscus*

ABSTRACT. Beyond voice lies a sound laden with dread. Dread, as Heidegger points out, is encountered in a feeling of nothingness. But nothingness is not an automatic existent; it is built up through actions that gradually breed detachment of self from a whole. This paper explores the journey of self towards nothingness in Andreas' *The purple violet of Oshaantu* and Adichie's *Purple hibiscus*. This journey is undertaken by the characters, Kauna and Mama, as they communicate with their spirits—silence. The silence of these characters is so shrieking that its echo is strongly heard in the lives of those around them. But are these characters able to liberate themselves after identifying selves or did they drench further into the helpless state they were before discovering selves? This is one question this paper answers as it traces these characters' journeys towards self-identification through nothingness.

KEYWORDS: Voice, Silence, Self, Nothingness, Being

Introduction

Silence, inarguably, is a recurring vocal role assigned to female characters in most African novels. This is due to the patriarchal domain through which these novels are probable. Several readings done on silence depict trenches of inequality, oppression, and subjugation meted out on the female gender by either their male counterpart or their homogenous specie. In Adichie's *Purple hibiscus*, silence as a thematic study has been subjected to a bildungsroman assessment of the protagonist, Kambili. Andreas' *The purple violet of Oshaantu* has few critical analysis done on oppression and subjugation with nothing much rendered to the presence of silence as a technique. This is to say that no study has been dedicated to the vibratory kernel of silence as a transitory mode for the

characters, Mama (Beatrice) and Kauna respectively. These novels share similarities in subject matters and character presentation but are set in different geographical locations, Nigeria and Namibia respectively. They are adorned with realism as they depict situations such as dysfunctional family life, corruption, oppression and subjugation. Unlike *Purple hibiscus* that has attracted a wide range of criticism both nationally and internationally, little analysis has been done on *The purple violet of Oshaantu*.

It has been noted by some critics that Andreas' residency in north Namibia inspired her to write *The purple violet of Oshaantu*. Born in 1964 at Walvis Bay in South-West Africa, Neshani Andreas grew up in the port city, Namibia, where her parents worked in a fish factory. She obtained training as a teacher at Ongwediva Training College located in the northern region of Namibia where she taught for five years. She later earned a Bachelor of Arts and post-graduate diploma in education at the University of Namibia. She worked for American Peace Corp for four years and as a programme officer for the Forum for African Women Educationalists. She died at the age of 46 in May 2011 after being diagnosed with lung cancer. Her novel *The purple violet of Oshaantu* remains her only notable novel as it reflects real situations of women in the northern Namibia. Ogbeide expresses the travails and woes of wives in the hands of abusive spouses in the novel. In an article titled "Violet without purple: The Colour of Spousal Violence in Neshani Andreas' *The purple violet of Oshaantu*," Ogbeide investigates wife battering and victimization of women by their spouses. He points out that "at the beginning of the marriage, Kauna is considered as beautiful, as the purple violet that grows in Oshaantu village. Her beauty, however, soon varnishes after a series of battering and abuse by her husband, Shange" (p. 255). He further examines Kauna's resolute spirit towards the end of the narrative:

Although Kauna's resistant silence does not change discriminatory social practices, although the social hierarchy has not shifted, she is able to establish an autonomous voice for herself within that structure. Shange's death has freed her from her years of unhappiness and physical battering. True, she is walking away with only her children and without any means of sustenance. But she is determined to build a new and better life for herself and her children (p. 58).

Weiss (2004) analyzes racial and gender subjugation with voiceless state as a means of subversion in her article "Shades of Utter(ing) Silences in *The purple violet of Oshaantu*, *Maru* and *Under the tongue*". She

points out Kauna's show of disobedience through "a woman's silence." Weiss sees Kauna's silence as a moral victory where Kauna "could carry through her will of uttering silence and hence making the unspeakable visible: her year-long disgrace and oppression." Beukes (2011) in "Prime Focus Magazine" reviews the novel through a postcolonial/apartheid perspective; she investigates the novel as "a personal account of two dynamic women in the village of Oshaantu in the northern part of Namibia. The book plays itself off in a post-apartheid Namibia with HIV/AIDS still a myth and domestic violence justified by elders as a part of any normal marriage setting" (p. 1). Furthermore, Beukes (2011) evaluates the settings of the novel:

The fact that Andreas does not romanticise rural life but depicts village life in its complexity brings many lessons such as the conflict between men and women but also the competition between women in the village, as well as cooperation and friendship. There are women who try to impose old values that oppress other women, and who gossip and accuse each other of witchcraft, which is never proven. There is the reality of hard physical work in the fields and the juggling which women face all over the world, trying to fit in all their daily tasks, on the land, in the home, looking after children and elderly relatives, maintaining a relationship with their husbands (p. 3).

For Beukes, the novel represents the travails of women in the world at large which includes subjugation and oppression by not only their male counterpart but also by their fellow women.

A close reading of critical works on *Purple hibiscus* also reflects gender subjugation and exploitation as major themes in the novel. Critics have potentially explored characters such as Kambili and Eugene as pivotal agents that wield the changes in the novel, but little attention is given to Mama whose journey towards the realisation of self brings about a sharp turn in the outcome of events. While investigating the subject-matters present in the novel which include effects of colonialism, religious tolerance and domestic violence, Ogwude takes a swipe at the character of Eugene which she describes as "a socially and financially successful but fatal flawed personality. This is in itself an apt summary of the ambiguous gains of the 'converted African' who while acquiring socioeconomic gains on the one hand, accepts a truncated cultural matrix on the other" (Ogwude, 1976, p. 115). This shows the imperfection of Eugene whose character is flawed by his act of domestic violence, which like a tragic hero, orchestrates his downfall (death) and disintegrates the family

which he holds steely together. Also Ogaga depicts Eugene as Janus-faced where “he urges his editor, Ade Coker to ensure that the *Standard* speaks out, yet he continues to muzzle his wife and children” (Ogaga, 2007, p. 247). In his article titled “Changing Borders and Creating Voices: Silence as Character in Chimamanda Adichie’s *Purple hibiscus*” Ogaga carries out a bildungsroman reading on the character, Kambili:

The novel traces the physical and psychological development of the protagonist, Kambili and her brother Jaja. A development which designates their struggle to define themselves, beyond the stiffened, and funless world their Calvinistic father has fashioned for them. Their fussy mercantile father builds a world stuffed with materialistic wholeness, a world that lacks ventilation, which guarantees a steady relationship with the outside when the inside becomes too suffocating (Ogaga, 2007, p. 246).

Ogaga also explores the growth of these characters as influenced by the socio-economic and patriarchal dominated African society. Udumukwu focuses on the representation of a modern African patriarch in Eugene and reiterates:

Helen Chukwuma contends that in spite of Eugene’s negative attributes, Adichie presents him as a monstrous representation of the Modern African male. Chukwuma’s worries are formed by the fact that Eugene seems to be a confirmation of the old colonialist assumption about Africa’s backwardness. In spite of his success as an entrepreneur, there is the possibility of perceiving Eugene as a chip of the *Old tribal block* (Udumukwu, 2011, p. 195).

He points out the three perspectives present in the novel are “Eugene’s perspective is the thesis which is also dominant patriarchal position. Auntie Ifeoma constitutes the antithesis [...] Kambili’s perspective functions as the synthesis” (Udumukwu, 2011, p. 154). Furthermore, Udumukwu examines Kambili as a subject:

[...] the speaking voice here is Kambili’s. The echo of her voice resounds through the uses of forms of the first person pronoun, namely: “My” and “We”. The possessive form “My” helps to establish a link between her and her brother, Jaja. But as a form of the first person, it also allows us to hear her as a subject in her own right and also as a female who has a brother (Udumukwu, 2011, p. 192).

Still on Kambili, Ogaga asserts that “the function of Kambili’s tongue is so constricted so that her struggle to express herself usually termina-

tes with a stutter, making her classmates observe her with familiarity laced with contempt" (Ogaga, 2007, p. 247).

In her analysis, Nutsukpo investigates gender-based violence in an article titled "Domestic Violence in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple hibiscus*". As echoed by Nutsukpo, "Eugene Achike, revered as a model citizen and family man, turns out to be extremely abusive in his home—he dominates, subjugates, batters and inflicts injury on his wife, children, sister and father, physically and psychologically" (Nutsukpo, 2017, p. 119). She analyses the conflicting characteristic traits possessed by Eugene and classifies his bestial acts as monstrous. Nutsukpo further investigates the symbolic effect of the figurine on Beatrice:

The destruction of the figurines can be viewed in a positive light—it signifies the removal of the protective shield that Beatrice has built around herself and her emotions. Thus, she can now discover a more positive avenue to deal with her pain and humiliation through self-assertion (Nutsukpo, 2017, p. 121).

Responding to the symbolic representation of the figurine in *Purple hibiscus*, Kabore concludes that "the figurines personify Mama. She is changing" (Kabore, 2013, p. 35).

These analyses show that Mama's role in the development of actions that lead to the major change in *Purple hibiscus* has been ignored by most of these critics as much attention is given to other characters. This study repositions the propellers of changes in the two novels by focusing on Kauna and Mama's reception of actions that threaten their existence at the family and societal level. With the diverse volume of criticisms from both novels, no critic has critically looked into the immensity of silence as a passage towards nothingness in the lives of Mama and Kauna; the same way they have not recognized silence as a resounding voice that vibrates through these characters. This study carves out the path of silence not as voiceless but a yell, not as a static mode but a movement or journey of self towards nothingness, towards realization where nothingness represents a mode of becoming. The journey of self is only recognized when self is identified; thus, what is self.

The Self

The concept of self lies in the perception of personality traits that characterize a Being. The self is an individual being in motion towards unravelling his/her potentiality which includes self-determination,

development and actualization. For Bandura, “the self, therefore, is not an entity but a set of cognitive process and structures concerned with thought and perception” (Schultz, 1976, p. 453). Bandura’s definition of Self shows that the self passes different developmental stages that finally build it up as a whole. Allport identifies the self as “proprium” and traces the different stages which the self undergoes towards actualization whereby the “Propriate striving is the final stage which occurs when the person realizes the existence in himself or herself of long-range purposes, goals, and intentions. The individual’s view is clearly toward the future, for which he or she begins to plan” (Schultz, 1976, p. 240). Consequently, Allport stages of development imply that self-realization and actualization rely on the physical and mental growth of an individual. In explaining Roger’s analysis of self-development, Schultz interprets:

As an infant develops a more complex experiential field, as a result of more interactions with other people, one part of his or her experience becomes differentiated from the rest. This new and separate part is defined by the words *I*, *me* and *myself*. It is the self or self-concept, and it involves distinguishing what is directly and immediately part of oneself from what is external to oneself. The self-concept is the person’s picture or image of what he or she is, should be, and might like to be (Schultz, 1976, p. 355).

Bernstein, Roy, Srull and Wickens, emphasize Roger’s perception of *Self* by stating that “to Rogers, personality was the expression of each individual’s self-actualizing tendency as it unfolds in that individual’s uniquely perceived reality. If unimpeded, this process results in the full realization of the person’s highest potential. If the process is thwarted, however, that potential may be distorted as various problems appear” (Bernstein, Roy, Srull & Wickens, 1988, p. 533). Bernstein et al goes further to define personality as “the pattern of psychological and behavioural characteristics by which each person can be compared and contrasted with other people” (Bernstein et al., 1988, p. 504). Therefore, the Being of self is revolutionized through motion and transition as analysed by Heidegger.

Heidegger’s Concept of Self

The conceptual framework which this study is founded is Heidegger’s concept of self in *Being and existence*. Heidegger identifies Self as the “who” of the Dasein whereby the Dasein is “essentially always my own”

(Heidegger, 1949, p. 29). Self, for Heidegger, exists in two modes—the authentic and unauthentic mode. The authentic mode is realized in communality with other Beings; the self exists “not as an ‘Ich’ (I), but as a ‘Man’, i.e. as ‘one like many’” (Heidegger, 1949, p. 45). He elaborates the identity of the authentic self by positing that “the averageness of the way in which the ‘self’ is together with others in daily life, the sway which these others hold over it and the resulting levelling tendency in community life are emphasized” (Heidegger, 1949, p. 45). But the unauthentic mode is “a potential mode of Being of itself; in it Dasein catches itself up and entangles itself” (Heidegger, 1949, p. 57). In these two modes, the Dasein is concerned with “Being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1949, p. 57) and nothingness remains central to Being-in-the-world where “the transposition into ‘nothingness’ is thought to be the preliminary and indispensable state, one of ‘transcendence’, to open up the realm of the multitude of beings in the whole and of Being itself of which nothingness is the veil” (Heidegger, 1949, p. 62–63). Nothingness, which Heidegger points out as “the ultimate reality of things,” is achieved in a state of dread (Heidegger, 1949, p. 228). Dread, for him, enables self-actualization of potentials:

The dread isolates the Dasein for its own innermost Being-in-the-world, it opens up to Dasein as “potentiality”, namely as what it can be uniquely out of itself as an isolated one in isolation. It can now project itself into potentialities by way of its understanding (Heidegger, 1949, p. 64).

Nothingness is not given or present in the self from the beginning of the Being-in-the-world. It is a mode which gradually emanates through constitutive situations. One of the situations which the characters under study journeyed towards nothingness is through silence. Silence is a means of communication that often speaks volume more than speech. Jaworski (1997) affirms that “silence is not to be understood as ordinary silence. Silence can be full, all-encompassing, indeed, it may even be loud. Silence and sound are both present at the same time” (Jaworski, 1997, p. 47). Silence witnessed among Mama and Kauna in the novels under study is not just loud but deafening. It is a yell for liberation as these characters slip into nothingness to realize their potentiality.

The silent self: The oppressed alienated from self

In the two novels under study, the journey of Kauna and Mama towards actualizing their potentialities is initiated through oppression and subjugation mostly inflicted by their spouses. These characters embark on this journey through silence. Just like other means of communication, silence communicates different meanings, ideas and thought. According to Leone “although silence is a transhistorical and cross-cultural feature of human communication, its quality varies depending on the various communicative contexts” (Leone, 2017, p. 161). Silence can function as both a cause and effect of a context; its magnitude is determined by the observer. It also functions as a positive and negative communicative device depending on the context. Silence as negative communicative device is mostly present among the dominated group as an escape from subjugation by the dominant group. As Jaworski rightly puts it “silence is a mark of oppression. Silence and oppression are linked; for instance, the silence of the marginalized which is more telling. The word ‘telling’ resonates especially deeply in this context for they can never ‘tell their story’ and are thus doomed to a perpetual silence” (Jaworski, 1997, p. 51). These oppressed women are unconsciously alienated from their potential self while living life as fashioned by their dictators. Tyson informs that “the *unconscious* is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about because we feel we will be overwhelmed by them (Tyson, 2002, p. 12). As alienated selves, there is a halt in self-determination, development, and actualization; these women fail to recognise their Being-in-the-world as they gradually move towards nothingness through dread. Heidegger points out that:

What is dreaded is that what is threatening is nowhere It is somehow there and yet nowhere very close and oppressing and yet nowhere. What is dreaded reveals itself as “it is nothing and nowhere”; but the atmosphere of profound averseness and oppression implied in the ‘nothing and nowhere’ indicates that what is dreaded is yet ‘something’, namely ‘the world as such’ (Heidegger, 1949, p. 61).

What is dreaded for these women are not their abusers but the non-recognition of selves as Beings endowed with potentialities and this threatens their Being-in-the-world.

In Andreas' *The purple violet of Oshaantu*, Kauna observes two degrees of silence. As presented by the first-person narrator, Mee Ali. The first degree of silence is generated from violence and oppression; the inability to speak up against an abusive husband. Kauna, a mother of four children experiences an oppressive marriage which starts right from her early married years. She tells Ali, her close friend, her ordeal as a wife without a homestead:

It was especially difficult when I did not have my own kitchen. Cooking times were my worst nightmare. Everybody disappeared, leaving me to cook more often than anybody else. We are about eight women at the homestead, but cooked at least four or five times a week for at least twenty people, and that excluded the neighbours who were often around at mealtimes. I simply wanted to do my own cooking just as I had done back home. But my husband was in no hurry to build kitchen. "You must be patient. If we hurry, my relatives will think you don't like their food" was his usual excuse (Andreas, 2001, p. 20).

Kauna's major oppression is from her husband, Shange, who changes from an impressive husband to an oppressive one that beats his wife and cheats on her with other women. Mee Ali expounds that "they were like day and night. Two different human beings" (Andrea, 2001, p. 51). Mee Ali recounts one of the inhumane treatment meted out on Kauna by Shange:

I will remember this sight of Kauna for as long as I live. Blood mixed with sand all over her face, in her mouth, nose, eyes, ears, head and clothes, and the sight of her children crying helplessly. 'Oooh!' called out the onlookers, awoken from their state of shock. I ran to Kauna and knelt beside her (Andreas, 2001, p. 59).

