

**WAR AND GENDERED ROLE SHIFTS IN SELECTED UGANDAN NOVELS**

**BY**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this work was carried out by M. R. Olayiwola in the Department of English, University of Ibadan, under my supervision.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to Almighty God, the most gracious father and to the Owolabi Clan for their innumerable contributions.

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## ABSTRACT

War, a motif in prose fiction, that depicts the varied angles of societal chaos, is explored in Ugandan novels for different purposes. Existing literary studies on war in Uganda have largely focused on the representations of disparities in gendered relationship and depiction of women's susceptibility to brutalities, with little attention paid to depictions of shifts in female characters' adoption of polarised gendered roles. Therefore, this study was designed to examine the representation of war and gendered role shifts in selected Ugandan novels, with a view to determining the assigned roles, deconstruction of gendered roles, and the literary strategies employed.

Michelle Foucault's Model of Feminist Poststructuralism and Kate Millet's Sexual Politics Theory served as the framework. The interpretive design was used. Two Ugandan novelists (Gerotti Kymuhendo and Moses Isegawa) were purposively selected because of their detailed portrayal of war and its effects. Four novels (two from each author) were purposively selected owing to their thematic relevance. The novels were Gerotti Kymuhendo's *Secret No More (SNM)* and *waiting*; and Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles (AC)* and *SnakePit (SP)*. The texts were subjected to literary analysis.

The traditional gendered roles assigned to women are nurturance and caregiving, which entrench their objectification, relegation and domestication. The deconstructive effects of war mastermind reconstructing the battered images of women through the adoption of fluid, transmuting, replicating and evolving gendered roles. War causes victimisation of and violence against women (*SNM, AC, SP* and *Waiting*), rape, inter-tribal and political clashes, parental rejection, imbalanced marital consent and family rivalry (*SNM* and *AC*); and displacement, humiliation and disillusionment (*Waiting* and *SP*). These characterise the re-representations of gendered relationships and roles and result in proliferation of unpredictability in the expressions of assigned roles. War generates the dismantling of stereotypes (*SNM, AC, SP* and *Waiting*) through the juxtaposed figuration of weak passive men versus strong assertive women. Female characters build resistance to subordinating vices of encountered brutalities (*SNM, AC, SP* and *Waiting*). Psychological shifts activated by continued traumatising incite violence in the victimised, which delineate their sense of power and dominance. Subjectivity to sexual exploitation, displacement and dispossession are responsible for the acceptance of the role of perpetrators by victims (*SNM* and *SP*). Marital denigration reinforces self-reclamation (*AC* and *Waiting*) and assertion of autonomy through recourse to sexual abuse of victimisers (*AC*). The expressed similarities in victimised characters' adoption of vengeful retribution to oppression during war (*SNM, AC, SP* and *Waiting*) attest to the similitude of power operation as capable of deconstructing polarities in the depiction of gendered role. Exhibition of conservative ideology about traditionally assigned roles breeds perpetual subjectivity of war victims (*AC, SP* and *Waiting*). The narrative strategies employed in representing war and its implications for gendered role shifts are multiple narrative voices (*SNM, AC, SP* and *Waiting*), journey motif (*Waiting* and *SNM*), foreshadowing and flashback (*SP* and *AC*), vivid description and dysphemism (*SNM, AC, SP* and *Waiting*).

Ugandan novels foreground the effect of war on the reconstruction of gendered role assignment through the reactions of victimised female characters by means of graphic narrative strategies.

**Keywords:** War and gendered roles, Ugandan novels, Victimisation of women, Fluid figurations, Sexual objectification.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

In recent times, the discourse of war and gender in academic and non-academic arenas continues to be broadened. This is perhaps due to the obvious participation of women in social matters, particularly in situations of war. Women are not just as victims but equal fighters alongside their menfolk to revolt against injustices and social ills. For many centuries, women have been the targets of violence around the world. This might be as a result of the strict culturally-defined gendered roles usually assigned to both male and female sexes within most societies in the world. However, the creation and distribution of gendered roles are mostly grounded on the biological and cultural considerations of both sexes (De Beauvoir, 1949; Firestone, 1970; Ali Mazrui, 1991).

The allotment of gendered roles, based strictly on anatomic, physiological and cultural principles in almost all the world communities, polarises both sexes. This makes it impossible for both sexes to relate as equals in many social matters. Observably, the childbearing and rearing roles of women have continued since ancient times to define their personalities and values. Foucault (1978) states that the reason for this differentiation is that all human societies are sexualised. The fact that strong consideration is given to biological make-up in almost all societies before gender roles are assigned indicates the importance of the biological differences between male and female sexes. Consequently, this creation of differences between both sexes based on their biological make-ups empowers the society to dictate the level of relevance of both girls and boys and ensure that both sexes function accordingly.

Also, according to Miller (1975), communal laws and ideologies are set up in diverse communities to reinforce the created differentiation between gender roles. Resultantly, these commonly held perceptions about the noticeable anatomical differences which exist

between the male and female species give expression to the notion of gender and gendered roles.