Amidst the maltreatment she receives from her husband, Kauna remains silent and hardly tells her best friend Ali; Ali gets to know when she notices "a bruise or when weeks later, she mentioned it in a conversation" (p. 61). Though she attempts divorce thrice, but she develops low self-esteem and thinks "maybe if I had been a nurse, a teacher or any of those office workers, he would have treated me better" (p. 51). Kauna's failure to liberate herself is not only rooted in her weakness but also in the functionality of the society where divorce does not conform to the norms. Her mother frowns at divorce and chides her for taking advice from her aunt who is a divorcee:

How do you expect your little mother to advise you? She is divorced herself. I hate to say this, but divorced people can give no other advice. Talk to married people, people who know how to handle marriage problem, not those who ran away from them. Besides, you forget a very important thing. Shange is the man God has given you and you must accept him as he is. You have made a promise before Him and the whole congregation to love and cherish your husband till death do you part. You cannot break your word now (Andreas, 2001, p. 67).

The above extract shows that the journey of Kuana towards self does not require standing aloof but existing as “one like many” in her environment (Heidegger, 1949, p. 45). By blaming herself for a miserable marriage, she attempts to repress her pains but “however, repression doesn’t eliminate our painful experiences and emotions. Rather, it gives them force by making them the organizers of our current experience: we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us to ‘play out,’ without admitting it to ourselves, our conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress” (Tyson, 2002, p. 12–13).

In Adichie’s *Purple hibiscus*, silence is a dominant trait running through the novel. Before the Palm Sunday, silence is the dominant means of communication in Eugene’s house where Mama, Kambili and Jaja speak mostly with their spirits than their lips. But among these three characters, Mama’s silence stands out as it is so deafening that it shapes the lives of other characters. Unlike Kauna whose silence is reserved to her marital affairs with her husband, Mama’s silence stretches through her activities. The narrator, Kambili, presents her as one who is feeble and sustains the functions marshalled out by her husband (Eugene); in fact “there was so much that she did not mind” (Adichie, 2004, p. 27). At Kambili’s tender age, she is able to recognize the master-slave union between her parents that she expresses “I could not even think of her and Papa together, on the bed they shared, custom-made and wider than the conventional king-size. When I thought of affection between them, I thought of them exchanging the sign of peace at Mass, the way Papa would hold her tenderly in his arms after they had clasped hands” (Adichie, 2004, p. 29). Kambili’s brother, Jaja, sees through Mama’s weakness as a mother and this is why he keeps coming to her defence. Jaja believes that the protection of their unborn brother rests on him and Kambili; it is this knowledge that prompts him to say “We will take care of the baby; we will protect them” (Adichie, 2004, p. 31).

Mama's attempts to stir away from the family norm earn her inhumane treatment. Her suggestion that Kambili eats cereals to sustain drug intake before going to church fetches them beating which Kambili likens to a bestiality:

Sometimes I watched the Fulani nomads, white jellabas flapping against their legs in the wind, making clucking sounds as they herded their cows across the roads in Enugu with a switch, each smack of the switch and precise. Papa was like a Fulani-nomad—although he did not have their spare, tall body as he swung his belt at Mama, Jaja, and me, muttering that the devil would not win (Adichie, 2004, p. 110).

Also Mama's attempt not to visit Father Benedict after Mass results to a bestial punishment by Eugene:

I was in my room after lunch, reading James chapter five because I would talk about the biblical roots of the anointing of the sick during family time, when I heard the sounds. Swift, heavy thuds on my parents' hand-carved bedroom door. I imagined the door had got stuck and Papa was trying to open it. If I imagined it hard enough, then it would be true. I sat down, closed my eyes, and started to count. Counting made it seem not that long, made it seem not that bad. Sometimes it was over before I even got to twenty. I was at nineteen when the sounds stopped (Adichie, 2004, p. 41).

Kambili's subtle presentation of such inhumane act is either attributed to her love for Papa or her age and inexperience to narrate such torture. This animalistic treatment 'earns' her a miscarriage which is painted as a journey towards self-awareness.

As Heidegger observes "the dread isolates the Dasein for its own innermost Being-in-the-world, it opens up to Dasein as 'potentiality', namely as what it can be uniquely out of itself as an isolated one in isolation. It can now project itself into potentialities by way of its understanding" (Heidegger, 1949, p. 62). Since what is dreaded, is the non-recognition of the potentiality of self, an understanding of self by a Being helps in revealing his/her potentialities that could be recognized by others. For Mama, Self-awareness gradually develops from a maternal instinct to tend and protect her family which is symbolised in the *étagère*:

Mama stood hugging herself in the centre of the living room, near the glass table, until Sisi brought a plastic bowl of water and a kitchen towel. The *étagère* had three shelves of delicate glass, and each one held beige ballet-

dancing figurines. Mama started at the lowest layer, polishing both the shelf and the figurines (Adichie, 2004, p. 43).

Mama's dedication in polishing the étagère reveals her awareness of her failure to stand up for her children that face domestic violence meted out by their religious fanatical father— Eugene. This awareness infuses in her the maternal instinct to protect Jaja and Kambili that are as delicate as the étagère. Freud believes that the development of instinct stems from stimuli to satisfy a need:

These instinctual stimuli arise within the body and can best be described as needs. When a need such as hunger is aroused, it generates a state of physiological excitation in the body—a physiological energy. This somatic energy, or need, is transformed in the mind into a wish. It is the wish—the mental representation of the body need—that is the instinct or driving force that motivates the person to behave so as to satisfy the body need [...] (Schultz, 1976, p. 48).

Mama's weakness affects her children to the extent that Kambili begins to see a portrait of Mama in any helpless female. She indirectly expresses this when she witnesses a woman maltreated by soldiers:

I thought about the woman lying in the dirt as we drove home. I had not seen her face, but I felt that I knew her, that I had always known her. I wished I could have gone over and helped her up, cleaned the red mud from her wrapper (p. 52).

The feeling of recognition is derived from a familiar situation of helplessness which she sees and experiences in Mama's situation. Mama's acceptance of Eugene's treatment is internalized in her perception of marriage. As she praises Eugene for his refusal to marry another wife, Auntie Ifeoma reprimands her to "stop it, stop being grateful. If Eugene had done that, he would have been the loser, not you" (p. 83). Auntie Ifeoma's remark is an attempt to decongest Mama's dysfunctional perception of marriage by instilling a sense of self subjectivism in her. Udu-mukwu in *The novel and change in Africa*, interprets the role of a subject in his reading of Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) where "ideology interpolates individuals as subjects... In addition, the subject has the value either as a free subjectivity, a centre of initiative, or as a subjected being that submits to a higher authority and is, therefore, stripped of all freedom" (Udumukwu, 2011, p. 54). Mama's idea of mar-

riage reduces her to a subjected being whose identity is stripped off from her by Eugene—the centre of initiative. Though Mama and Kauna communicate silence differently, at what point did they realize that they are Being-towards-death? At what point did they begin to form a concept of self and recognize themselves as Beings-in-the-world?

The daring self: Repositioning the identity of self

The daring self emerges from the awareness of self as an individual with capabilities. Such awareness is engraved in Being-towards-self; the realization of the concept of self. This realization of the capabilities of Self reflects the authentic mode of Being. As opined by Heidegger “Dasein is ‘authentic’ only when it is primarily concerned with its own potentiality of Being, and not with that of the ‘one like many’, while taking care of things and of one’s fellow-men” (Heidegger, 1949, p. 76–77). In realizing self, Kauna and Mama pass through the mode of nothingness which is derived in the mood of dread; in recognizing themselves, they drift into Care and unleash their capabilities by positioning themselves as *subjects* in their own capacity subjected to a higher being who does not exist in the same level of existence. According to Schultz (1976) “Rogers predicted, on the basis of his theory, that people will defend themselves against experiences that are incongruent with their self-image. They do this by denying or distorting the aspects of reality that are inconsistent with their self-image” (Schultz, 1976, p. 370). The second level of silence experienced by Kauna is a daring one borne out of the recognition of self. Kauna defies the order of the society through silence. She refuses the usual *widow cry* which the society expects of every woman mourning a husband as a sign of respect for the husband:

First they said it was the shock. ‘You know some people are like that. When they’re in shock, they don’t cry. But once they come to terms with reality, they act differently,’ one of the mourners remarked. The first day she did not cry, the second day she did not cry, the third day she did not cry and still, today, the fourth day, she had not cried. Mourners were getting tired. Rumours that Kauna was not crying or showing any emotion towards the sudden death of her husband spread like wild fire. People started to whisper and Shange’s relative got mad (Andreas, 2001, p. 48).

Kauna’s recognition of self as an individual emerges after Shange’s death. She establishes herself as an individual in her own right with her

own feelings and not as a societal structured self. Against all odd, as a widow, she refuses to shed a tear for Shange whom she believes deserves no more tears:

Well, I'm sorry you all feel uncomfortable about my behaviour, but I cannot pretend [...] I cannot lie to myself and to everybody else in the village. They all know how I was treated in my marriage. Why should I cry? For what? For my broken ribs? For my baby, the one he killed inside me while beating me? For cheating on me so publicly? For what? For what Ali? (Andreas, 2001, p. 49).

Shange could be likened to the famous General in Samuel Johnson's *An elegy to a famous general* who draws much tears from widows and orphans while alive that none accompanies him to his graveyard. The questions raised by Kauna gear toward Shange's actions (while alive) that have sapped the tears she would have shed for him. Mee Ali draws her attention to her provocative action and its effects on those around her:

I'm not saying you must pretend, all I'm trying to say is that you should also think of the rest of us your children, relatives and friends. Your behaviour is affecting all of us [...]. Even if you hated him, do not behave as if you want the world to know that you are happy he is dead. If you do this, you will give people reasons to accuse you of being responsible for his death (Andreas, 2001, p. 49).

But as Jaworski puts it "there is the silence in which one courteously engages so that one might be heard;" For Kauna to establish her identity as a victim of domestic violence, she employs silence where her cry is required (Jaworski, 1997, p. 42). She undertakes the journey of establishing self by sacrificing her feelings as a widow, a mother and a kinswoman. This is a journey of the authentic self where "the averageness of the way in which the 'self' is together with others in daily life, the sway which these others hold over it and the resulting levelling tendency in community life are emphasised" (Heidegger, 1949, p. 5).

For self to be established, sacrifices ought to be made. Kauna sacrifices her expected role as a widow in her bid to be heard. She makes no attempt obscuring her pains as a violated wife and she cares less of its reception by those around:

I have been angry my whole life. I have been angry about this marriage and with this man, so at this stage I really don't think I care what happens to me if I don't cry for him. I really don't care. I have nothing to lose (Andreas, 2001, p. 50).

Though Mee Ali chastises her for her emotionless attitude towards her widowhood societal role, she nevertheless admires her behaviour which she summarizes as "some new strength" (p. 143). Kauna is moved to shed tears only on the arrival of her mother and aunt; but her cry is not for Shange, it is more like a moment of bonding and sharing women's travails as the three of them "formed a circle as they embraced one another and cried" (p. 121). Kauna's silence extends to the presentation of speech as the widow during Shange's burial. She decides not to present a speech since her reflection of Shange as a husband will taint the people's expectation of a loving speech:

But, Ali, can you imagine what I have to say about that man? Can you picture me saying [...] No! I am not going to tell lies that widows tell at their husband's funerals. I am not going to say what an honourable, loving and faithful husband he was, while everybody in the village knows what type of a man he was. No, I will not make a laughing stock of myself. No, not because of Shange or anyone else [...] (Andreas, 2001, p. 139).

By standing out from the stereotyped widows, Kauna establishes her individuality; her attempt to stand out from the 'others' by remaining true to self makes her 'the devil' and Shange 'the victim.' Kauna remains defiant in revealing herself that "even the sight of her children did not make her emotional" (p. 162). By standing aloof and refusing to cry like others, she slips (a bit) into the unauthentic mode where she portrays herself to the world as a being devoid of affection and sympathy. Heidegger avers that "this self-estrangement which denies to Dasein its authenticity and best potentialities, as it were, locking it up from what it genuinely can be, does not hand it over to something which it is not itself, but presses it into its unauthenticity, a potential mode of Being of itself; in it Dasein catches itself up and entangles itself" (Heidegger, 1949, p. 57). Kauna's disposition towards Shange's burial is used by her in-laws as a necessitated weapon for ripping her off her homestead. Though the practice of relatives inheriting a man's homestead and sending the widow out is common amongst the people, in Kauna's case her in-laws rely on her action to justify this ill practice:

Why do you want to stay here and enjoy Shange's wealth? You didn't even shed one tear for him. Do you think we don't know how you disrespected Shange? Now you want to stay here and behave like a poor widow. You will not stay here and bring other men into Shange's bed. If you think we would allow this we won't (Andreas, 2001, p. 166).

Kauna vacates the homestead with a glimpse of hope and willingness to explore as a “self-Being” (Heidegger, 1949, p. 58).

In *Purple hibiscus*, Mama’s attempt to establish self as an identity, does not end with the expectation observed in Kauna’s quest. Mama’s silence as a subjected being unaware of self is broken with the shattering of the figurine by Eugene:

He picked up the missal and flung it across the room, toward Jaja. It missed Jaja completely, but it hit the glass étagère, which Mama polished often. It cracked the top shelf, swept the beige, finger-size ceramic figurines of ballet dancers in various contorted postures to the hard floor and then landed after them. Or rather it landed on their many pieces (Adichie, 2004, p. 15).

The breaking of the figurines, which signifies the shattering of the family unity, ushers in Mama’s awareness of her demanding role as a mother which is threatened by the reprobated patriarchal domination. The shattering of the étagère also awakens Mama’s quest of liberating her family from the shackles of domestic slavery; this is attributed to her recognition of self and her capabilities. Kambili affirms this new spirit in Mama when she refuses replacing the figurines:

Maybe Mama had realised that she would not need the figurines anymore; that when Papa threw the missal at Jaja, it was not just the figurines that came tumbling down, it was everything. I was only now realising it, only just letting myself think it (Adichie, 2004, p. 23).

Mama’s metamorphosis into an identified self is felt by those around her, Kambili testifies that “even the silence that descended on the house was sudden, as though the old silence had broken and left us with the sharp pieces” (p. 261). This shows that silence in the novel is experienced in two degrees: silence as a means of oppression and silence as a means of liberation:

The running forward in thought reveals to Dasein that it is lost in the ‘oneself’ and brings it face to face with the potentiality of being itself, primarily unaided by the care of others, but itself in the passionate, actual Freedom-towards-death (Freiheit zum Tode), being certain of it and dreading it, yet being independent of the illusions of the cone like many (Heidegger, 1949, p. 78).

Mama’s yell towards liberation makes her take rash decision without caring its consequential effects on others. After coming to a full awareness of her identity as a mother, Mama goes ahead to liberate self by

eliminating that which threatens her existence as a Being by poisoning Eugene's tea. Kambili echoes the grievous effect of poisoning Papa through his tea which they usually share a love sip:

For a long, silent moment I could think of nothing. My mind was blank, I was blank. Then I thought of taking sips of Papa's tea, love sips, the scalding liquid that burned his love onto my tongue. 'Why did you put it in his tea?' I asked Mama, rising. My voice was loud. I was almost screaming. 'Why in his tea?' (Adichie, 2004, p. 294).

The second question by Kambili shows that she is more concerned in the method of Papa's execution than in Papa's death. Mama moves towards self-estrangement by detaching herself from others; Kambili observes that "not even when Jaja wrapped his arms around me and turned to include her but she moved away" (p. 295). In a way, Mama satisfies her quest for self-identity by moving towards unauthentic Being, "But this appeasement by itself intensifies the 'Verfallen', driving to a restless activity and bringing Dasein into a state of 'self-estrangement' (Entfremdung) in which its own innermost 'potentiality of Being' becomes concealed to it [...]. This way of inner movement of Dasein in its own Being is termed the "fall" (Absturz): the Dasein falls from itself to itself, namely to the groundlessness and irrelevance of unauthentic everydayness" (Heidegger, 1949, p. 56–57). Mama fails to liberate herself as an independent Being but entangles herself as she falls to herself:

She does not seem to mind that she looks this way; she doesn't even seem to know. She has been different ever since Jaja was locked up, since she went about telling people that she killed Papa, that she put the poison in his tea. She even wrote letters to newspapers. But nobody listened to her; they still don't. They think grief and denial—that her husband is dead and that her son is in prison—have turned her into this vision of a painfully bony body, of skin speckled with blackheads the size of watermelon seeds. Perhaps it is why they forgive her for not wearing all black or all white for a year. Perhaps it is why nobody criticised her for not attending the first and second year memorial Masses, for not cutting her hair (Adichie, 2004, p. 300).

Conclusion

Both Kauna and Mama experience two major degrees of silence as the oppressed self and the daring self. Both women also attempt to institute self as an individual whereby Kauna defies the tradition of widow's

cry and the religion of delivering a perfect speech in church as a godly and dutiful wife during her husband's burial; Mama eliminates that which threatens her fulfilment by poisoning Eugene. While Kauna fiercely establishes herself as an individual with her own rights, Mama's attempt to establish self-identity, does not liberate her as she drenches deeper into a different kind of silence which is borne out of guilt. Her children which she attempts to liberate become bounded by the shackles of the law (as seen in Jaja's imprisonment). The silence of these two women contribute to both the development of other characters and events in the novels. Kauna's inability to stand up to Shange's violent act while he's still alive makes her to keep swapping roles with her daughter, Kandiwapa, who cleans her bruises whenever she is brutally beaten up by her husband. It also gives Shange room to openly have a mistress at the "white house" and disrespect her in the presence of people. One can say their master-slave relationship also contributes to Shange's careless death whereby his health status would have been detected by his wife if she was treated as a wife, an equal and not a slave. For Mama, her feeble attempt in playing the role of a wife and mother encourages Eugene bestial acts which lead to the character formation of her children and later to the death of Eugene. In their quests to realise self-identities, both women pass through the state of nothingness as realised in dread through silence; at the end, Kauna emerges fulfilled and hopeful while Mama ends up unfulfilled and quite hopeless.

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The construction of tenor, identities and power relations in online discourses on indigenous people of Biafra (Ipob)

ABSTRACT. Previous studies on ethnic, religious and political expressions and activities in Nigeria have examined issues such as religious and political intolerance between and among groups. In particular, the activities of pro-Biafra groups such as that of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Biafra Independent Movement (BIM) among others in real life and in online forums have also been studied by scholars from different ideological and theoretical standpoints. However, none of these studies examined the deliberate expression of ethnic, religious and political identities and otherness in the discourses that emanate from the arrest, detention and trial of Nnamdi Kanu, the separatist founder of IPOB, by the government of Nigeria. This study aims at unearthing the deep sense of exclusion that underlies the reactions that trail his arrest and trial in online platforms. A total of twenty online comments were purposively selected and analysed within the tenets of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in order to unearth the ethnic, religious and political ideologies that underlie them. This study gives an insight into how individual and group ideologies in online discourses can threaten the autonomous face wants of others and also that of the corporate existence of the nation. The theoretical orientation adopted for the study leads to the understanding that ethnic, political and religious sentiments underlie the use of language in crisis/conflict situations in the Nigerian context. This study significantly espouses the notion that there is the need for equity, social justice and mutual trust between groups in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Ethnic, Religious and Political Identities, Exclusion, Equity, Social Justice

1. Introduction

Individual attitudes, beliefs, orientations, points of view and biases on something are referred to as ideology in critical studies. People can also manifest their ideology through their language, actions and inac-

tions. Consequently, every utterance is ideologically mediated or imbued. No utterance is ideologically neutral. People's comments and reactions to the trial of Nnamdi Kanu (the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB & founder of Radio Biafra) have also not been less of a product of ideology. The origin of the conflict that has so far led to the trial of Kanu did not just begin recently, as it dates back to 1967 when the Republic of Biafra originated as a secessionist state as a result of the economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions among Nigerians. A military coup occurred in January 1966 which led to the death of top political and military leaders including the then prime minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, a northerner. Due to several reasons, the killings were alleged to be an Igbo coup and as a result, a counter-coup came in July of the same year which heightened the ethnic tensions in Nigeria. A lot of military officers and civilians of Igbo extraction resident in the North were targeted and killed and reprisal killings of Northerners in the East also followed suit. The counter-coup led to the death of the then military head of state, Gen. Aguiyi-Ironsi, an Igbo. A civil war which lasted close to three years (1967–1970) broke out after Colonel Ojukwu, the military governor of eastern region, proclaimed the eastern region an independent and sovereign state to be known as "The Republic of Biafra". After the war came the process of reconciliation and reintegration of the Igbo into the Nigerian nationhood. However, a sizeable majority Igbo have never ceased to see themselves as not being part of Nigeria because of alleged or perceived instances of marginalization against them by their fellow compatriots. Kanu, like some other radical Igbo agitators, believe the realization of Biafra is the best way of ending the marginalization of the Igbo in Nigeria. As a way of conscientizing the Igbo and other ethnic minorities in the southern part of Nigeria he opened a pirate radio station in London known as "Radio Biafra" from where he broadcasts series of anti-government and anti-President Buhari messages. He was however arrested by security operatives in Lagos in October 2015 when he attempted to enter the country surreptitiously under a new identity.

The arrest and detention of Nnamdi Kanu since October 14, 2015 by the federal government of Nigeria has fostered a crisis situation. Protests by members of IPOB and Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) have occurred in the southeast and south-south zones of the nation to press for his release. The protests and riots have brought about loss of lives and property of not just the protesters

themselves but also that of innocent by-standers. Clashes have also occurred between the protesters and security operatives who have been accused of using excessive force to quell the protests. Both sides have traded blames on who ignited the confrontations and their fatal consequences. Again, several negotiations and round-table discussions have been held to find a possible political solution to the fast spreading crisis before it degenerates into another civil war.

The Internet, particularly the social media technology, has so far gone a long way in shaping identity construction/re-negotiation and establishment of individual and societal ideologies. Innocent Chiluwa (2014) asserts that “the internet has been adapted as a medium to negotiate perceived endangered ethnic identities” (Chiluwa, 2014, p. 81). The Biafran issue has also not been an exception as Chiluwa also notes that “[...] the internet is a key site for social interaction, civil engagement and identity negotiation. The Biafra Campaign Group forms a virtual community for the purpose of asserting its ethnic identity and to seek political independence from Nigeria” (Chiluwa, 2014, p. 81). Still on the issue of Biafran agitation, various online platforms and websites have been opened, such as “Voice of Biafra”, “Biafra Online”, “Biafra Forum” and others, through which members of the forums post information or comments pertinent to the agitation. Each of the comments/posts on the forums exhibits ideological content that represents both individual and collective identities.

Nnamdi Kanu’s trial has been on for some months now and people have reacted to this through various means—online or print media. However, no researcher has studied how otherness or the ideology of exclusion is expressed in the discourses on Kanu by groups and individuals in online medium and the implications of such discourses on national cohesion. The obvious neglect of this area is therefore the major concern of this study. Language in online medium has performed various functions including the enactment of inclusion and exclusion/otherness. The aim of this study is to examine how crisis situations enable language users to implicitly and explicitly express the ideology of exclusion or otherness. One of the objectives of this study is to reveal how online discourses create a platform for the expression of individual and group identities and the implication of such expressions on national unity/integration. Another objective of this study is to examine how a crisis situation can generate diverse reactions that exude in-groupness and out-groupness. The study also unravels how people use language to

show resistance and dominance in crisis situation. This study is significant in that it shows the interconnectedness between discourse, ideology and identity especially in crisis situation. It shows that individuals and groups can take advantage of the liberty/freedom provided by the internet to produce discourse forms that can threaten fellowship face, autonomous face wants of the other, traditional bonds between groups, and thus weaken national unity. This study is restricted to the analysis of language use by selected online users/commentators in reaction to the arrest, detention and trial of Nnamdi Kanu. Consequently, it will examine how ideologies and identities are constructed by different individuals and groups in crisis situation such as the ongoing trial of Kanu.

2. Literature review and theoretical perspective

The first recorded use of the word “identity” appeared in 1570 as “identity”, meaning “the quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration; absolute or essential sameness; oneness” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 18). Identity is obviously a difficult concept to define because it is not a fixed notion. Omoniyi and White (2006) observe that “identity is a problematic concept inasmuch as we recognize it now as non-fixed, non-rigid and always being (co-)constructed by individuals of themselves (or ascribed by others), or by people who share certain core values or perceive another group as having such values” (Omoniyi & White, 2006, p. 1). McKinlay and McVittie (2011, p. 19) argue that identity, particularly in discourse, should rather be examined in terms of how it is produced and dealt with within the specific particularities of the interactional contexts in which it appears. They contend that people will construct identities for themselves and for others as they interact with others through discourse. This explains why Evans (2015, p. 49) observes that language is often used to claim group identity. Language enhances the enactment or expression of both individual and group identities.

Language enables its users to express their experience of the world and their relationship with others. Halliday (2003) views language as a resource for construing human experiences. Working within the Hallidayan view of language, Sonderling (2009, p. 86) observes:

In a fundamental way language makes it possible for us to understand and make sense of the world by providing us with words and meanings to name

things and interpret the world, to represent it to our mind, talk about it and exchange information with other people. Our knowledge and experience of the world are words and meaning mediated by language. The way we organise and articulate our experiences is an interpretative process that takes place mainly in, and through, language... language stands between us and our world; by using words to describe objects in our world we re-present the world to our mind and such representation influences, shapes and also distorts our view of the world.

Evans (2015) contends that language is more than words and phrases and disembodied sounds but rather the coming to life of social interaction where sentences may be incomplete, punctuated by voices of other or by gaps, silences, intonations, accents and accompanied by bodily gestures and facial movements. He points out that language is embodied and expresses ways of being in the world through the creation of meanings which relate to us in terms of identity (Evans, 2015, p. 3). Language therefore includes the spoken and written words, signs, semiotics, gestures and so on.

Language is important in the construction and analysis of social identity. Omoniyi and White (2006, p. 2) note that language plays a central role in both interpreting and proclaiming identity. Language enables individuals to make sense of their own identities and that of others. Duszak (2002) puts it very succinctly when she argues that “no doubt language gives us a most powerful tool for conveying social identities, for telling (and making) friends and foes. The construction and the management of social identities are done through discourse and by means of various linguistic mechanisms and strategies” (Duszak, 2002, p. 1). The expression of ingroupness and outgroupness is the property of language. The expression of social proximity and distance is also discursive. How we perceive ourselves and others and how we would want others to perceive us are also discursive. According to Duszak (2002, p. 8):

Social identities are enacted in discourse. Analyzing what is said we make presumptions as to what is meant. In the course of such interpretation processes we also make inferences as to what social identities speakers (writers) construe of themselves and their listeners (readers). On the basis of such inferences we produce mental representations of people and develop attitudes of social solidarity and detachment. These are then consolidated, revised or redefined on the basis of further evidence.

For Evans (2015), identity, is the idea, sense and perception of self or self-concept which is constituted by the meaning of language and how it

is reflected in language, not just in small-scale social interactions but also in larger linguistic-political discourse. He maintains that the meanings that substantiate self-concept or identity are both created through language and expressed by language (Evans, 2015, p. 3). To Benwell and Stokoe (2006, p. 42), some scholars perceive identity as something that lies dormant, ready to be “switched on” in the presence of other people, and this can only be switched on through the use of language (which is a vital means for humans to express themselves). Therefore, people will construct identities for themselves and for others as they interact with others through discourse (McKinlay & McVittie, 2011, p. 14). One major fact about identity is that it is in two forms—personal and social—where “personal” refers to who an individual is, that is, the name of the person and characteristics while “social” means the groups and organizations the individual belongs to.

In Duszak’s (2002, p. 2) studies on social identities, “people construct their social identities on the basis of various socially and culturally relevant parameters. These include ethnicity, nationality, professional status and expertise, gender, age, as well as ideology and style of living”. The considerations above represent some of the ways scholars have perceived and considered the notion of identity.

3. Methodology

The primary data for this study is derived from some selected online comments in *e-Vanguard* news (the online version of *Vanguard Newspapers*) of December 2015–March 2016, on the arrest and trial of Nnamdi Kanu. A total number of forty (40) posts were sampled out of which twenty (20) were purposively selected for analysis. The twenty posts were selected as fair representations of the main focus/theme of the posts. The twenty posts are represented as follows: ethnic identity (12 posts—85%); religious identity (2 posts—3%); and political identity (6 posts—12%). It should also be noted that no attempt is made to correct grammatical and spelling errors in the posts. The posts convey some sociolinguistic information on the speakers. From the way language is used in the posts, we can infer the social and ethnic backgrounds of some of the commentators. Most of the posts bear the online identity of the commentators.

4. Data presentation and analysis

In this part of the study, focus shall be on the online comments on Nnamdi Kanu's arrest and trial as they convey a sense of ingroupness and outgroupness, that is, how individuals use language to display ethnic, religious and political identities. The twenty posts selected for analysis are presented and discussed below.

4.1. Ethnic otherness

The twelve (12) posts under consideration in this category (ethnic otherness) constitute 85% of the twenty posts selected for analysis. This shows that the ethnic dimension of the discourse is dominant or received the greatest attention. This is not surprising since the agitation for Biafra is essentially an ethnic one. This means that most of those who speak in favour and against the struggle do so mainly from ethnic prism or lenses. The concept of identity as discussed in 2.0 above has been identified as a multi-faceted one. An individual can have multi-identities, depending on the context involved. Ethnic identity is one of such identities as seen in the posts below.

Post 1

opy 13 days ago

Head or tale Kanu will rot in prison, he can't escape it. So the earlier you agitators of biafraud realizes that the better.

A common way to portray otherness is with the use of pronouns. In the above post, the ethnic group of the speaker is not clearly stated but one can easily notice that the speaker is anti-Biafra with the use of the words "...you agitators...", therefore excluding himself or emphasizing that he is not one of them. Also, by neologising the word Biafra to become "biafraud", the speaker does not only portray them as inferior to whatever ethnic group he may belong to but also labels them in the negative as fraudsters, hence the use of the word "...fraud". Again, the use of the word, "biafraud" depicts the whole concept of Biafran struggle as fraudulent—an opportunity for some privileged few to defraud or exploit the gullible majority. The phrase, "head or tail, Kanu will rot in prison" is intended to threaten the autonomous face wants of the other—the followers or sympathizers of Kanu and Biafra.

Post 2

Obosi Warrior • 14 days ago

Oh no! Why stop the demon—Stration, a lot of biafraud e-rats are going to lose erection because of late the madness has become an opium that fans thier libidic fantasy. By the way who told you about any negotiation to release Nnamdi Kow-nu, you guys are just putting it up as a saving face (lame) withdrawal strategy. No government ever promised that, Kow-nu will go through the legal process and if found guilty will surely bear his cross. Abeg knw wey market don open, make I go buy garri for Ochanja market jare!

The above speaker, whose identity is revealed, is obviously an anti-Biafran. He labels the Igbo negatively as well as scapegoats them as he calls them names such as “biafraud”, “e-rats”, “demon-Stration” and also uses a distorted the coinage “Nnamdi Kow-nu” instead of “Nnamdi kanu”. One could describe the commentator as an Igbo who does not share in the Biafran dream. There are linguistic indicators that suggest that he/she is Igbo: his/her name—Obosi (an Igbo town) and the reference to Ochanja market (in Onitsha). This gives the impression that not all Igbo buy into the IPOB/MASSOB campaign or that one could be Igbo without being Biafran. The speaker further shows his/her disapproval of IPOB protesters by constructing them as being possessed by the demon hence the action of demonstration is graphologically distorted and foregrounded as a “demon-Stration.” However, the rhetorical purposes for the deliberate deployment of sexual images such as “erection”, “libidic”, “release” and “withdrawal strategy” in the context of the discussion is not certain.

Post 3

EvaNexy Dec 8, 2015

The yorobbers don't want biafra to go because they are so afraid that if biafra goes the hausa/fulani will take over their land cos they know that they are born cowards and betrayers.

The above speaker first begins by deliberately distorting the word “Yorubas” to “yorobbers” (yo-robbers) hence labelling the Yoruba ethnic group as robbers and also scapegoating them as betrayers for not supporting the Biafran cause. The speaker goes further to call the other cowards and betrayers who rely on the Igbo being part of the Nigerian nation to escape Hausa/Fulani occupation. The claim implicitly represents the Hausa/Fulani groups as land grabbers. The coinage “yo-robbers”

implies that the Yoruba are greedy thieves who reap where they did not sow. This is an obvious use of discourse of blackmail to represent the other in the most negative. Such discourse shows that the Igbo do not like or trust people of the Yoruba ethnic group when it comes to matters such as the one under consideration. The speaker carefully chooses words such as “yorobbers”, “born cowards” and “betrayers” that are purposely intended to offend the Yoruba and threaten the fellowship face between the Igbo and the Yoruba.

Post 4

@EvaNexy Dec 8, 2015

We're biafrans & not nigeria, our way and everything is different, so you can't intimidate us neither do buhari or army, when we finish with nigeria & buhari we will come after any politician who has conspired with nigeria harm us directly or indirectly. All hail biafra. #Free nnamdi KANU #Free biafra.

Unlike the two previous comments that attack the face of the other directly, the above comment asserts the Biafran ethno-national identity of the speaker in unmistakable terms, hence the continuous use of the pronouns “we” and “us”. We find the speaker reiterating his national/ethnic identity and what they stand for—“we're biafrans & not nigerians, our way and everything is different...” It is not certain, from the co-text, whether the pronominal “you” refers to other commentators, Buhari, the army or other perceived enemies of Biafra but what is certain about the discourse is the speaker's use of pronouns to assert and construct a self-image that negates the one being imposed on him/her by the Nigerian nation. Contextual clues however lead us to infer that the “you” refers to those the speaker believes are opposed to the realization of Biafra. The speaker uses the expression, “...our way and everything is different” as a way of persuading his/her audience to accept the fact that there are no commonalities or common grounds between Biafra and other parts of the Nigerian nation. Thus, the pronouns of inclusion (we, our, us) and exclusion (you) establish the ideology of dichotomy or difference between Biafra and others. The speaker ends his/her rhetoric with two hash tags as a way of drawing attention to and drumming support for the Biafran struggle. Hash tags have become very popular in contemporary discourses that have political and ideological orientations. They are mainly perceived as semiotic signs of resistance against social injustice, oppression and dominance.