The categorisation of roles based on a strong consideration of human biological nature has adverse implications on the conception of gendered duties in literary narrative writings. This, according to Mackinnon (1982), has led to the conception of women as docile, soft, passive, nurturant, vulnerable, weak, narcissist, childlike, incompetent, masochistic and domestic in many literary texts. They are represented in domestic terms as caregivers to their husbands and children.

Such representations usually contrast the portrayal of men as strong, capable, natural leaders. This gender-based dichotomy makes it convenient to assign specific roles that index males' superiority over the females' as they (the females') are assigned culturally-limiting and marginalised roles as wives, mothers and housekeepers. Although, according to Sideris (2003) and Nnaemeka (2007) gender role has experienced a lot of changes since the modern era and have continued to experience a paradigm shift within society, the influence this shift creates on the fluid adoptions of roles by both male and female is yet to reflect the dynamic representation of selves in most literary narratives. To corroborate this position, Knapp et al. (2009) once again testify to the changes occurring in gender roles when she noted the shift which is taking place in gender role assignment among Mexican immigrants. She observes that the modern system of immigration in the United States has motivated most Mexicans to change their attitude, this behavioural change encourages women to work outside the home for wages.

In this context, Knapp's statement is understood to mean that women are gradually leaving the restricted corridors of their homes to participate in the public sphere so that the public space is increasingly being transformed from a public space that was solely dominated by men to a shared terrain where both sexes can interact based on their personal achievements and, not necessarily, as a fulfilment of socially allotted gendered role. Hence, it has become possible for males and females to strive for the control of power as individuals operating as counterparts in the same domain.

Yet, the allotment of gender roles, as it is constantly depicted in literature, still portrays the chasm that exists between both males and females especially in fictional presentations of characters. This portrayal of dualised gender roles in literature, apart from the fact that it fails to represent the progress women has made over time in breaking free from societal and individualised dominance. Such literary texts replicate women history as a permanently subverted object and adopt the continual polarisation of gender roles. Hence, rather than create dynamic characters who express the essence of the dynamic trend in gender role assignment; many imaginative works still reflect the binary which permits the exaltation of one gender at the expense of the other. Invariably, this ascribed dominance to men while women are regarded as the *other* whose feeble nature predisposes her to male consistent dominance. El Saadawi (2007:520) adds some insights to this observation when she alleges that:

Among the male authors I have read, both in the West and in the Arab world, irrespective of the language in which they have written, or of the region from which they have come, no one has been able to free him from this age-old image of women handed down to us from ancient past, no matter how famous many of them have been for their passionate defense of human rights, human values and justices, and their vigorous resistance to oppression and tyranny in any form. Tolstoy, with his towering literary talent and his denunciation of the evils of feudal and bourgeois Russian society, when speaking of women found nothing better to say than: “Woman is the instrument of the devil. In most of her states, she is stupid. But Satan lends her his head when she acts under his influence”.

The distribution of gender roles using the ancient yardstick of biological and cultural measures hinders the development of versatile male and female characters in literary representations. This is even so in this era where stereotypes against the diversity of gender roles are constantly losing effect because fictional authors still find it difficult to create characters with dynamic gender roles. Rather they, result in creating inferior female characters to gain much acceptance in a male-dominated community of writers. This attempt was first noted by Firestone (1970) as resulting in the “misrepresentation of odds”. Invariably, in a bid to overhaul the perpetual description of female personalities as oppressed and subsumed under male authorities, female novelists often create female

characters whose independence and sexual freedom, according to Abiola and Umunnakwe (2018:8), resembles:

...evil femme fatale who leads men down to their dooms, the proud educated woman who becomes someone's girlfriend, but never a wife, the virgin, the good girl who helps the old woman and gets rewarded, the one who suffers tribulations silently until a rich man comes along to 'free' her.

The inability of fictional writers to construct dynamic characters who reflect the unbiased allotment of gender duties is, perhaps, because the problem of gender role division and sexuality is oppression that goes back beyond recorded history to the animal kingdom (Firestone, 1970 and Foucault, 1982). Hence, to construct fluid literary characters who exemplify the growing changes in the gendering of roles, particularly in this epoch, it becomes essential to look beyond biological and cultural limitations that segregate gender roles. However, Foucault (1978) suggests that to achieve a balanced depiction of characters, especially in literary representations of roles, there must be a continuous struggle against the "government" of individualisation. So, to break the continuous mystification of sexed characters and stereotypical differentiation of genders in creative writings, the formation of a new power struggle against polarisation becomes the viable solution.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Scholars and critics in the field of literary scholarship have examined the social construction of gendered roles allocation and stereotypic portraiture of the female in literary writings. (Woolf, 1929; De Beauvoir, 1949; Firestone, 1978; Foucault 1978; Caughie, 1991, Applegate 2012). On the other hand, several sociological studies have been carried out on the subject of war and its reformatory capacity at both societal and individual levels (Herman, 1992; Tedeschi, 1999; Mamdani 2001; Finnstrom 2006; Alison 2007; Golooba-Mutebi 2008; Butler, 2009; Kustenbauder, 2010). However, these studies have not extensively examined war as a transformational agency for gendered role shift in literary writings with predominantly conflictual settings. This study, therefore, interrogates the representations of gendered role shift, orchestrated by victimised female characters, in selected Ugandan narratives with war settings, from poststructuralist and feminist perspectives.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The study gives answers to the following questions:

- (a) What impacts does war create on gendered roles as portrayed in the selected Ugandan texts?
- (b) How does the deconstruction of gender stereotypes in selected Ugandan novels result in personality changes for the characters?
- (c) How does the fluidity of gender roles indicate unbiased adoption of roles by characters in the chosen texts?
- (d) How do the literary strategies employed by the writers in the narration of war foreground convergence between the activities of the victimised and the victimers?

### **1.4 Aim and objectives**

The main aim of the study is to investigate how violence causes a shift in the representation of gender roles in selected Ugandan novels set in war situations while the specific objectives are to:

- a) examine the portrayal of war and gendered role shifts in the selected texts;
- b) determine the assigned roles and their eventual deconstruction
- c) Investigate the literary strategies employed by the writers in the narration of war and its implication for gendered role shifts.
- d) compare the writers' stylistic representations of gendered role shifts to foreground verbal and graphic confluence in their narratology.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study is important because it sets out to investigate and establish, not just the connection between war and gender, but also, and more particularly, the role that war plays in re-ordering social beliefs about gender role allocation, as represented in imaginative writings. This study offers new insights on the literary representations of the relationship between war and changes in the apportionment of gender roles.

This study will hopefully fill the gap that exists between sociology and literature by raising the consciousness about the effects of war on gender fictional representations in war-prone areas. The study admits that, though war has destructive impacts on all world societies, its violent nature has a positive effect on the classification of socially determined gendered roles as it has the potential to subvert the traditional allotment and performance of gendered roles within society. Through this effort, it is hoped that the importance of using literature to propagate changes in gender role performance, during and after periods of war, will help to bridge the gap of gender inequality and subjugation. Moreover, the present study hopes to correct the stringent depictions of duties based on an anatomical valuation of the body which engenders inequality and is propagated through variegated social systems and practices.

Mazrui (1991:100) opines that the “androgynization of both sexes, during violent times, is central to this research”. The present study hopes to contribute significantly to the discourse of gender inequality in African societies and contribute to the creation of non-biased fictional representations of gender roles in literary narratives. Scholars and students with interests in sociology and literature will hopefully find this study a resourceful material.

Unlike the focus in popular gender studies, this study underscores the transformative capacity of war as a socio-historical event on gender-balancing in society. It suggests a positive impact of war on gender role assignment and interpersonal relationships between both males and females. The exhibited change in perception should create a behavioural check that curbs abusive behaviour towards women by men.

## **1.6 Justification of the study**

This study opens further grounds for the exploration of gender in literary writings and creates a major connection between civil war literature and gender studies. The findings should expose, in detail, the implications of war on gender allotment of roles and how this strengthens the creation of non-stereotypical characters in literature. It will argue essentially that war plays a significant role in reconstructing power relations between both men and women in communities.

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

The scope of this study is limited to the four selected Ugandan novels whose contents treat war and its reformatory effects on gendered role allocation. The novels to be considered are carefully chosen from the Central and Eastern Regions of Uganda owing to the prolific writings of the authors that are in these regions. Also, this choice is due to the fact that the selected literary texts are written by renowned authors whose writings have attracted both national and international accolades, and have been published by reputable publishing firms. The chosen works are: Gorette Kyomuhendo's *Secret No More* (1999) and *Waiting* (2007) from Eastern Uganda, Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000) and *Snake Pit* (2004) from Central Uganda. These authors and their works imaginatively recreate experiences from previous insurgencies in Uganda. Also, the choice of both male and female authors is to give a balanced view of the topic to be understudied. These texts stand as the basis for our explication of literary representations of gender role shifts and the contexts of such changes in the Ugandan society at large. The link between conflictual situations and gender role shift is duly explored.

### **1.8 Organisation of the study**

This research is divided into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the work. It contains the background to the study which examines the reformatory capacity of war on reordering dichotomised gender representation in Ugandan fiction narratives. The gap to be filled is also identified in the statement of the problem. At the same time, the chapter states the aim and objectives of the research and explicates the research methodology with the theoretical framework adopted. Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature to the study. The secondary materials selected are chosen from closely relevant fields of studies that explicate the nexus between war and gender role reconfiguration, and its literary depictions. Chapter Three explicates the method adopted in gathering the data analysed. Meanwhile Chapters Four and Five are preoccupied with the critical analyses of the texts using poststructuralist and radical feminist theories as the framework. In Chapter Four, Kyomuhendo's *Secret No More* and *waiting*, Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* and *Snake Pit* are discussed to reveal the impact of war on the reordering of gender roles and literary expressions of this which result in the transmutation of extant gender roles in Ugandan imaginative writings. Chapter



Five considers the implication of violence as a tool for self-reinvention to resist gendered subjugation and bring about the fluidity of gender role allotment. Chapter Six summarises and concludes the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 Chapter overview**

This chapter examines the previous discussion of war and its connection with gender to assert the positive impact that the eruption of violence can have on the re-imagination of gender roles in fictional narratives. It examines how the emergence of self, after the destruction of war, evokes different stylistic representations in literary writings and how such expressions of differentiation can recreate assertive selves that champion the erasure of dualities in the representation of gender roles. The review depicts the central place that war takes in reshaping gender roles, as depicted in literature, and illuminates the important position which political assumptions occupy in feminist studies as well as in other research done in connected fields of studies. These fields include poststructuralism, gender studies, political science and discourse analysis. Also, the review significantly explores how social segmentations of roles inform the representations of gender roles in literary representations and expounds how the violent nature of war can help to shift the stereotypical ideological notion of gender roles.

#### **2.1 Conceptual framework**

In this section, related concepts that are relevant to this study are examined. This aspect is considered germane as it reinstates the expressions on which the study is premised. The concepts examined are gender, war, shifts, polarities, oppresions, replications and transmutations.

##### **2.1.1 Gender and its evaluations on behavioural patters**

Gender can be defined as “the attitudes, feelings and behaviours that a given culture associates with a person’s biological sex” Glasser and Smith (2008). In substantiating the

aforementioned position, gender can be conceived as a social construct that teaches individuals how to identify with their biological sex through the process of socialisation; people are socialised into their gender roles. However, Knapp and Muller et al. (2009:1) recognises that “the social construct of gender does more than help people to discover themselves as a socio-cultural construct of male and female identity”. It also shapes how individual live and interpret the world around them determining their relationships, opportunities and attributes. It again foregrounds what behaviour are valued, and allowed of men and women in a given context.

### **2.1.2 Assignments of roles and the challenge of stereotypes**

Gender assignment serves as a preparatory process which helps individuals in almost all world communities to understand themselves and be able to interpret signs and codes that govern communal functioning in order to ensure that they adopt appropriate duties which are in conformity with their sex statuses. Rules were set up within communities to reinstate the gender process and to ensure a strict categorisation of duties which gave rise to the concept of gendered role. Gender role assignment is an ideological practice which supports the stipulated societal roles designed for male and female sexes. Duties are assigned to both male and female sexes to reinforce the social distinctions based on their anatomical differences.

Significantly, gender role assignment expresses societal sentiments about gender constructs because it projects the communal beliefs about males and female sexes. Confirming this assertion, Money (1955:305) concludes that gender roles are encompassing descriptions of distinguishable traits associated with human personality to make them accept their physiological differences. Money’s definition of gender roles establishes the difference between the concept of gender and that of gender roles. While both share a close affinity, they differ in the purpose they serve. Gender is an abstract, popular belief and its importance and features are attached to different sexes. Gender role, on the other hand, is the tangible segregation of duties which arise as a result of the abstract opinions formed during the gendering process.

Gender role assignment has some consequences. Clearly, “the assignment of distinct roles to both males and females, based on their biological constructs, resulted in a strict

polarisation which gives privilege to the roles of men while it downplays the roles women carry out within the societies at large thus engendering a wide chasm that places inter-relationship between men and women on an unequal stand” (Cade, 1969; Mackinnon, 1987). The enormity of the difference which gender role assignment creates between males and females has consistently allowed the portrayal of gender roles in many literary works as dualistic and oppositional. Nwagbara et al. (2012) note that women’s participation in politics, which is a public affair, is a mark of their gradual but steady movement from the peripheral role they performed to the mainstream (public) role. The evolvement of women in the public sphere continues to question the correctness of gender role assignment as women now take up roles that were once reserved for men and men take roles that were earlier restricted to women.

### **2.1.3 Discourse on policisation of gender roles**

The gendering of roles becomes political as the extent of social relevance depends on it. It becomes a protocol – politics in women’s roles revolve around those of men while men’s are directly linked to the community. Sexual domination of women by men gets permitted, not necessarily as a result of biological differences between the two groups, but as stipulated by culture. Millet (1970) gives credence to this observation when she aptly states that “sexual domination creates the most corrupting ideology of human norms which empowers politicisation of bodies through the process of socialisation to ensure the fixture of the existence of patriarchal politics.”

This subconsciously restates the unequal distribution of roles between male and female characters in literary representations. Yet, it has been noted that there is no essential truth about being a female writer, the best writing comes from the boundaries, the ungendered spaces between male and female (Yvonne, 2007).