Post 5

Obosi Warrior Chiemele • 14 days ago

Reasoning with people whose brains has been washed with Omo and key soap becomes very exhaustive. I wonder who they claim is negotiating with them retards. Negotiate about what? Nnamdi Kow-nu a frustrated loafer in UK, who thinks he can buy himself into prominence through mischief and wayo. Listen to them talk here, you will see they all reason in one direction, like a herd directed towards abyss

The above speaker uses *omo* and key soap (which are kinds of detergent in Nigeria), to express how the referent has been brain-washed by pro-Biafra mind controllers and ideologies. The phrase, "...whose brains has been washed with omo and key soap..." as a metaphor, implies being brain-washed, ideologically. On the surface, one may not know who is being brain-washed and by who, until one goes further down the comment where the speaker makes use of the pronoun "they", thereby excluding himself and in the context of the discourse, it could probably be referring to pro-Biafra agitators in real life and in virtual communities. The speaker therefore, through his comment, reveals himself/herself as an anti-Biafran. Instead of him/her spelling Nnamdi Kanu correctly, the speaker deliberately distorts it to "Nnamdi Kow-nu", which by pronunciation sounds like the word "cow." The association of the name and personality of Kanu with cow is also seen in the phrase, "...like a herd directed towards abyss." Framing Kanu and other pro-Biafra agitators as cow or herd is intended to delegitimize kanu and justify the speaker's claim that Kanu is "a frustrated loafer in UK" who is leading the ignorant to destruction.

Post 6

Smancy Dec 9, 2015

You mean Kanu I saw in one YouTube, who went to America to solicit for guns and ammunitions to kill hausas. Which means he is instigating war in the country, which is also a high treason, he thought hausas will just sit down and allow him and his cohorts to just kill them and go, what a Big fool.

The speaker carefully chooses his words, which depict him as none pro-Biafran (or a non-Igbo) because he represents Kanu as an insurgent "instigating war in the country". It is also clear that the speaker is not Hausa as a result of the third person plural pronoun "them", a pronoun of exclusion, which refers to the Hausa ethnic group. By also referring to

the Biafrans as Kanu's "cohorts", the speaker reveals his dislike for the Biafran movement as a whole. The speaker in trying to represent Kanu in the negative flouts one of the Grecian maxims—the maxim of quality. The speaker does not appear to have any evidence in support of his/her claim that Kanu was soliciting guns in America to kill the Hausa. Why would Kanu target just the Hausa and spare other ethnic groups such as the Yoruba, the Fulani, the Kanuri, and so on. It appears the speaker's intention is to depict the Hausa as innocent victims of Kanu's wicked and evil intentions and perhaps instigate an ethnic war between the Hausa and the Igbo ethnic groups. He also portrays his biases by declaring such an act "a high treason" when he lacks the powers of a judge to do so. By calling Kanu "a Big fool" he threatens the autonomous face wants of the other.

Post 7

KampalaKamptown 13 days ago

@Smancy u re mad who has been killing who in this zoo if i may remember it has been the hausa fulani killing the Biafrans many thunder fire u and ur generation 500 times

This speaker reacts to the previous post. He starts by abusing the previous speaker (which is a common phenomenon in crisis discourse). While the speaker in post 6 implies that Kanu and his ethnic group are the ones planning to eliminate the Hausa people, this speaker counters that by representing Biafrans as innocent victims of the Hausa/Fulani genocidal attacks. The speaker refers to Nigeria as a "zoo" which implies Nigeria is inhabited by wild animals where no rules obtain. The speaker uses the zoo metaphor to justify the alleged killings of Biafrans by the Hausa/Fulani group. The use of abusive language by the speaker is also a threat to the face of the other.

Post 8

HAROLD_WILSON_SYNDROME 13 days ago

@Nattifika @Ibiso

THEY will become Igbo again AFTER the movement succeeds.

The speaker here foregrounds the pronoun "THEY" in capital letters to show he is not one of those who are against the Biafran movement. The pronoun refers to those who are denying their Biafran identity because of the challenges IPOB and other pro-Biafra movements are facing in Nigeria. He is against those who will only want to become in-

group members after the realization of Biafra. The time deixis, after, is also foregrounded as a metaphor of hope for the eventual realization of the Biafran dream.

Post 9

Ibiso Dec 8, 2015

Although I am from the Niger delta and will not allow my region to be with Biafra, I think right now if Biafra is not allowed by Nigerians, People like the Oba of Lagos and other Hausa fools should be sent to jail anytime they carelessly utter rubbish. 2. Every Nigerian where ever the person finds himself or herself MUST have every right to live at that place. Every human right and benefit... If not THEN ALLOW BIAFRA to go.

@Ibiso

Fellow Biafrans, this can be a yoruba imposter...be warned. He carefully chose his words to make you believe he is pro biafra.

The first speaker here starts by establishing his/her regional identity as a non-Biafran and pledges not to allow his/her region to be with Biafra. He/she however argues that Biafrans should be allowed to go if social justice and rule of law are not allowed to flourish in Nigeria. A critical look at the comment therefore, will reveal the somewhat indifferent disposition of the speaker to the present issue. Meanwhile, the second speaker on the other hand, by using the expression "fellow Biafrans", identifies self as a Biafran before going further to antagonize the first speaker for the apparent contradictions in his/her identity. By warning his/her group members, Biafrans, to beware of the "Yoruba imposter" the second speaker seems not to believe that the first speaker is from the Niger Delta. It is however surprising that this speaker still feels comfortable to label the first speaker a "Yoruba imposter" even when he/she has clearly identified himself/herself as coming from the Niger Delta region and thus a non-Yoruba.

Post 10

Speaker A

Sting2000 kuli • 14 days ago

[...] but you have been raping and taking their resources for decades. You have even killed their leaders like Sarowiwa, Boro and the Ogonis. Igbos have never fought wars or killed their neighbors. So what about that? Next propaganda and lies, please!

Speaker B

kuli Sting2000 • 14 days ago

Us you mean. We are all Nigerians since Biafra is dead yet again. Lolz

Speaker A

Sting2000 kuli • 14 days ago

Chameleon, refute the issue in context and stop trying to divert attention to your Biafran nightmare. I never used the word “us or we”

Speaker B

kuli Sting2000 • 14 days ago

I am using the word US and WE intentionally. Since Biafra died a few minutes ago. Newsflash you are still Nigerian just like me. Join me in Yaba, make we go chop Amala and Gbegiri to celebrate our unity.

The above string of exchanges contains perfect examples of expression of otherness. The pronouns “we” and “us”, are used to express in-groupness while “you”, “their” and “your” are for out-groupness. In the first comment, we find speaker A exonerating Biafra (or the Igbo) from the atrocities committed against the people of the Niger Delta by the Nigerian nation. Meanwhile, speaker B quickly identifies the attempt by the Igbo to scapegoat others for the injustices committed against the Niger Delta people by insisting that the Igbo are still part and parcel of Nigeria. Speaker B uses the “we” and “us” in the discourse context to index what he believes to be their common identity—their oneness and Nigerianness. Speaker B perceives the whole idea of Biafra as an opportunity for some privileged few to exploit others hence the derogatory word, Biafra. Whereas speaker A speaks as a pro-Biafran and a supporter of the Biafran cause, speaker B believes Biafra will never be. He/she believes in the indivisibility of the Nigerian nation.

Post 11

Nattifika Dec 9, 2015

@Ibiso Although I come from the NigerDelta part of Nigerian, specifically from Warri, I am remain a staunch supporter of Biafra. Itsekiris should wake up now and not remain sitting on the fence to give their support to the movement. I think our cousins the Urhobos and the Ijaws should come out NOW not tomorrow to show their solidarity for the

drive to accomplish some tangible result. I will never understand Niger-Deltans that wishes to remain under the yoke of complete dominane from the central Goverment.

From the above, we can infer that some non-Igbo identify with the Biafran struggle as the speaker claims to hail from Warri. He also urges other ethnic groups in Delta State to identify with Biafra. However, the speaker's Warri identity claim is in doubt because he/she succeeds in mentioning the three major ethnic groups (Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ijaw) that lay claim to Warri without identifying which one he/she belongs to. This text shows that virtual identities can, sometimes, be difficult to establish. It is easier for discourse participants to conceal their identities or lay claim to new ones.

Post 12

Paul Afam PolyGon2013 • 14 days ago

Oh yes, that's the reason a yaraba man is used for an example of a COWARD & awusa/F00Lani as an example of a TERRORIST.

From the above post, it appears the speaker is from the south-east region of Nigeria and because in-group members always see others as inferior, so the speaker labels members of the other two major ethnic groups in the negative. He/she uses coinages as well as capitalization to communicate his message. The Yoruba are the carriers of the attribution "COWARD" while the "awusa/F00Lani" are the carriers of the negative attribution, "TERRORIST". Meanwhile, the speaker carefully neologises Fulani as "F00Lani", where the supposedly /u:/ vowel sound is realized in cardinal numbers and foregrounded in capital letters. This is a deliberate act which reveals his/her perception of the Fulani ethnic groups as "fools" and he/she also deliberately misspells Hausa as "awusa" and Yoruba as "yaraba". This is a way of doing linguistic violence to the identity of those ethnic groups.

4.2. Religious otherness

Posts that are religious in orientation received the least attention. Only 3% of the posts express a sense of religious otherness. This shows that discourse participants privilege ethnicity and politics over religion, as far the discourse on Nnamdi Kanu is concerned.

Post 13

Smancy Dec 9, 2015

Do you allow hausas to build their place of worship? Go to North in every local government, there is a church, when I served in anambra five local governments have to come together to pray at rented store. Pls be wise

Using the second person pronoun “you”, the above speaker exempts himself/herself from the rhetorical question. The speaker appears not to be of Igbo ethnic group and accuses the Igbo of ethno-religious bias or discrimination against Hausa Muslims. The speaker evokes a historical knowledge frame in support of his/her argument that the north are more religious tolerant than east. With the use of the third person pronoun “their” in the first sentence, it becomes difficult to specifically say the speaker’s religion. However, with the presence of the pronominal “you” in the first sentence, it can be inferred that the speaker may not be a Christian and as such could be a Muslim or a Muslim sympathizer.

Post 14

KampalaKamptown 13 days ago

@opy u re useless and uneducated idiot that's y this ur Islamic British nigeria zoo must fall and Biafra must be restored

From the speaker’s words above, though the religion of the speaker is not directly mentioned, the speaker paints himself/herself as an out-group member of Islam or one who does not identify with the Islamic religion, hence the use of “...this ur Islamic...” The speaker may therefore be a Christian, a traditionalist or one who belongs to some other religious groups who obviously see Nigeria as a British-Islamic configuration that is anti-Christian in the main. Again, the speaker metaphorizes Nigeria as a zoo and predicts its downfall. The use of impolite expressions such as “useless” and “uneducated idiot” by the speaker is a face threatening act.

4.3. Political otherness

In this category, six (6) posts (which make up 12% of the twenty posts) will be analysed to reveal their ideo-political orientation. The comments in themselves evince a sense of political otherness and give

the discourse on Kanu a political colouration. This shows how people who are ideationally different perceive or react to the same phenomenon.

Post 15

kofuche PlayMyPart • 14 days ago

That is where the Nigerian money is going into. APC and Buhari is using every money in this country to bribe the international media to look the other way. Well, that is the man fighting corruption. Don't worry, we will tell our story by ourselves. That is what radio Biafra is doing the entire world is listening to it. They are eager to know what we are doing, but they will not tell you. Do you think we care?

Social actions are generally perceived and constructed from ideological and political perspectives. The arrest, detention and trial of Nnamdi Kanu have not escaped being viewed from the perspective of partisan politics as can be seen in post 15 above. The post does not just reveal the speaker as a Biafran, but also as a non-APC (All Progressives Congress) supporter. Besides, he/she also shows in his/her comment that he/she is against Buhari's government and all that it stands for. The speaker satirizes Buhari's anti-corruption crusade as double standards. He/she also accuses the Buhari led regime and APC of trying to use politics to stifle the discourse on Biafra and prevent it from reaching the global public.

Post 16

EduMainMan1/Stuttgart • 14 days ago

APC and Demented Mumuhari are Demon Possessed. They Need Deliverance by Fire by Force

The speaker in post 16 above, labels both Buhari and APC as demented and demon possessed. By the negative portrayal of Buhari and APC, it is therefore a given that the speaker is an out-group member, though he makes this obvious in the second sentence with the use of the pronoun "they". The speaker also creates a coinage from Muhammadu and Buhari to form "Mumuhari". The coinage which has "mumu" (imbecile), as its root word, represents a direct threat to the face of the referent. By referring to President Buhari as "mumu" the speaker intends to communicate the impression that the president is stupid and unintelligent. The post negatively represents APC and Buhari as evil and mentally unstable.

Post 17

Emy Maria • 14 days ago

The cowards are those calling for dialogue...Guess who, Buhari and APC false government.

Post 17 is another comment that connects Kanu's ordeal with partisan politics in Nigeria. Like post 16 above, the speaker depicts the Buhari led APC in the negative. This speaker does not just call APC and Buhari cowards but also calls their government a false one. It is not certain what he/she means by the phrase "...false government" or why he/she assumes that the regime is "false." However, it could be inferred from the historical context of the discourse that the speaker believes that the regime is either unpopular with the masses or lacks some form of legitimacy. He/she sees their alleged calling for dialogue as an act of cowardice.

Post 18

opy 13 days ago

@brownymorris1 @THE LION OF BIAFRA God bless you, it's has donned on their PDP sponsors that the security agents are closing in on them, hence the need to retreat. Bloody PDP fraudsters! Power has changed hands!! Live with it!!!

The speaker in post 18 above is obviously a sympathizer of the ruling APC government. By "power has changed hands!", the speaker refers to the fact that APC is now the ruling party, which has taken over the reins of government from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) which had been in power for sixteen years. Since he/she is an APC supporter, which can be gleaned from the expression "...their PDP sponsors", in reference to the critics of the APC government, it could be said that the speaker is excited about the ruling party and believes that things will change for the better following the end of the PDP regime of corruption. It can also be inferred from the post that the speaker perceives pro-Biafra agitators as PDP sponsored miscreants who want to destabilize the APC government. He/she also commends the security operatives for clamping down on the protesters.

Post 19

opy 13 days ago

@Ikem Onuoha Another PDP agent sighted, We've all seen through your deceits, Power has changed hands! Live with it!!

This speaker in post 19 above labels his/her addressee as a “PDP” member and describes the actions of some perceived PDP members as “deceitful”. The speaker appears to be happy that power has changed hands. Post 19, just the post 18 before it seems to perceive those who criticize the arrest and trial of Nnamdi Kanu as PDP agents. The speakers could be Igbo but appear to privilege party ideology and interest over that of ethnicity. This implies that political ideology and interest could be a binding force as well as a force of division.

Post 20

opy 13 days ago

@Mgbajala @EvaNexy The truth is that you an an agent of the PDP, and sooner than later, you will all be exposed. Power has changed hands! Live with it!!

The above speaker, like the speakers in posts 18 and 19, shows sympathy for the actions of the ruling APC regime. Thus, all other posts that criticize the actions and policies of the APC led administration; particularly its continued detention and trail of Nnamdi Kanu are perceived as being sponsored by PDP agents. From this therefore, it can be said that the speaker has confidence in the ruling party to both uncover and execute justice to past criminal actions and to leave a positive mark in the society. This also implies that the speaker believes the actions of the government against Kanu are justified.

5. Conclusion

The study reveals that real life social actions such as politics, football and religion can generate debates in online forums and platforms. The internet is populated by several virtual communities in which discourse participants engage issues members consider to be of importance to them. This goes to explain that some issues that have impact and effect in real life situations also receive the attention of online participants in diverse online forums and platforms. This gives the impression that online communities are extensions of real life communities (see Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). This challenges the boundaries between real life and online social experiences. In contemporary politics, political parties and social actors have extended their campaign and persuasion strategies to online platforms. Separatist groups as well as human rights activists

have also taken their struggle to the internet world. The explicit expression of otherness in the primary data reflects the mood of the nation. It shows that Nigerians do not see themselves as one because commentators in the study did not view the trial of Nnamdi Kanu from the perspective of patriotism or nationalism; rather, each took different ideological stance or position. Ethnic, political and religious considerations appeared to dominate other considerations such as national cohesion. This portends danger to Nigeria's nationhood. However, arising from the discussion is the need for political leadership in Nigeria to address the fears of marginalized groups by giving them a greater sense of inclusion and oneness. The government can also harness the positive side of the internet by posting messages that give hope to all its citizens; present a positive future for the youth; and security to all. Interactive forums that encourage bonds across ethnic, social, political and religious divides should be encouraged by the federal and state governments.