In other words, for literary artists to be able to portray dynamic characters who are capable of taking diverse roles, they themselves must have a ramified experience of their communities and be able to reconstruct these realities into imaginative representations of events that portray the progress that emanates from the people’s struggle. It is only at this moment that their imagination can get a total release from the binarism which exists between the self and the other. This only connotes that women will also have to leave the corridors

of the inner chamber to feature on the outer field of battle alongside men, not as victims or the subjugated other but as equal fighters in the advancement of humanity which sometimes can occasion wars.

#### **2.1.4 Foregrounding the legacy of revolution**

War basically refers to a heightened state of confusion, disagreement or strife which leads to the perpetuation of diverse form of violence. Malinowski (1947) defines war as “an armed contest between two independent political units, by means of organized military force, in pursuit of a tribal or national policy”. Notably, Malinowski’s definition of war as an armed conflict which thrives on force denotes the centrality of violence in conceptualisations of wars.

The impact of war on the countries or groups of people who participate in it is usually deadly because of the violence involved. However, Goldstein (2001:3) observes that “in understanding the relationship between war, literature and gender role, the potential of war matters more than the outbreak of particular wars”. It can be inferred that the destructive nature of war has the capacity to birth new innovations because it evolves from paradoxes, disjoints and disarray. Hence, Lucien (1980) identifies violent contradiction as vital to the transformation of a new self when he alludes to the fact that “Men transform structures, create antagonism and cause an old superseded structure to be taken over by a new functional and significant one”. O’ Brien’s description of the juxtaposition experienced during the war in Vietnam, cited in McLoughlin’s (2012: xii), further demonstrates the transformation that Lucien talks about:

There is no clarity. Everything swirls. The old rules are no longer binding, the old truth no longer true. Right spills over into wrong. Order blends into chaos, love into hate, ugliness into beauty, law into anarchy, civility into savagery. The vapours suck you in. You can’t tell where you are, or why you are there and the only certainty is an overwhelming ambiguity.

Essentially, the impact of war, though devastating, can translate into the induction of new artistic discoveries that can create shifts in social configurations which literary representations reflect. As such, it institutes a new paradox of change that allows the dynamic distribution of gender roles using a non-sexist method. This, in turn, will help fictional creative writers to recognise the fluidity that exists in the allotment of gender roles.

Significantly, gender is a social construct which attune human beings to conform to social rules and regulation. Consequently, society conditions males and females to perform stipulated gender roles.

Berger (1972:52) observes the patterns of male dominance in the literary space and comments that “men act and women appear.” Interpretatively, it is the action of men that produces the appearance of women in most fictional representations and women are featured in the way that elevates men’s personality. Although many literatures have hinted at the connection violence has with the creation of subjects, de Beauvoir’s (1949) and Fanon (1965) are fine examples of the works which explicate the shifts violence can instantiate.

Aijaz (2007:58) gives “thanks to the legacy of Revolution” for its ability to metamorphose into non-conformist imaginations which encourages flexibility to thrive in the assignment of gendered roles. Mazrui (1991), by implication, opines that the future for genuine empowerment of women in Africa and their representation [in imaginative arts] requires the androgynisation of the African military, androgynization, according to him, is a process of arming both boys and girls during violent situations, thus, encouraging the equal participation of both sexes in the struggles against oppression. Androgynisation portends the possibility for the erasure of dualities in the representations of gender roles since the process offers the same chance to both male and female sexes; it buttresses significantly the proposition of the shift the eruptions of war can create in the closure of strictly delineated gendered differences. War is expounded as a catalyst that is capable of reconstructing ideological stances that permits the institution of dynamic role assignment in fictional narratives as against the usually polarised depiction of socially entrenched gender roles in literary narratives.

Through his suggestion of androgynisation, Mazrui draws a parallel between the destruction war causes as an agent for the possible re-imaginings of male and female characters in literary narratives, it identifies the destructive nature of violence, especially war, as capable of erasing the stereotypes surrounding the perception of gender and gender duties and, as a result, influences the writer’s thought to create dynamic gender roles which eliminate the stereotypic gendering of roles in narratives works. The depiction of war and its attendant destructiveness as a viable tool in re-imagining gender role assignment creates a positive

interconnectedness between war and the portrayal of gender role delineation in imaginative writings. War, as a result of its destructive ability, is able to deconstruct ideological stances which encourage partitioning of gender roles since it destroys former preconceptions about gender and the appropriateness of gendering roles.

### **2.1.5 The provocation of inequality as universal**

Many scholarly works have been done to affirm the division of societies into two unequal halves and to criticise the unbalanced view given to the anatomical differences that have long existed between males and females within almost all world societies (de Beauvoir 1949: 26; Firestone 1978:2; Foucault 1978:142). These studies attest to the imbalances created by the historical division of gender roles according to sex. Firestone (1978:158) conceives the existence of this dichotomy in the perception of gender role allocation to be as old as time itself. Hence, the assertions of the subject/object dualities which exist in gender roles have been mostly detected by foremost scholars of humanities and this early detection of the gap between the portrayal of both sexes roles is, according to Mill (1869: 2), as a result of its universal acceptance of gender roles.