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Human trafficking and the African woman: A critical study of Darko's *Beyond the horizon* and Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*

ABSTRACT. Globalization, gender inequality and poverty render African women vulnerable to trafficking; this is explored by Darko and Adimora-Ezeigbo in their novels. From the feminist perspective, this article analyzes the authors' portrayal of trafficking, factors and structures that sustain it, and the significance of the construction of self-narratives during victim's rehabilitation. It also proffers preventive strategies and effective avenues for victims' rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

KEYWORDS: gender inequality, African women, trafficking, self-narratives, rehabilitation, reintegration

Introduction

Trafficking in humans, especially women, has rapidly become one of the fastest growing criminal industries world-wide. Although many African nations have been adversely affected by this insidious modern-day slavery, a total comprehension of its magnitude and complexity still eludes many. Worse, the gravity of its impact, not only on victims, but the African society in its entirety, is yet to be realized.

The United Nations defines human trafficking thus:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat of the use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, or the purpose of exploitation (United Nations, 2018, p. 1).

The trafficking of African women from countries such as Ghana and Nigeria to the West, and their subsequent dehumanization is, therefore, a great blow to feminists' fight for gender equality and women's rights. It is for this reason that women activists and writers are striving to put an end to this devastating problem. Ghanaian writer, Darko and her Nigerian contemporary, Adimora-Ezeigbo, have also lent their voices to this cause through their poignant works which reveal, through the trials of their female protagonists, their keen understanding of the complex nature of the trafficking of African women. Subsequently, these works have received much scholarly interest and critical attention.

Frias (2002, p. 8) in her study of *Beyond the horizon* emphasizes the focal point of the work which she identifies as its subversive portrayal and resistance of the objectification of "the black female body in Africa/Ghana, and in Europe/Germany, through prostitution and pornography". In consonance with Frias, Umezurike (2015) also identifies and explores, in his critical analysis of the work, the "realistic and haunting" representations of the sexual objectification of African women immigrants in Europe and "the degradation, and domination they have to go through in a male-driven society" (Umezurike, 2015, p. 293). He concludes that, understanding the fundamental objectification in the novel can best be achieved through the process of interpellation. Chasen (2010), however, focuses on tracing the interconnected roles played by globalization, colonialism and tradition in the trafficking of women and reveals that, an integral aspect of Darko's novel is the intersection between the "physical and psychological impacts of violence and forced prostitution on African women in the Diaspora" (Chasen, 2010, p. 4).

In his feminist reading of *Beyond the horizon*, however, Ugwanyi (2017, p. 62) recognizes the work as "a celebration of solidarity amongst women and the deconstruction of the avowed feministic biases in female writings in Africa", achieved through the subversion of male characters. For him, this is seemingly the only avenue through which the patriarchal systems instituted by men to subjugate women can be defeated. Ladele (2016, p. 141) also critically analyzes the sexualized effect of globalization on the restructuring of the identities and sexualities of the African woman through the protagonists of Darko's *Beyond the horizon* and Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*. She argues that through forced prostitution, the bodies of these women are re-colonized by European imperialism supported by indigenous patriarchal systems.

In her article on *Trafficked*, Fubara (2013, p. 8) identifies the trafficking of women as a form of slavery and violence against women and traces some of the causative factors to “the socio-political milieu of poverty, corruption and bad governance”. However, her focus is limited to the style and techniques employed by Adimora-Ezeigbo to reveal the message of her narrative. Nadaswaran (2011) concurs with Fubara by identifying, in her critical study of *Trafficked*, neo-liberal policies as being responsible for the corruption and poverty in Nigeria, the by-product of which is the sexual trafficking of Nigerian women to various European countries. Nadaswaran (2011, p. 276) ventures a step further to analyze “the fundamental characteristics and resistance shown by the enslaved person’s life” in the narrative.

From the foregoing, it is evident that existing studies on Darko’s *Beyond the horizon* and Adimora-Ezeigbo’s *Trafficked* mostly focus on the causative factors of trafficking and the subsequent objectification of female victims in the novels without highlighting an integral aspect of their rehabilitation and reintegration into society which is the construction of self-narratives by the victims during the process of rehabilitation. This strategy, advocated by psychologists and postmodern feminists, is insightfully captured by both writers, with emphasis on its significant role in enabling the victims to regain control of their voices, bodies and lives. For this purpose, the feminist theory, with special reference to postmodern feminism, becomes a suitable framework against which the experiences of the female protagonists in both novels are analyzed.

One of the major achievements of feminists is making visible the patriarchal beliefs, norms, values and structures that reinforce gender inequality in society, resulting in the oppression and marginalization of women. As such, while women are rendered vulnerable in the gendered social order, men are privileged with power and authority through which they exercise control over women. In traditional African society, the socio-cultural conditioning of women forces them to conform to, rather than challenge these gendered practices, thereby reinforcing them.

The major goal of feminists is, therefore, to identify and destroy the oppressive systems that maintain gender inequality and encourage male domination, discrimination against women and what Lorber (2005, p. 14) refers to as “the excesses of men’s power—violence, rapes, and sexual [as well as economic] exploitation of women”. Feminists also advocate resistance to gender inequality through consciousness-raising

and activism, to challenge and destabilize the gendered social order, while emphasizing that women must make their voices heard and presence felt in the various structures of society through active participation and meaningful contributions.

Among feminists who strongly advocate a “degendering” of society are postmodern feminists who insist that this must “translate into everyday interaction which could be revolutionary enough” (Lorber, 2005, p. 17) to be successful.

Factors and structures responsible for the trafficking of African women

Several factors have been identified as being responsible for rendering the African woman vulnerable to trafficking. First is globalization which is responsible for demographic differences between developing African countries and the developed world. This has been reinforced by the patriarchal nature of the African society which systematically preys on and exploits the vulnerability of women and girls as a means of fulfilling its ideologies, making it very easy for them to become victims of trafficking.

With women culturally conditioned to accept the man as the superior being whose pride, needs, and happiness come first, and who must exert his authority in decision-making, many women have fallen prey to the exploitation of men. Also, gender inequities encouraged by patriarchal notions of the African woman, which directly or indirectly prescribe and control her roles in society, have created an imbalance in the socio-economic sphere where women have been largely deprived of opportunities for knowledge, self-improvement, individualism and actualization.

Mara, Darko's protagonist in *Beyond the horizon*, can be placed under the category above. Naïve and uneducated, she is culturally conditioned to regard her husband, Akobi, a clerk, as her lord and master. After all, his father had “bought her off very handsomely” (p. 7) which single-handedly reduces her to his “property” to do with as he pleases. Her duty is to obey his every word and put his happiness first. Burn (2005) gives further insight into this situation by observing thus:

When people are thought of as commodities or property, they are diminished and dehumanized and do not have the power to make their own life

choices. In many cultures, a female is property—first of her father and then of her husband. These men decide her fate and she is expected to obey. (Burn, 2005, p. 23)

This is Mara's fate. She has no say in the choice of her husband and from the following conversation between them, it is obvious that neither does her mother who breaks the 'good news' to her:

'Your father has found a husband for you,' she gasped, 'a good man!'

'Who is he,' I asked mother, 'Father's choice for me?'

'Oh, dear child,' mother said, 'you know your father would consider me rude if I disclosed him to you before he did.' (p. 4)

And so, from a father who exercises complete control over her life and would have very happily given her away "even for one goat" (p. 7) because of her suitor's status as the first educated man in their village, Mara is passed on to Akobi who expects her to "obey and worship" (p. 13) him as required by tradition.

Wilkinson (2017, p. 10) defines gender inequality as being "primarily about power [...] [which] has an undeniable economic dimension". Right from the start of their marriage, Akobi asserts control over Mara physically, mentally, and economically because he is the man and, as the head of his family, tradition has allotted him power and authority over her. He moulds Mara to accept his every demand and controls their finances; even when he permits her to engage in business, it is to selfishly further his own end—have her use whatever she makes to sustain the home while he saves his income towards his travel abroad. As a good wife, Mara supports her husband's dream, believing its attainment will lift them out of poverty. Akobi successfully travels to Germany and, after two long years of silence, suddenly sends a letter requesting that she joins him (even though he has married Gitte, a German) to supposedly "keep house for [him]" (p. 51), leaving him free to earn enough money to ship home all the things he has acquired with his savings. As a dutiful wife, Mara obeys her husband's call and even incurs debts to support her travel to Germany which her husband arranges for selfish reasons.

The second factor responsible for the migration of women to Europe and other parts of the world is poverty. The poverty rate in African countries like Ghana and Nigeria, the preliminary settings of the novels under discussion, is very high due to the uneven spread of resources among the population. The harsh economic climate has left many fami-

lies wallowing in poverty due to unemployment or the lack of a proper source of income. The desperate need for employment and the quest for a better life has, inevitably, made migration to developed countries very attractive to many jobseekers. This is what lures Nneoma, Adimora-Ezeigbo's protagonist, to Europe.

Like Mara, Nneoma regards herself as one who can help better the lot of her poverty-stricken family. With a father whose gratuity remains unpaid several years after retirement, her family is plunged into dire economic straits and relocates to the village. Nneoma is unable to help in any way because years after completing her training as a teacher, she remains unemployed:

Her mind went back to the year she completed her National Certificate of Education training. She couldn't find a job. There had been a time when trained teachers were guaranteed employment. But those days were over. Other students had the same experience, of assiduously looking for a job that was not forthcoming (p. 70).

The strain of family squabbles, poverty, and the belief that she is "the only source of relief and hope for a better life for [her family]" (p. 20) drive Nneoma to flee from home in search of a job. She recounts:

I fled from home one Friday morning without telling my family. A friend and classmate had told me some weeks before that some people had helped her secure a teaching appointment in the United Kingdom and she would introduce me to them and I could come with her (p. 126).

Evidently, poverty and the unavailability of decent employment opportunities has created an enabling environment for traffickers to prey on women. Nneoma further narrates:

In no time, [the sponsors] get passports and flight tickets for us, and keep them. They show us pictures of the schools where we'll be teaching and give us appointment letters signed by people with English names [...]. We are six young women between the ages of seventeen and twenty (p. 127).

The third factor—an adverse political climate—manifests in the case of Efe, another female character in *Trafficked*, who suffers a similar fate as Nneoma after responding to a newspaper advert for men and women who wish to work abroad. Unlike Mara and Nneoma, Efe's desire to migrate stems from the need to escape the unconducive climate of the military regime in the country (Nigeria) at the time. She recounts:

You know how people longed to leave the country, especially during the military regime [...] I responded to the advertisement [...] the office seemed perfectly normal. Quite a number of people were interviewed the same day. Some were rejected, but I was selected. None of the men who were interviewed was taken. That should have alerted me to danger, but I barely gave it a thought at the time (p. 99).

Evidently, Efe feels the need for a more comfortable and productive environment, conditions which she hopes to enjoy by migrating to Europe.

Fourthly, Kempadoo (1998, p. 10) observes that racial and ethnic profiling often exoticize African women which makes them desirable as objects for the fulfillment of western fantasies. This perception, therefore, encourages sex industries to support the trafficking of African women. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of African women being trafficked from African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria to Western countries.

Finally, many of the labour markets in the West have migration and immigration policies which are unfavourable to migrants from African countries. According to Soova (2015, p. 2), "current statistics show that the labour markets of EU member states are increasingly restrictive to third country migrant workers". For this reason, many young women, unable to meet the official requirements, opt for unofficial arrangements which render them vulnerable to the exploitation of multinational trafficking networks whose agents, according to Moorehead (2007, sec. 1, para 10) "dupe [them] into accepting offers of what they are told are lucrative and respectable jobs".

In *Trafficked*, Nneoma and Efe become victims of this sophisticated criminal industry which eases their way to Europe at the expense of their freedom and dignity. The genesis of Mara's trafficking in *Beyond the horizon* is different, having been planned and orchestrated by her husband who pays an agent to "smuggle" her into Germany. Mara recounts:

My agent knew his way about in these things. He travelled regularly between Africa and Europe. Men paid him to smuggle their wives and girlfriends, who had no valid visas, into Europe, a very risky but lucrative business [...]. Akobi, for instance, had paid him his return trip to Europe, plus of course the cost of his labour. All he had to do was see me through emigration at home and through immigration in East Berlin (p. 57).

With the aid of corrupt officials who turn a blind eye and facilitate their business, these networks of traffickers thrive and prosper while

the lives of their victims are destroyed. Unlike Nneoma and Efe who are completely unaware of their plight until they cross borders, Mara becomes one of those women who had “knowingly availed themselves of trafficking networks in order to be smuggled into more prosperous nations in the hope of economic betterment” (Meyers, 2016, p. 4). In so doing, she becomes a pawn to her husband, Akobi.

Forms of trafficking

Two forms of trafficking highlighted in *Beyond the horizon* and *Trafficked* are involuntary domestic servitude and prostitution; both forms are tied to debt bondage. The International Organization for Migration’s 2000 report (cited in Moorehead, 2007, sec. 1, para. 6) identifies trafficking as “the most menacing form of irregular migration due to its ever-increasing scale and complexity”. Apart from forcing victims into involuntary domestic servitude and prostitution, these trafficking syndicates trap their victims in debt bondage which keeps them in their exploitative stranglehold.

Bhoola (2016) remarks that debt bondage, also known as bonded labour or debt slavery, “remains one of the most prevalent forms of modern slavery in all regions of the world despite being banned in international law” (cited in the UN report on debt bondage, 2016, para. 1). Trafficking syndicates use agents to trap victims into debt bondage by paying their victims’ travelling expenses. In *Trafficked*, Nneoma gives more insight into the technicalities of debt bondage when she narrates what happens after she and five other girls are recruited, and their travelling documents processed by the syndicate:

They tell us we will have plenty of time to pay back our debts to the agency when we start earning money [...]. The only thing that worries me is that we have to take an oath and they tell us the consequences will be severe if we disregard the terms of the agreement, disobey them or cut links without settling our debts (p. 128).

Efe goes through a similar process, the only difference being that, while Nneoma takes her oath with a Bible, Efe’s oath is administered in a shrine (p. 128). The implication of the oaths is clear: not only are they regarded as binding, they will also attract spiritual punishment should

they be broken. Thus, both women effectively become the properties of their traffickers to do with as they please.

In *Beyond the horizon*, Mara faces a similar yet more complicated situation because the person she is indebted and bonded to is her husband. She narrates: “Akobi took the money I earned, as payment for the roof he and Gitte had provided over my head, for my food and transport, for the investment in my trip from home, and for the cost of setting me up for my coming big job” (p. 106).

Bhoola (2016) also observes that a power imbalance develops between the traffickers and their victims which renders the women even more vulnerable to human rights abuses. Inevitably, they end up earning very little income, if any, for the value of the work they do (cited in UN report on debt bondage, 2016, para. 6). They also work on terms set by the traffickers that are “rarely made explicit to the bonded person, who may be passed with their debt from owner to owner” (Bindman, 1998, p. 67) as experienced by Nneoma when she is sold to Baron who takes her to Britain where her exploitation continues (p. 132).

Another trap used by the traffickers to reinforce their control over their victims is the confiscation of their travel documents which leaves all the women—Nneoma, Efe and Mara—completely at the mercy of their traffickers. It becomes very easy to take advantage of their vulnerability to abuse them physically and psychologically to keep them in line.

In *Beyond the horizon*, Mara is first placed in domestic servitude by her husband. She recounts:

The very next week I found myself working as a housemaid for a German family. I worked three times a week and sometimes at weekends if the Madam demanded it [...] it was very hard work as there were six people in the family, among them two very untidy teenagers (p. 106).

She continues this job until she is laid off by her Madam who fears being charged by the authorities for employing an illegal African immigrant (p. 108). In addition, Mara does the housework—washing, cleaning, and cooking—in their own apartment.

In *Trafficked*, Fola, another victim, also works as a domestic servant. Although the novel does not elaborate on her personal experiences, it is obvious she regards domestic servitude as a far better position than prostitution. In a fight with Alice, another victim, she mocks: “I’m glad I was trafficked as a domestic servant and not a sex slave like you” (p. 137). This perception of prostitution as a form of slavery is reiterated

by Barry (1995) and echoed by Burn (2005, p. 35) who further defines it as “plainly about sexual objectification of women [...] clearly driven by economics[and] about women as commodities to be bought and sold and about how women’s few economic options may force them into prostitution”. Forced prostitution is even more extreme and this is what most of the trafficked women in the novels, among them Mara, Nneoma and Efe, endure to redeem their debt bonds.

Moorehead observes of the women victims of trafficking:

What is clear is that the conditions surrounding trafficked women [...] include all the classic elements traditionally associated with slavery: abduction, false promises, transportation to a strange place, loss of freedom, abuse, violence, and deprivation. [They] are isolated, controlled by various emotional and physical techniques [...] duped and terrorized into submission. (Moorehead, 2007, sect. 1, para. 7).