Earlier scholarly articles question the imbalances in gender roles. For instance, Wollstonecraft's *The Vindication for the Rights of Women* (1792) is mainly a recognition of the denial of the rights of women, especially rights to education. To underscore the privileging of men, she specifically recognises how such a denial of civil education leads to the subordination of women and the elevation of men. Her main point here is, rather than the society educating women to take civil responsibilities and be independent like men, their education, when finally, approved, is tied to the satisfaction of men. Hence, women are encouraged to take up roles that affirm their gender.

All through her essay, Wollstonecraft was able to discuss the reasons for the perpetual existence of binaries in the allotment of roles between male and female sexes. She also, explicate how the notion of polarisation occasion a consistent representation of women in androgynous texts as either innocent or naïve, she buttresses her assertion through an analysis of Jean Jacques Rousseau's *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754) and his portrayal of female characters. Also, she faults John Milton's description of women as valuable only in connection with her outward beauty and sexuality. To be able to erase the

continuance of such stereotypic and gender portrayals of women in literary works, Wollstonecraft considers it essential for women to be educated and take advantage of moments of social upheavals that afford changes in gender-based power relations.

Wollstonecraft's exposé on the rights of women serves as the foremost and comprehensive writing on the discourse of gender roles, and the existence of these gender binaries in the depiction of literary characters. Despite the historically diminishing reputation of Wollstonecraft's treatise on the right of women and its in-depth discussion of their challenges that bring about their perpetual oppression, Faith Duman (2012:88) noted that her contribution to feminism is disputable. Also, this observation explains the criticism that ensues after the expression of her reservations.

Julie Monroe (1987:144) criticised Wollstonecraft's research for its inability to take her thesis "beyond the limits of bourgeois ideology to its logical radical conclusion". Again, Monroe still notices that, despite her advocating for revolution in feminine gender matters, she never exceeds the preconception of the traditional female roles of wife, mother and daughter. Observably, in spite of her thorough explication of the need for women to acquire the same wholesome education as men, she rarely describes the implication the access to education will have on women's perception about themselves and how this change in perception can aid a reaffirmation of their rights. This assertion contradicts her earlier stated advocacy for women's freedom.

Regardless of the criticism raised against her ideas in her essay, she erases the constructed binaries between male and female reasoning during her era. She also argued against the separation of virtues between the sexes. Evidently, Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Right of Women* is a vital revolutionary thesis written to ease the obvious segmentation of male and female roles based on the assumed differences in the reasoning capacities of both sexes. To this end, Paul Lizotte (1996) suggests to those who regard Wollstonecraft's thesis as controversial to envision her work as a reconstruction of the image of women which had earlier been deconstructed by foremost male writers especially Rousseau and Milton.

However, Wollstonecraft's inability to bring her thought to a logical conclusion may be because Wollstonecraft herself understood the continued viability of her research. She states



that "...But for this epoch we must wait-wait...then, if then, if then women do not resign the arbitrary power of beauty-they will prove that they have less minds than men" (1975). Hence, those who regarded her research as inconclusive may not have understood her projected foresight about the radical changes she conceived gendered role representation in literature may undergo. While Wollstonecraft research deals with the importance of the wholesomeness of women's education and asserts it as a means of destroying the prototyped roles assigned to both male and female sexes in literature, Woolf (1929) agrees with Wollstonecraft about the existence of binaries in gendered roles and questions the persistence of such a division. According to Weily (2004), Woolf realises from her own experience that the main barrier against women's expression of total self in literature is as a result of their lack of freedom, education and financial viability which result into their under-representation in the field of music and literature. Weily notes, however, that unlike her predecessor's stance against the society and men as main reasons for the retention of binaries in the allotment of duties to male and female sexes, Woolf's work, *A Room of One's Own*, focuses more on the use of a different language to describes women's situation in relation to her body in order to deviate from the oppressive domain of language of men. As a result of her belief which portends that conventional narrative styles strengthen the polarised portrayal of gender duties, she projects liberation through her assertion of a distinct style of writing. According to her, as cited in Pamela Caughie (1991), this prevents the polarised comparison of male and female writings.

In essence, Woolf's writings, especially *A Room of One's Own*, are radical detachments from conventional ways of narrating literary events which destroys the opportunity to polarise not only roles in literature but attempts to remove the dual barriers that exist between male and female literary writings. However, despite her effort to create an alternative language that will express women's independence and creativity, Woolf's writings have attracted criticisms from some scholars. Essentially, Elaine Showlter, in her work titled, *A Literature of their Own* (1978), considers the writing style of Woolf to be too abstract, unserious and shifty and recommends that her writing should not be read with keen interest because, rather than the liberation it feigns to ascribe to the "private room" as a solution to women's oppression, a detached reading of the essay, according to her, will make one discover that the central concept of possessing the same will power and freedom

of expression as men which signifies liberation for women are not as freeing as they appear. Hence, according to Showlter, Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is a disaffirmation of the originality associated with the field of feminism, it contributes little to the erasure of the binaries which underscore gender roles and its portrayal in literature.