In *Beyond the horizon*, Mara is forced into prostitution by her husband who has her drugged and sexually assaulted by different men and filmed. This video is then used to blackmail her into complying with Akobi’s demand that she works as a prostitute because she is “too illegal and too black for any other job” (p. 114). Mara narrates:

Oh yes I got it, but too late, because before I could understand enough to acknowledge to myself that the best thing would be to pack my bags and flee, to return to Naka and to hawking boiled eggs, which was a far, far nobler job, I was made the property of a good-looking dark haired man who owned a sex nightclub called Peepy (p. 114).

This is the beginning of Mara’s travails as a prostitute whose body and labour are used to enrich her husband, and Pompey, the owner of the sex nightclub. In *Trafficked*, however, Nneoma discovers she has been trafficked when they arrive in Italy instead of the United Kingdom. She recounts:

In Italy I discover I am trafficked. I have no say in the matter. There’s a woman called Madam Dollar—nothing comes between her and money. She owns us and the man, whom we learn to call Captain, is her bodyguard. She keeps us prisoner in her flat. Life is hell in Rome—we are always walking the night, selling sex to Italian men and foreigners [...] I am completely devastated by the life I’m forced to live (pp. 128, 129).

Efe and Nneoma’s experiences are very similar. Both are sold to vicious Nigerian women who make them “walk the streets every night”

(p. 99), and later sold to pimps who further use and degrade them for their own gain. In the case of Mara, Nneoma and Efe, Barry's (1995, p. 24) observation that "when women are reduced to their bodies, and in the case of sexual exploitation to sexed bodies, they are treated as lesser, as other" is validated, for not only are they objectified, their dignity and humanity are also denigrated. Nneoma and Efe's ordeals only end after their escape from their "captors", subsequent arrest and deportation by the authorities. Mara's peculiar situation, however, does not accord her a similar ending.

The significance of self-narratives in rehabilitation and reintegration

For postmodern feminists, language is very important because through it reality and meaning are constructed. As such, "the patriarchal control over traditional modes of speech entails that cultural meanings are determined on the basis of masculinist perceptions and experience" (Mui & Murphy, 2002, p. 11). Mui and Murphy (2002) further explain that when a woman's world is devastated through the experience of any form of trauma, the construction of self-narratives enables her to regain not only her sense of self, but also her power of self-representation and self-actualization.

Consequently, the process of rehabilitation becomes very crucial to the recovery of trafficked women because of the general belief that women who have gone through the trauma of trafficking can never sufficiently recover from the damage it does to their lives to become respectable and worthy contributors to society. However, if properly planned and implemented, rehabilitation should offer women victims the space and opportunities to successfully reconstruct their lives.

In *Trafficked*, Nneoma and Efe are traumatized by the horrors they endure: deceit, betrayal, threats, isolation, physical and sexual assault, rape and bonded labour. They are also shamed, humiliated, angered by the way they are perceived by society, and afraid of how their families will react to their status as "trafficked women". Alongside several other deportees, they are taken in by the Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development, a non-governmental organization (supported by the government and the private sector) for a one-year rehabilitation programme. During this period, they are empowered for a better future by being

trained in a trade of their choice. They also benefit from seminars, workshops and motivational talks organized by the NGO. In addition, they receive stipends for their upkeep.

Neoma and Efe seize the opportunity to redeem their lives, but in the process, they also form a bond of sisterhood and, through this, construct their personal narratives, an integral aspect of the rehabilitation process, overlooked by the NGO. According to Parnell (1997, p. 92), a clinical psychologist, "Traumatic events [...] can have a devastating effect on a person's life [...] change our views about ourselves and our world and shake the foundation upon which we have built our lives". She further notes that in talking about traumatic events, victims can experience some "desensitization" as the traumatic event "loses its emotional charge, and erroneous beliefs and unhealthy behaviours cease" (Parnell, 1997, p. 93). Feminist psychotherapist, Brown (2011–2016) concurs with Parnell by postulating:

Inviting trauma survivors to tell their stories is the process of gradually rewriting their life narratives so that [...] the reality of the experience of trauma is acknowledged [...] as part of the individual's autobiographical narrative[as] the survivor rewrites the story of what [her] life means with trauma in it (Brown, 2011–2016, remembering section, para. 3).

Clearly, a successful construction of one's self-narrative paves the way for healing and empowerment.

In *Trafficked*, Efe is the first to raise the issue of self-narrative construction to Nneoma:

I think the time has come for us to bare our minds to each other [...] I know we've both been hurt. Terribly hurt. I see it in your movement, in your silences. I'm sure you also see it in me, however much I pretend all is well. Nneoma, you brood too much. You must let go and move on. I don't know what happened to you, but it's not healthy to be so bitter, to punish yourself like this [...] I just want to be your friend in the real sense, to carry some of your burden, if you allow me and also get you to share some of mine, if you are willing (p. 96, 97).

Being very perceptive, Efe recognizes and accepts the fact that they are "all broken inside" (p. 97) and in need of healing to enable them to move on with their lives. She also realizes that constructing the narratives of their experiences by sharing them with each other will begin the healing process. It is this knowledge that prompts her to make a final

appeal which finally prevails over Nneoma's uncertainties: "Look, why don't we just tell each other what happened to us? Perhaps finding our voices will help us to heal" (p. 97).

Brison (2002, p. 137) remarks that "the self is both autonomous and socially dependent, vulnerable enough to be undone by violence and yet resilient enough to be reconstructed with the help of empathic others". Indeed, by sharing their self-narratives, both Nneoma and Efe recognize the similarities in their experiences, identify their strengths and weaknesses, note the right and wrong turns they have taken, and encourage each other. The success of this form of self-representation, evident in the case of Nneoma and Efe, reinforces the argument of postmodern feminists that speech is power. It is this power, gained through the construction of their self-narratives, that frees them to rewrite their current narrative by rising above their status as victims, and regaining control of their lives.

In *Beyond the horizon*, Mara strikes a friendship with Kaye, the African wife of Pompey. Kaye is the first woman Mara bares her soul to completely. Kaye reciprocates the gesture and a sisterhood is established between them. Mara reveals: "She was the first person I told my whole story, only to hear from her that she too had gone through a similar ordeal years ago, except that in her case the man who did it to her was her boyfriend and not her husband" (p. 116). After listening to Kaye's narrative, which is almost a replica of hers, Mara begins to ask herself some hard questions:

Why couldn't I take control of my own life, since after all, I was virtually husbandless, and anyway, what did my husband care about a woman's virtue? [...] So why should the money I made go to him? What had he ever done for me? Once a prostitute, always a prostitute. The stamp would never leave me. So why care about a sex orgy video with me in it? [...] So why did I wear myself out with men and let him take the money? If I couldn't help myself out of my situation then why not turn it to my advantage? (p. 119).

Excited by the change she witnesses in Mara's perception and attitude, Kaye encourages her thus:

At last, Mara! You have woken up. I have been waiting for you to wake up by yourself. I could have woken you up, of course, but in this business, which operates in a world of its own and is far colder than the cold world outside, it is always better to wake up by yourself. Only then do you fight to remain awake because you know how difficult that waking up has been and what

a long time and a lot of thinking it takes, and you also know what it means to be asleep. You understand (p. 119)?

Sharing their narratives raises Mara's consciousness, enabling her to take certain actions that change her situation for the better. First, she raises enough money to "buy" her residency by marrying a German. Secondly, she pays Gitte a visit during which she learns why Akobi had her brought to Germany, in the first place, and forced into prostitution: he had brought his first love, Comfort, to Germany (on the pretext that she is his cousin) even before sending for Mara. The purpose of his enslavement of Mara is to give Comfort, who had ironically rejected him in Ghana, a comfortable lifestyle in Europe. Gitte recounts:

I noticed that Cobby has power over you. He controls you. It wasn't like that with Comfort at all. She had the power. She controls Cobby and shouts at him. Then, too, with Comfort, Cobby wanted a different arrangement [...] and at our expense. He didn't want her to live in the apartment with us like you did [...] He wanted to rent a whole apartment for her in town [...] he wouldn't have Comfort living with us and sleeping in the living room like she was our housemaid (p. 124).

The realization that Akobi has used her (and Gitte) to attain the life he has always wanted with Comfort shocks Mara and leaves her pained and disillusioned, not only for herself, but also for Gitte who is still unaware of the truth.

Obviously, Mara's self-representation changes her perspective of, and her attitude to life so much so that Kaye observes: "[Mara] is standing before me [...] but she isn't the same any more. You are no more you, Mara. You've changed" (p. 127), to which Mara responds: "No, Kaye [...] I'm still me. I have just understood the world a bit better" (127). Mara's next step is to hire a detective, Gerhardt, who gets her every information she needs on Akobi and Comfort in a report which shocks her even more:

I felt drained, so drained that I had to ask for a glass of water. My husband brings me from home to a foreign land and puts me in a brothel to work, and what money I make, he uses to pay rent on his lover's apartment, and to renovate a house for her in her village back home. I came to Gerhardt expecting the worst, but this was even worse than I had conceived of (p. 137–38).

Mara sends this report anonymously to Gitte who hands it over to the authorities. This results in Comfort's deportation while Akobi is

jailed. Gitte also divorces Akobi and returns to her family that had disowned her for marrying him. With Kaye's help, Mara escapes from Hamburg to Munich where she works for Oves—"a new lord"—having gained a level of control over her body and her earnings but marred by her victimization.

Unlike Nneoma and Efe who are arrested, deported back home, and rehabilitated, Mara feels she is too deeply embroiled in prostitution and pornography to ever return home. The following assertion further explains her reasons:

The rot has gone too deep for me to return to the old me [...] I have decided to stop thinking about ever going home. I just don't belong there any longer. Moreover, I have this fear that haunts me day in and day out, that if I show my face there one day, out of the blue that sex video Akobi made of me clandestinely will show up there, too. Worse still, I am now to be seen on a couple more sex videos. Home will have to remain a distant place (p. 131; 139).

Wijers (1998, p. 75) aptly notes that the family, in many cases is dependent on the trafficked women's income but there is likely to be serious social consequences should they know that she works as a prostitute". Such is the case of Mara who makes a conscious effort to make as much money as she can to take care of her family back home, especially her sons, having concluded that material things are all she can offer them (p. 140). For this reason, she encourages Mama Kiosk, her only contact in Ghana through whom she sends things to her family, to believe that she works in an African restaurant. She becomes resigned to her fate, psychologically enslaved by her perception of herself; in her words, "there's nothing dignified and decent left of me to give them" (p. 140). Her new-found "liberty", therefore, becomes an irony because it cages her in Germany where she remains lost to her family (the only ones who benefit from her labour and sacrifices) forever.

Conclusion

Criminal trafficking networks take advantage of vulnerable African women, many of whom become entangled in various forms of debt bondage including domestic servitude and prostitution in different parts of the world. It has been established that globalization, patriarchal attitudes, gender inequality, female subjugation, poverty and lack of job

opportunities are largely responsible for women falling prey to traffickers. As such, it is essential that African nations formulate and implement policies and integrated programmes in line with international standards and feminists' objectives aimed at protecting women from repressive patriarchal structures and socio-cultural values and practices that reinforce gender inequality, infringe on the rights of women, and marginalize them. This will create room for the empowerment of women which will equip them to participate actively in all spheres of society and remove them from poverty.

Also, as noted by Waugh (2006), restrictive migration and immigration policies often encourage and sustain multinational trafficking industries which profit from the trafficking of women (cited in Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008, p. iv). Such policies must be revisited and reformed to be more accommodating to prospective migrants who might otherwise fall victim to traffickers who serve as buffers between them and these restrictive migration processes. Such processes are often illegal and render their migration status irregular and criminal. This, in addition to their identity papers and other documents being confiscated by their traffickers, makes them wholly dependent on them.

Trafficking groups also go unreported and uninvestigated due to structural and systemic deficiencies which encourage corruption among law enforcement agents. These deficiencies such as poor salaries, and lack of proper training, and equipment, should be addressed and corrected to enable them work efficiently in tracking and apprehending such criminals. Awareness must also be created among the public on trafficking and the modus operandi of traffickers to enable them spot and report any such syndicate.

Above all, it is important that post-recovery programmes, vital instruments in successful rehabilitation and reintegration, are established to cater to the needs of women victims. A good example is the Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development, the non- governmental organization depicted by Adimora-Ezeigbo in her novel, which rehabilitates the deported victims. Brown (2002) emphasizes the need for rehabilitation and reintegration programmes to ensure that victims regain control of their lives, for "it is only when we have created the space for the trafficking victim to [recognize herself] again as a person, not as object, whose agency we respect and whose value is inherent, that she [...] becomes a survivor" (Brown 2002, para. 10). Thus, to be effective and successful, the following are crucial in the rehabilitation process: a conducive space,

medical care and counselling for the victims which must include the opportunity for them to construct their self-narratives to quicken their healing and empower them. The following assertion reinforces the significance of this strategy:

we need not only the words with which to tell our stories but also an audience able and willing to hear us and to understand our words as we intend them. This aspect of remaking a self in the aftermath of trauma highlights the dependency of the self on others and helps to explain why it is so difficult for survivors to recover when others are unwilling to listen to what they endured (Brison, 2002, p. 147).

A successful rehabilitation and reintegration programme, therefore, requires an understanding not only of trafficking, but also of the factors underlying the victims' trafficking, as well as their experiences, and the damages they have sustained.

In Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*, Nneoma and Efe are beneficiaries of the above process: they acquire tailoring and hairdressing skills which they put to good use. Nneoma gets a tailoring job, takes the university entrance examination, and is admitted for a degree course in business education; she also eventually reconnects with her family and fiancé. Efe also returns home where she is employed by a notable hairdresser and becomes engaged to a man of her choice. On the other hand, we witness the disadvantages of not benefitting from this process through Mara, who becomes one of the several victims of trafficking lost in the criminal and stigmatized system of prostitution. Unable to change her current narrative and rediscover herself, Mara is unable to find her way back home.

Most importantly, there must be total commitment on the part of all involved in this process—government and its agencies, NGOs, groups, individuals, and society in general—to restoring and protecting the rights and dignity of the victims. This will empower them to rewrite the script of their lives for a better and more fulfilling future.

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Rescuing the woman from the Achebean Periphery: The discourse of gender and power in Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart* and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The last of the strong ones*

There is that great proverb—
that until lions have their own historians,
the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.

Chinua Achebe

ABSTRACT. A great majority of African cultures are patriarchal, which is to say that the male members of such societies are responsible for the perpetuation of family/blood lines. Cultural practices such as succession rites, female genital mutilation, hereditary, widowhood rites, polygamy, kinship, etc., aggregate to marginalize African women, thus conferring absolute power on men. The perpetuation of the ruses of patriarchy is also enabled through writing. Since literature is ideologically determined, it is created by/through discourse; writing becomes an avenue through which male writers sustain the status quo. One author whose works have sustained patriarchal values among the Igbo is Chinua Achebe. In *Things fall apart* (1958), Achebe presents a coherent Igbo society whose internal dynamics revolve around an established hierarchical social structure which excludes the woman from the phallic games of power. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones* (1996) subverts the patriarchal structures which undermine Igbo women. This paper discusses the cultural constructs which confer ultimate power on the men in Achebe's *Umuofia*. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's response to Achebe's male chauvinism is realized through a counter discourse which seeks to reconstruct the battered image of the Igbo woman. Female Self-determination, re-appropriation of the female body, and breaking of silences are all discursive strategies adopted by Adimora-Ezeigbo in her attempt to rescue the woman from the Achebean margins. Textual analysis informs the methodology of this work, while relying on deconstruction and discourse analysis as theoretical frameworks.

KEYWORDS: Kalu, Centre-Periphery, discourse, gender, power, Igbo, patriarchy, Achebe, Akachi-Adimora, woman

Introduction

Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart* (1958) and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones* (first published in 1996) are both set against the background of the colonial occupation of the Igbo hinterland. Chinua Achebe's debut novel was published at a period in the evolution of the novel when it was fashionable for black African writers to engage in anticolonial protest-writing. Almost forty years later, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel takes us back to that same historical conjuncture when the colonialists first set foot in Africa, pillaging and desecrating age-long African traditions in the name of *Pax Britannica*.

The two novelists are both Nigerians of Igbo origin. This is to say that they should ordinarily share the same Igbo *weltanschauung*. But in the treatment of the issues of gender and power, they tend to disagree. Whereas Achebe's women have no real place within what has been termed a 'masculinist hegemonic culture' (Mpalive, 2008, p. iii), Adimora-Ezeigbo, in her work, deconstructs the Centre-Periphery mode of relationship inherent in the pristine Igbo society.

This paper uncovers the discursive dynamics of gender and power in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones*. If Achebe places his women on the narrative margins, Adimora-Ezeigbo pushes them back to the centre. In the final analysis, writing, as discourse, presupposes an ideological position.