However, contrary to Showlter's opinion about Woolf's *A Room of one's own*, Caughie (1991) again attests to the fact that some other feminist critics view Woolf as the "principal feminist craft person" since she was able to forge the appropriate feminine form which, contrary to popular opinion establishes literature as a form which is capable of creating another structure apart from the polarised ones undergirding the allotment of roles to both male and female genders in the society. She believes that, within literature, strong verbal attacks can be written against the continued gender polarities. Further still, she intones that, to understand Woolf's writing, one has to think in terms of a dynamic model for narrative and not a dualistic one. In other words, Woolf's language transcends the dichotomous use of language in literature and, as a result, disallows the establishments of dualities in gender role assignment through the use of language.

#### **2.1.5.1 Toril Moi: a deconstruing of Elaine Showlter's criticism**

Specifically, too, Moi (2002) criticises Showlter for not taking into consideration the viability of Woolf's writings but placing more values on the need for a political art that struggles against sexism which, according to Moi, is limited. Hence, Moi states that their interpretations errors are based on the assumption that great fictions present truthful images of strong women with which readers may identify. In Moi's line of thought, however, this is not the most essential. She cites the views of Julia Kristeva (1984) that portrays shifts, paranoids, disorderliness, contemplation and all other inadequacies as the actual breakthrough which creates other avenues for the expression of self that is not bound to societal or conventional dictates. Moi then argues extensively that the non-conformist attitude of Woolf indicates a break from the symbolic language. Such breaks, perhaps, allow the establishment of a non-biased language in the description of gender roles in imaginative writings. Caughie's (1991) description of Woolf's dynamic contribution to language use in literature, which she believes if properly appropriated might result into an understanding of the fact that Woolf's main aim is not to form a new social order; it is to "alter, not to recast

the standard of the past”. Therefore, Ute Kathmann (2012) notices that, in order to avoid such egoistical references to self which allows the expression of gender polarisation, Woolf creates an alternative which affirms the distinction of the female self that is expressed without the tension of dichotomies.

Caughie (1991) eventually notices that Woolf’s concentration on the alternate use of language makes her opinions and radicalism about change in fictional representations of women appear to be more on the surface than an in-depth validation. It, therefore, confirms the criticism of Showlter about her lack of affirmation since she could not support her claims with vivid examples of women who changed through their experiences of struggles. But on the other hand, Woolf’s writings affirm the importance of being detached from the conventional way of expressing self and depict the options available for the expression of non-biased portrayals of self in literature. She, however, omits the description of the processes that validate the need for a change in language since she does not provide an imaginative experience that explicates the need for the diversification of language. Her attempts at introducing a distinct language to express women’s situation further expands the dichotomy between male and female constructs in literary writings and does not erase the polarised descriptions of gendered roles. But in order to explicate the experiential shift which war has on gender role allocation, one needs to take into consideration literary expositions which progressively explain the synergy between sexuality and the reconfiguration of gender role apportionment which violence can exert.

### **2.1.5.2 Simone de Beavouir: theorising the collapse of difference in gender role representation**

In order to expound the nexus between binaries in gender roles and its reflection in imaginative works, de Beavouir wrote her influential treatise on the conceptions of roles and how they influence the representations of gendered duties in fictional writings and how such influence the behavioural patterns of both sexes which culminate in “false symmetries of instrumental reasoning to use” (McCillum and Constance, 1992) parlance. Unlike other research on gender, de Beavouir’s *Second Sex*, which was published in 1946, establishes diverse factors as responsible for the genderised view of roles presented in imaginative writings. According to her, the representation of gender dualities in literature is as a result

of the social segmentation of roles based on anatomical differences. This has affected the thought patterns of both males and females. While the male is considered to be stronger because of his physical strength; the female, for her fragile nature and her conceptual abilities, is categorised as weak and dependent on man.

The point is not simply that in phallogocentrism, the male gains greater predominance over the female. Rather, the point, according is that this binary constructed between male and female affects every other aspects of life; both genders are perpetually divided. This division, de Beavouir (1949:46) recognises, is further subdivided into positive/negative ends. Man represents all that is positive; woman represents all that is negative as a result of her biological nurturing roles. Her analysis gives credence to the fact that such created binaries, apart from the fact that they are socially constructed, cannot be intellectually proven. There is no biological ground for perpetually subjugating women to men despite her biologically-determined nurturing roles. She foregrounds her arguments against societal construction of gender polarities through an analogy drawn from the sexual reproductive process. She significantly noted that, during sexual activities, both the female and the male organs have to concur in order to make an embryo which subsequently grows into human. Through this analogy, she weakens the duality created between male and female sexuality and renders inconsequent the popular view about the polarity created on the biological distinction between male and female sexes. Essentially, she draws an inferential equation between male and female sexual organs to establish that both synergise in the reproduction process.