The Centre-Periphery paradigm of the African literary canon

The origin of the Centre-Periphery paradigm dates back to the time of the transatlantic slave trade. According to Michael Manley:

In a little more than one hundred years after Columbus' first voyage, Africans were being captured by mercenary adventurers and sold into slavery for transhipment to the new world [...] It was this labour which was to come to represent a vital component in the growth of the capitalist system; to become involved in the creation of a special relationship between colonial territories and the metropolitan centres of the emerging industrial powers which we now identify as the Centre-Periphery paradigm (Manley, 1991, p. 352).

During the anticolonial period, there was consciously, or unconsciously, a carryover of this paradigm onto African literature whose canon was

inaugurated by male authors. And so issues bordering on the marginalization of women were never thematised. Regarding this situation, Simon Gikandi posits that:

The result was that in many important cultural texts such as Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mt Kenya*, the desires and identities of women were effaced in order to empower African men. And in important nationalist novels such as Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngũgĩ's *The river between*, the rehabilitation and legitimacy of African culture could only be achieved by repressing the marginalization of women in the Igbo and Gikũyũ cultures respectively (Gikandi, 1991, p. 207).

Therefore, when one considers the writing of the first wave of African authors—predominantly male—the image of the woman that is presented is unsavoury. She is defined by patriarchal language through discursive cultural practices such as inheritance rights, 'exchange in marriage transactions' (Lerner, 1986, p. 214), initiation, and other rites of passage, etc. And the roles of men and women in these societies are not defined by biology, but by gender. These gendered roles create an opening through discourse for the subjugation of the woman. And so whereas the man assumes positions of traditional authority, the woman is assigned such roles as home-keeping, childbearing, farming (specific kinds of crops), etc.

The discourse of gender and power in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

In the Foucauldian concept, the term "discourse" goes beyond the mere act of talking or speaking, or conversation in its traditional conception. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin explain Foucault's idea of discourse as:

A strongly bounded area of knowledge, a system of statements within which the world can be known. The key feature of this is that the world is not simply 'there' to be talked about, rather, it is through discourse itself that the world is brought into being. It is also in such a discourse that speakers and hearers, writers and readers come to an understanding about themselves, their relationship to each other and their place in the world (Tiffin, 2000, p. 62–63).

The implication of the above assertion is that the world we see is a constructed and ordered reality. This reality is sustained by 'unspoken rules' which have come to stay as norm. Certainly, these rules are made by someone, and for someone. Those who make the rules are in a position of power; and they have certain knowledge of the world which others do not have. It is this 'link between knowledge and power' (Ashcroft, et al., p. 62) that creates binaries that favour a group to the exclusion of another.

In the traditional Igbo world, patriarchy created modes of speaking and thinking that conferred power on individuals in the society on the basis of gender. Much in the same way as western imperialism established a skewed relationship between the industrial metropolitan centres of Europe and the colonial periphery, patriarchy established a violent structure of binary oppositions which placed the woman outside the sphere of power. Patriarchy is thus an ideology 'because the expression of a male-dominated and dominated society entails the stereotypical repression of the woman as inferior, unintelligent, dependent, emotional' (Lorapuu, 2015, p. 23). These imposed patriarchal frames are thus internalized through discourse, making them move away from the constructed to the natural, and ultimately accepted as the "truth".

As 'an authentic native document' ("The New York Herald Tribune", 1958, quoted in James Currey, 2008, p. 28), *Things fall apart* clearly paints a composite, homogeneous society whose values are constructed by patriarchy. In other words, Umuofia which represents the Igbo society fixed frames of meaning that marginalized the woman. In such a society only the male members are conferred with titles which confirm them as sources of traditional authority. Little wonder Okonkwo's 'life had been ruled by a great passion—to become one of the lords of the clan' (Achebe, 2008, p. 104).

Okonkwo is the undisputed hero of the novel; a great wrestler and farmer who has many wives and children. He had taken a few titles which made him one of the decision makers of the clan. His warrior-like disposition, his fiery temper, and high-handedness in still fear in his wives and children. Here, it is important to note that women and children belong to the same class. It is therefore the duty of the man to exert absolute control over them. This is evident in the novel as the narrator informs the reader that 'no matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children (and especially his women) he was not really a man' (Achebe, 2008, p. 42).

Apart from Okonkwo, the reader of *Things Fall Apart* comes across men of substance who are revered in Umuofia because of their wealth which in turn bestows social recognition on them. They are titled men: Ogbuefi Ezeugo, Obierika, Ezeudu, Nwakibie, Uchendu, etc. The opinion of these men must be considered when serious issues arise. In Umuofia for example, during a gathering of the clan to decide what line of action should be followed when Ogbuefi Udo's wife was killed by the people of Mbaino, Ogbuefi Ezeugo was chosen to speak. The narrator acknowledges him as a great orator, but goes on to say that the gift of oratory was not why he 'was always chosen to speak on such occasions' (Achebe, 2008, p. 9). Nwodo expatiates thus:

Even his name shows he was a man of substance. Ogbuefi literally means "cow killer". He probably used a bull as part of his title-taking ceremonies when he could have satisfied the same requirement with a he-goat or a ram. He could easily afford it. His second name Ezeugo, is sometimes given in full as Eze Kwugo—the king who wears eagle feather—a symbol of dignity and wealth among the Igbo. If Ogbuefi Ezeugo had been a wretch, a debtor like Okonkwo's father who also had the gift of speech, he would never have been chosen to speak in the assembly of Umuofia (Nwodo, 2004, p. 10–11).

The titled men of Umuofia acquire wealth through hard work; they are great farmers who own large barns with thousands of yams and yam seedlings for subsequent planting seasons. We learn in the novel that the yam crop is the "king of crops", and is considered a man's affair. If the percipient reader understands *Things fall apart* to be a product of the Igbo subtext, he will surely decipher the social relevance of the yam crop. Udumukwu provides a considered explanation for the premium placed on the yam crop:

In other words, yam functions as a sign of transforming an axiological entity, which accounts for its significance in the social system of a culture. Thus, yam is used in the novel as a trope for personal power and strength. As such, we are told that the strength of a man's hand is measured by the size of his barn and yam is described as "the king of the crops", and a man's crop (Udumukwu, 2007, p. 66 cited by Njoku, 2016, p. 38).

This is also true of the Ogoni ethnic group of south-southern Nigeria (formerly a part of the old Eastern Region) where yam is the chief crop. Among these people, there is a belief that yam is a superior crop to cassava. And when crops are harvested, the tubers of the two crops are

separated by fresh leaves when put in the same basket. And the chief priest of the Ogoni does not eat cassava because it is a woman's crop. He eats only yam since it is considered superior to other crops. This further serves to reinforce the patriarchal structuration of the societies of the Lower Niger.

Among the Igbo yam is considered the major income earner, and since only men indulge in yam production, they are able to gather enough money to take titles and become powerful and relevant in society. The ideological implicature here is that the women will never achieve economic independence or social relevance since they are not allowed to cultivate the yam crop or own yam barns.

Achebe's woman as metaphor for weakness and failure

Metaphor is that which according to Akwanya 'extends to all deviant uses of words, including symbols, synecdoches, personifications, images...' (Akwanya, 2015, p. 328). It has been argued that metaphor itself is not accounted for by the science of semantics (Akwanya, 2015, p. 316). For this same scholar, semantics 'knows the simple word alone—at most a syntagma, as long as it has a conventionally fixed information value' (Akwanya, 2015, p. 316). This implies that the metaphorical use of language is context-dependent. Ricoeur corroborates this when he avers that 'a metaphorical use must be solely contextual, that is, a meaning which emerges as the unique and fleeting result of a certain contextual action' (Ricoeur, 1981, quoted in Akwanya, 2015, p. 317).

But beyond a shift from the literal to the figurative, context-dependent meaning of the sign "woman", patriarchy has internalized this metaphor as literal, true, and permanent. Thus the signifier "woman" is not intended to create any 'implicit comparison' (Thorne, 1997, p. 77) between the woman and the object or abstract idea which she represents culturally; the woman has come to be, through the discursive cultural text, the object or abstract idea itself.

In the clan of Umuofia, not only are women considered inferior to men, but also used as qualifiers for weak and unsuccessful men, especially those men who have taken no titles. A case in point is Unoka, Okonkwo's father. He had taken no titles in his life time, and so was considered a woman. Okonkwo was afraid of becoming a failure like his father. The narrator says of him that:

Even as a little boy he had resented his father's failure and weakness, and even now he still remembered how he had suffered when a playmate had told him that his father was an agbala. That was how Okonkwo first came to know that agbala was not only another name for a woman, it could also mean a man who had taken no title (Achebe, 2008, p. 11).

Okonkwo participated in the killing of Ikemefuna even though Ogbuefi Ezeudu had warned him: 'That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death' (Achebe, 2008, p. 45). And so in his blind pursuit of valour and glory, Okonkwo broke an age-long moral injunction. The thought of Ikemefuna's death tormented him day and night, and he could not eat for two days (p. 50). But Okonkwo, in his characteristic manly disposition is not one to brood over the death of a mere boy. After all he had brought home several human heads during wars between Umuofia and other clans. Okonkwo's interior monologue is quite instructive here:

'When did you become a shivering old woman?' Okonkwo asked himself, 'you, who are known in all the nine villages for your valour in war? How can a man who has killed five men in battle fall to pieces because he has added a mere boy to their number? Okonkwo, you have become a woman indeed' (Achebe, 2008, p. 51).

But beyond the individual, a clan could also be qualified as effeminate or womanly. When Okonkwo killed a kinsman inadvertently, he was forced into exile by Umuofia. He fled to Mbanta, his maternal home, and remained there for a period of seven years. He was there when the white missionaries first set foot in Mbanta. The new church in Mbanta was despised for killing the sacred python which the people worshipped. The clan did not go to war, and depended on their gods to avenge the sacrilege. Okonkwo felt that his motherland should have reacted violently against the church. As the narrator puts it, 'Okonkwo made a sound full of disgust. This was a womanly clan, he thought. Such a thing could never happen in his fatherland, Umuofia' (Achebe, 2008, p. 127).

The Igbo society is at once presented as one in which the fear of failure is ontologized. Every male member of that society must live up to a certain expectation. This expectation is not limited to the taking of titles. In the cosmology of *Ndi Igbo* (the Igbo race) there are other considerations which make the Igbo a complete being in the world of humans. According to Ichie P. A. Ezikeojiaku:

The *Ndi Igbo* recognize the world of human beings which can be called the world of man—*uwa mmadu*, as opposed to the world of spirits—*uwammuo*.

Man, as perceived in this world view, ought to be intelligent, strong in body and spirit; hence the proverbial expression, *isi ike na mmadu sie na mmuo*. To the Igbo, man is supposed to be of 'half iron and half wood' [...] In other words, man is conceived as one who is even ready to face all odds of life (Ezikeojiaku, 2008, p. 53).

Perhaps, Unoka's weakness was both in body and spirit. He was lazy and lacked the strong will to succeed come what may. Perhaps too the people of Abame and Mbanta are weak in body and spirit. They lacked the will to fight back in the face of external aggression. Towards the end of the novel, we find that the people of Umuofia have become weak in body and spirit for allowing the Whiteman to subdue them, a situation which also killed Okonkwo's body and spirit. What is striking here is that man is at the centre of the Igbo universe. The woman is invisible and voiceless. Achebe can therefore be said to have written under the impulse of a society whose vision of the world is defined by male dominance. The depiction of the woman as a metaphor for weakness and failure reduces her to a mere semantic category, an object without humanity. In feminist parlance, this is called the "objectification" of women.

The role of the folk tradition in the marginalization of women

The folk tradition by way of oral literature also plays an integral part in the grand narratives of the dominant group in a society which seeks to perpetually exert control over a group that is considered weak and inferior. Folktales for example serve to reproduce 'the preferences of a dominant group' (Ropo, 2008, p. 14). The themes treated by folktales further accentuate the binary opposition inherent in the society that produces the tales. In African societies generally, tales are of two kinds; the first category is meant for all (men, women, and children) whose aim is to entertain and to teach. The second kind is that which is considered sacred, and of high esoteric value. These tales are exclusively told by men and are reserved for those men who are initiates of certain cults or associations.

These tales, whether they are profane or sacred are patriarchal constructs. They are intended to further the interest of patriarchy. Through these narratives, we observe that male dominance is transmitted from one generation to another. In *Things Fall Apart*, we find Okonkwo telling manly stories of war and violence. His wives on the other hand tell the

children mild and tender stories of the birds and the tortoise. Even though we do not find Okonkwo telling folktales, the stories he tells are part of the ruses of patriarchy in order to instill manly qualities in his sons.

Okonkwo's first son, Nwoye, was considered worthless by his father because the young lad had shown no interest in the ways of warlike and courageous men. He was, thus, considered effeminate just like his grandfather, Unoka. The lad preferred stories told by women, especially 'stories of the tortoise and his wily ways[...]' (Achebe, 2008, p. 43). But the coming of Ikemefuna into the Okonkwo household helped Nwoye to wean himself gradually from maternal influence. Okonkwo was happy about the development, and, to please his father, Nwoye 'feigned that he no longer cared for women's stories' (Achebe, 2008, p. 43).

Folklore is considered one of the pillars of patriarchy; through folklore (myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, fables, etc.) cultural practices are perpetuated and sustained. These practices also include the interiorization of the woman, and her exclusion from the source of power.

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones*: towards a feminist discourse of subversion

Women writers have taken up the challenge to deconstruct the narrative of dominance which male authors have sustained for decades. These women find expression in and through the emergence of the post-colonial feminist discourse. The pioneering efforts of Flora Nwapa (*Efuru*, 1966; *Idu*, 1970) have given rise to unprecedented feminist writing which seeks the total liberation of woman. In her novels, this doyen of feminism in Nigerian literature, according to Killam and Howe "reverses the usual positions of men and women, making women central" in a bid to "liberate women from all forms of fetters" (Killam & Howe, 2000, p. 190). Other female writers like Buchi Emecheta (*Second-Class Citizen*, 1974) Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo (*The Last of the Strong Ones*, 1999) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (*Purple Hibiscus*, 2006) have all taken a cue from Nwapa in their quest for the emancipation of the African woman.

Female writers question patriarchal orthodoxies, and feminine writing, succinctly captured in French as *écriture féminine* becomes an ideological weapon which 'should then enable women to divulge the repressive order that silenced them' (Siwoku-Awi, 2010, p. 52). This

'repressive order' is the discourse of patriarchy which traditional African societies employ to marginalize women. When Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel appeared in 1996, the African literary public was awakened to a revolutionary prose that queried the very essence of patriarchy. Her work deconstructs the Igbo notions of authority and power. The female characters in her novel are not pushovers, as the author imbues them with essential humanity, reinstitute their dignity, and above all, recovers their stolen voices.

Characterization in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The last of the strong ones*

Characterization is one of the features of a literary text, especially the novel. This is so because the story of the novel is that of characters who play various roles in the unfolding of the plot. Without characters, setting and plot and all other elements that make up the literary edifice will crumble. Characters are carefully chosen by authors in order to show their thematic intention.

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's abundant use of female characters is not fortuitous. They are strong and portray the woman in a positive light. Thus, in *The last of the strong ones*, we find women of valour who pervade the entire universe of the text. These women are part of the traditional custodians of Umuga. They are Ejimnaka, Onyekozuru, Chieme, and Chibuka. These women were elected into the Obufo which was exclusively reserved for men in the pristine Igbo world. People who are elected into the Obufo are thus custodians of the *ofo* or what could be termed the ancestral staff of authority. Nwodo throws some more light on the concept of *ofo* among the Igbo:

The concept of *ofo* is difficult to explain. It combines justice, truth, moral authority and benevolence. *Ofo* as a staff proclaims the justice that validates the exercise of its authority. Among the Igbo authority is different from physical force. As a moral power, authority always goes with justice. The holder of *ofo* represents truth of utterance [...] (Nwodo, 2004, p. 41).

By being members of the Obufo, these worthy daughters of Umuga are automatically entrusted with leadership at a higher level. They sit in council with their male counterparts to make decisions that affect the clan. Perhaps, it is for this reason that Charles Nnolim, the foremost Ni-

gerian literary critic, in reviewing female character portrayal in the works of Nigerian female writers, thinks very highly of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo because in the words of Chibuzor Orie, 'he rates Ezeigbo as one who emerges to remedy female character portrayal' (Orie, 2009, p. 27).

Ejinnaka, Onyekozuru, Chieme and Chibuka, apart from being members of the *Obufo*, are also the four *oluada*. They are carefully chosen, each one of them, to represent the four villages that make up Umuga. They belong to a larger group of women called *Umuada* which literally translates as a "gathering of daughters". As *Oluada*, they are the 'voice of the women, among the sixteen inner council committee' (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 3). In Igbo *Oluada* can be broken down thus: *olu* means "voice", while *ada* means daughter. Therefore *Oluada* is a group of four women chosen to represent the womenfolk in the gathering of the community. The designation *Oluada* is carefully chosen by the author as a way of breaking the silence for which women were known in the traditional Igbo society.

Assigning epic and leadership roles to the women in her novel is not fortuitous. It is a deliberate attempt to subvert the grand narratives of patriarchy. What the author has done therefore in the words of Ezechi Onyerionwu is to:

'De-authorize' the chauvinistic versions of history and identity politics that African male authors alongside their imperialistic overlords have 'regaled' the continental leadership with. She executes this 'de-authorization' by bringing women to the fore of communal leadership through figures like Ejinnaka, Onyekaozuru, Chieme and Chibuka. She highlights the social visions of these women which have been developed to the optimum, far above what previous colonial narrators were prepared to oblige the traditional African woman (Onyerionwu, 2017, p. 225).

The point which Onyerionwu has raised here concerning the focalization of women in African texts corroborates Simon Gikandi's earlier position which we have already noted. From the above assertion, one can then appreciate Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's attempt at reinventing the African, nay the Igbo woman. The reader is also aware that unlike what obtains in male-authored works, the novelist (Akachi) uses the female narrative voice. This is evident when the narrator of *The last of the strong ones* reveals herself:

Before the end of the meeting, two women were chosen to take up the duty of recording events as well as reconstructing the lives of the four *oluada*.

The choice fell on me and another of the other younger women who was a gifted singer and story-teller. So we became witnesses, custodians and critics of the unfolding events (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 3).

The two women who have been chosen to chronicle the lives of the four *Oluada* lead us into the secret lives of the four great women around whom the narrative is woven. The author adopts the multiple narrative voices as a technique of verisimilitude. The main narrative voice is occasionally, momentarily suspended to allow the reader enter the world of the *Oluada*. From their narratives, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's project metamorphoses into a feminist ideology aimed at rescuing the woman from the periphery created by patriarchy.

Female self-determination

In most traditional male-authored works, the woman's destiny is determined for her; she is not allowed to choose the course of her life. In such a situation, her roles are imposed by the corresponding culture. She has no choice in matters regarding her partner. However, there is a tendency in feminine writing to create independent female characters that are no longer willing to act as mere appendages to men. These (female characters) are self-assertive since they are responsible for their actions, and their destinies lie in their own hands.

Chieme's marriage to Iwuchukwu ended as a result of her barrenness; but this does not deter her from moving on with her life. Determined to succeed against all odds, she engages in the selling of kola nuts. She also learns the profession of chanting/praise-singing during funerals and sundry other ceremonies. She made so much money and became liberated and self-sufficient. According to her: "Having accumulated wealth and made a name in my profession, I became *Loolo* and chose the title *Omesarannaya*—the one who brought fame to her father" (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 118). Traditionally, in Igboland, a woman assumes the title of *Loolo* by being the wife of a titled man or traditional male ruler. It is the equivalent of the *Lady* of a knighted man. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo makes a serious point here: a woman can take a title if she works hard for it. This is a deliberate subversion of patriarchy.

Chibuka's ordeal in the hands of her husband is better imagined than experienced by any woman. She is a classic example of the patience of

the woman stretched beyond imaginable limits; but she stays on until his demise. She says of her ordeal: "I emerged from that period of my life a stronger person, determined to carry on with my activities in the home" (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 149). Her character summarizes the author's position on marriage; for her marriage is dignifying even when it is polygamous. She however discourages abusive marriages where the woman has no dignity.

The character of Aziagba also comes to mind when female self-determination is discussed. When Ejimnaka could not bear her husband any male child, the whole family was agitated; her mother-in-law put pressure on her (Ejimnaka's) husband to take another wife. It was Aziagba, Ejimnaka's daughter who offered herself as a sacrificial lamb to save the family from insipient disintegration. According to Ejimnaka herself: "it was Aziagba who solved the problem and saved all of us from slow death. She was willing to *remain at home* with us to produce male children for her father" (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 45). The author's emphasis, *remain at home* says a lot about the importance attached to marriage and the male child among the Igbo, and to drive home the weight of Aziagba's sacrifice in a bid to perpetuate the family name.

But for Aziagba to stay in her father's house as progenitor, a ceremony called *nliukwa* is performed so that a mate is chosen for her. On the contrary, she chooses for herself because, according to her mother 'Aziagba is not the kind of woman who would allow anyone to choose for her in a matter like this' (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 45). It is against this backdrop that Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo foregrounds female characters in the face of the sterilizing effect of patriarchy on the development of the woman.

Re-appropriation of the body

Traditional African practices include the reification of the female body. The practice of dowry encouraged by patriarchy allowed for the woman to be considered as property owned by her possessor. Aduke Adebayo is right in saying that:

In the traditional African context, the female body is an object, purchased with the dowry. Virginity is demanded to ascertain the integrity of the bought item. Besides, there are several sexual mutilations [...] to prepare

the woman for her roles as a receptive and passive receptacle of the man's pleasure (Adebayo, 2000, p. 288).

Contemporary female authors liberate their female characters from the total domination by men. The women in their *oeuvre* re-appropriate their body in order to reclaim their stolen identity. In francophone Africa, Calixthe Beyala stands out as the most militant in the fight for the recovery of female sexuality. We find Letitia, her character in *Seul le diable le savait* (Beyala, 1990, p. 115) reclaiming her body with the words, '*Je veux mon corps*' (I want my body). Beyala's characterization may have influenced female authors of the later period, especially Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo.

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's female characters in *The last of the strong ones* can be described as women who evolve from a state of total ignorance to that of consciousness and self-realisation. The author, through the flashback technique, presents characters that were once subdued either in marriage or never allowed to be in charge of their body. A case in point is Onyekozuru. She was given out in marriage to a man old enough to be her father as a second wife. The marriage was never consummated in the real sense of the term as her body was "stolen" from her, denaturing her in the process. But, at the demise of her husband she regains her freedom, as she tells the reader:

My life changed in many ways after the death of Umeozo [...] I took care of my body to make it look beautiful again. It gave me pleasure to wear my jigida and have my skin adorned with Uhie and uri. A pleasant sensation would spread all over me as I would lie or sit up on a mat, as one of my friends would tenderly touch up my body with uri (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 59-60).

Gendered roles attributed to members of the community made it impossible for the woman to realize the potentials of her body, the beauty of sexuality, and the sublimity of giving in to the desired partner. Onyekoruzu thus rejects the advances of men she does not like at the death of her imposed, aged husband. Later in the novel, the reader sees Onyekoruzu fall in love for the first time. The man who has catches her fancy is Obiatu, and she explains her experience with him thus:

Obiatu took my hand, gently and I led the way to my bed. My heart somersaulted many times like an acrobat and I was filled with wonder at these unfamiliar sensations which, nevertheless, brought indescribable pleasure.

I felt moist all over and my body spoke a new language I never knew existed (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 67).

Although Obiatu does not marry her (he marries Ejimnaka instead), Onyekozuru's satisfaction comes from the fact that she has broken the patriarchal shackles of sexual enslavement.

Verbal expression of authority

In *The last of the strong ones*, direct authorial intervention imbues female characters with an idiom of self-assertion aimed at the recovery of the woman's stolen, thus breaking the chain of silence with which patriarchy held her. The reader who is conversant with male-authored African texts is taken aback by the temerity of language of the women of Umuga. Thus, in *The last of the strong ones*, during a discussion bordering on the Whiteman's excesses, some elders were condemned for allowing themselves to be willing tools in the hands of the white intruder. Onyekaozuru spoke without mincing words: 'a good thing this medicine has caught no woman yet... only men are reeling under its influence, like drunkards' (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 16). Some male members of *Obu-fo* find this scathing remark rather outrageous. Abazu, unable to hide his indignation at the woman's comment bursts out in the characteristic chauvinistic manner, 'woman, shut your insolent mouth and watch your words' (p. 16). The woman's response is immediate and carries with it the whole weight of matriarchal authority, 'Abazu, I hope it is not me you are addressing like that?' (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 16).

The women in *obufo*, as we have seen, do not play subservient roles like the women in Achebe's *Umuofa*; their opinions are considered. They possess such qualities as bravery and outspokenness; qualities which are considered *sine qua non* for authority and leadership. When Ezeogu asserts that Kosiri has put fear into the hearts of the people of the surrounding towns, Ejimnaka, one of the matriarchs of Umuga speaks out in a monologue suffused with rhetorical questions:

Fear! [...] so fear now rules every heart in this and other lands? For how long shall we allow fear to cripple us? Are we going to wait until Kosiri picks us all up like snails? [...] Power? [...] His power feeds fat on people's weakness and on our disunity. It is the men who are afraid, not the women. Why can't all these towns come together to fight him? (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2006, p. 20).

True to her words, during the war with Kosiri (the Whiteman), the women of Umuga join in the war effort to protect their community from total annihilation. Some men indeed prove to be weaklings and exhibited cowardice.

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's obsession with female characterization is just one aspect of her craft that stands her out. Others include her mastery of the Igbo speech act. Just as we find in *Things Fall Apart*, the Igbo Proverbs in her novel remind us of the *palm oil* with which according to Achebe, "words are eaten". The use of Igbo names suggests the author's intention to remain close to her background, and serves to add local colour. Overall, the author achieves a blend of oral literary forms and western canons of literature. The traditional griotic mode of narration gives her novel a touch that is unmistakably African.

If the history of the hunt, as Achebe pointed out, should be told by the hunter alone, then we should expect nothing less than a skewed version of the story. Over the ages, women (especially Igbo women), have been deprived of their own version of the story. *Things fall apart* is the history of the hunt as told by the hunter; *The last of the strong ones* is the history of the hunt as told by the lion.

Chinua Achebe and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo are both Igbo, and therefore, partake of the same cultural background. Achebe's novel, a riposte to European ethnocentrism, has thrown up issues bothering on gender and power in the Igbo society. His realist presentation of the Igbo world may have been done out of innocence, but the overwhelming male chauvinistic undertone is what Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo seeks to deconstruct. After all, Achebe should have known better that there are "basic ontological principles guiding the Igbo world and the Igbo society" (Nwodo, 2004, p. 12). One of them according to Nwodo (p. 13) is the principle of duality. According to this scholar of Igbo descent:

This manifests itself in many ways and at various levels from the individual to the community and even to the gods. The individual is complemented by a duality—a strong masculine element and a gentle, feminine side [...]. When the two elements blend together properly, we have a complete and beautiful human being. In the family we have male and female members—father and mother, brothers and sisters. In the extended family, the male side, the *ummunna* is complemented by *umuada*, the female counterpart. In the farm, yam is a man's crop while cassava and cocoyam are female crops (Nwodo, 2004, p. 13–14).

If Nwodo's assertion is anything to go by, why are Achebe's male characters averse to complementarity? Okonkwo, just like patriarchy, in his outward display of masculine rabidity cannot be said to be "a beautiful human being". Where in *Things fall apart* do we find *Umuada* and *Umunna* breaking and eating kola nuts together, and putting their heads together for the good of the clan? How can any kind of complementarity be achieved when Nwodo himself says of Umuofia, that "outwardly, the society is dominated by masculine qualities and activities"? (Nwodo, 2004, p. 14). Achebe's women are at once presented as docile, resigned, and powerless in the face of pervasive male chauvinism. They are products of discourse through the cultural practices that deny them access to the corridors of power.

If Chinua Achebe presents his readers with all-male traditional holders of staff of authority, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo presents the *Obufo* as a democratically elected group of leaders comprising men and women in the society. Her aim therefore is to allow women play a complementary role in the leadership structure of Umuga. This, she carefully does by at least giving numerical strength to the male members of *Obufo*. The author also creates the *Oluada* and *Alutaradi* to protect the interest of the women in Umuga community. These women groups help to checkmate male excesses, and also to caution erring women in the groups. In doing this, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo has created a parallel, utopian Igbo world whose ideals still float within the realm of aspiration. But it is a first step towards female emancipation in a culture where the woman is considered a passive member.

But beyond the discourse of gender in the works of the two authors which we have analysed, is the marginalization of Nigerian women in general. Almost all Nigerian societies are patriarchal. Through the dictates of patriarchy women are shut out from the larger political scene. As Lorapuu puts it:

A common factor that distinguishes patriarchy from matriarchy is sex; the rule of the father versus the rule of the mother. The contest to conquer the nation can be seen to begin from the conquest of the female sex in the family; men seek to conquer and dominate their immediate terrain and extend into the society space (Lorapuu, 2015, p. 159).

The above scenario has continued unabated in Nigeria, making the much-talked about 35% affirmative action for women a mere red herring. The larger Nigerian society is thus, a male—oriented space where political office holders and opinion moulders.

Conclusion

In our analysis of the two novels which form the corpus of this study, we have come to the sad realization that most cultures and people that make up Nigeria are patriarchal to the disadvantage of the womenfolk. This situation must be checked through a female counter discourse which would in turn create the necessary awareness which is required to give back to women their stolen voice. Women authors should be encouraged at all levels to address issues of marginalization, especially of women and girls in rural areas of Nigeria, nay Africa. When this is done, girls will go to school and compete with their male counterparts, women will achieve a higher degree of economic independence, and participate actively in political activities. And, if men and women come together to discuss the future of the continent, the Achebean woman would have shifted considerably from the margins towards the centre of power.

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BOOK AND JOURNAL REVIEWS



Mary Hawkesworth. *Gender and political theory*. Cambridge 2019: Polity Press. Pp. 231.

Gender and the political theories connected to that issue have not been dealt with adequate attention for a long time. Previous works, especially western political theory incorporated certain assumptions about sex and gender as natural and unvarying. A critical approach to those theories is the key in this publication supported by the case studies and long-term research. The latest publication of Mary Hawkesworth published by Polity Press will give the reader a complex picture of what is the current academic perspective on the problematic presumptions about sex, gender, power and finally the sexuality.

Mary Hawkesworth is one of the most well-known Professors of Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers which is the State University of New Jersey in the United States of America. She is a political scientist raised in feminist theory. Her main research focuses on the women and politics, gender and contemporary feminist activism around the world. She made herself know for the following publications: *Globalisation and Feminist Activism* (2018), *The Douglass Century: The Transformation of Women's Education at Rutgers* (2018), *Embodied Power: Demystifying Disembodied Politics* (2016). The newest book is without any doubts based on long term research dedicated to the women, democracy and globalisation.

Author's work aims to draw insight from the critical race, feminist, post-colonial, queer, and trans theory to give a compelling explanation and readable introduction to historical and contemporary discussions on gender and political theory. There are six elaborated chapters in this book. Language of the publication is very personal and inviting reader to explore the Gender and Political Theories.

Chapter One Sexed Bodies: Provocations according to the author "to lay the groundwork (for presented arguments), it is necessary to challenge certain key assumptions about sex that have permeated canonical political theory" (p. 21). Throughout this part, the writer refers to ways how we can interpret sex and denaturalise it. In the literature, the author presents a novel approach to the feminist theory concerning the history of Western political thought. This part explains widely liberal-feminist theory which compared with Marxist-feminist and socialist-feminist theories give the reader a better understanding of the following chapters.

The second section titled Conceptualising Gender is focused on the origin and meaning of gender. Later on, there is a comparison of sociobiological, femi-

nist and queer theorisations of sex and sexuality in general. The author focused on historical contexts of the gender from early feminist times up to the present day. The reader will also find other highlighted analysis of the troubling sexual dimorphism and scientific relations among sex, gender and sexuality. This chapter represents an innovative approach in this particular publication.

The next chapter *Theorising Embodiment* looks at the question of how the recent feminist scholars explore embodiment as a matter of the mutual constitution of nationality, sexuality as well as race, ethnicity, gender and social class. According to the writer, it is important to present the descriptive way from modern to the postmodern embodiment which meaning has changed through the years. A very informative and complex chapter with clear language supported by the vast of author's knowledge.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to refiguring the public and private boundaries. The reader will learn how analysts of political theories of public and private have contributed to the consolidation of racialised and gendered understandings of citizenship, liberty and social order. Another issue is to understand how contemporary feminist, critical race, queer and trans theorists "have probed the public/private distinction to illuminate and challenge forms of power and domination in the domains of family, sexuality, embodiment, and subjectivity" (p. 84).

Chapter five is about analysing the state and the nation based on Iran and the United States of America example. Later on, the chapter is written in a way of comparison of accounts of the state advanced by philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Weber, Marx, Madison and Foucault.

The matter in question shows limitations of their views identified by critical race, feminist, queer, and trans academics.

The final chapter *Reconceptualizing injustice* which also sums the publication is the sixth one. The main idea of this part is to "map the scope" of the state injustice. In general, this section also refers to limitations of state-based approaches to justice and gendered exclusions and insecurity. That is why in an incredibly clearly and logically narrative constructive way, the author creates the conditions of possibility for new models of social and political justice.

This book has led me to the conclusion that the issue of gender should be more visible in academic discourse. In this paper, we have plenty of examples of how the approach to the feminist theory can be implemented in political life. The author of this book managed to present the different approaches to embodiment and justice clearly and understandably. Taken together, these mentioned findings highlight an important role for getting to know better undersides of the gender and connected with its political theories.

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