Although she agrees with the differences in the physical outlook of both sexes and her arguments affirms the complementariness of the differences rather than viewing this as the main reasons for the long sustenance of gendered binaries, her points are anchored on two main praxes. Her second essential point is linked to her first where she proves that the notion of binaries anchored on sexual variation of both sexes is false. Here, she generalises the abilities to commit violent acts as features of living beings and not necessarily a distinctly male endowment as mostly presented by the society and in literary works. Her explication of the reproductive process, she destroys the foundational biological stance on which the

polarisation of gendered roles is established. This makes it possible to re-conceptualise the notion of gender polarities as erasable and not fixed.

Furthermore, de Beauvoir acknowledges the biological complexities of the nature of woman, admits the challenges that they face as a result of their nurturing abilities but vehemently refuses to accept their anatomical difference as the reason for their long-endured subjugation by males. Instead, her research shows that the main reasons for the continued existence of duality in gender roles is as a result of woman's acceptance of her subjugated position, her lack of adventurous spirit, non-persistent habits as well as her inability to define who she wants to be are the reasons she is perpetually suppressed. Mainly, de Beauvoir, through her discussion, could ascertain that the bodily difference of man and his ideologies allow him to function in the dynamics of the world which is based on his ability to exude experiential knowledge in the vital spheres of work, war, play and art. His ability to express himself in all these areas significantly makes him the dominant figure. Unlike the man, the woman's experiential knowledge is mostly limited to the area of play because she has allowed her relevancy to be shaped by popular ideologies; her limited social functionality has statically led to her being constantly repressed as the other who must always obey the rule of "the Absolute". Since her experiential knowledge is not as multi-dimensional as his own, it is only natural that she serves the role of the other. Her lack of experiences in other spheres makes her play and live in a repetitive circle which bores her and others around her; her repression sprang from this fixated, unadventurous nature of hers.

de Beauvoir establishes that her representations in fictional works depict the societal conception of the woman fashioned typically from the male's point of view. She is defined in every way that resonates with her sexual difference and these differences establishes polarities in the allotment of duties and have also ensured the permanent existence and regeneration of binaries. Yet, de Beauvoir was able to discover that women, when determined, can achieve as much as men and can be very tough competitors that even men will dread. To the question as to why women continue to remain in a subjugated state and have not been able to erase passivity from their descriptive features, the research notes numerous reasons for this. Chief among those reasons is essentially her preferences of peace

to war, stability to instability and such one-dimensional preferences makes her world inactive and fixated which explains the reason she has to be ruled by an active one.

All these explains the reason why she is 'the Other', 'the Sex' and the oppressed while the man remains, 'the Absolute', 'the Master' and 'the Oppressor'. Despite these constrictions, her intelligent nature matches that of the man but the limitedness of her experience creates a significant chasm in the allotment of gender duties.

Significantly, de Beauvoir discovers and asserts, through her research, that the reason for the sustenance of the gendered duality is not mainly because of the anatomical differences between males and females. It is mainly as a result of the passivity of women towards revolutionary volitions, for, in spite of her physiological differences, she can be very assertive and be a capable equal for the male gender when she is determined. Hence, de Beauvoir, through her explication of the reasons for inferiorisation of women's sexuality, was able to indirectly establish a synergy between violence and its effect on gender roles. Unlike Wollstonecraft, de Beauvoir was able to give concrete examples of how violence has produced liberation opportunities for women and was able to reinstate further that, for true liberation that is capable of destroying polarity in gender role assignment, women must decide to reshape their own identities because a woman's physical appearance is not enough to define her, rather, the consciousness of who she is should be determined by her realities and how she strives towards changing such realities if they misrepresent her.

Although her research basically disagrees with total dependence on violence to erase binaries in representation of roles, it attests to the symbiotic relationship among war, play and art. This means that any lack of experiential knowledge in one area definitely affects other spheres of life and that is what affects the subordination of a woman's body, and not necessarily her sexual difference, since it cannot be proven scientifically or otherwise that, as a result of their sexual differences, women suffer intellectual defects, even though the society made it seem so. It then means that it is their lack of experiential knowledge in the area of war which affects their inactive depictions in war situations in imaginative writings.

Notably, de Beauvoir's analytic style is distinct from Woolf's because she was able to provide actual supportive instances that clarify her claims and connect the effect of the lack

of adventurous spirit have on women's representations in literature. Through her analytic expertise, she clearly expounds the relationship between sexual differentiation and binaries in representations of gender roles and reinstates significantly that biological distinctiveness is not the actual reason for the binary representations of roles in imaginative writing. She further indicates that societal ideological influence about biological differences between male and female gender breeds the tolerance of passivity among women rather than develop their active nature.

Her articulation of the symbiotic relationship that exists among war, play and art has attracted lots of encomiums from feminist scholars and scholars from other related fields. For instance, Butler (1986) views *The Second Sex* as a prescription for advancing women's freedom. Moi (1985) says her intellectual influence is obvious even when ignored. Yates (1993) regards *The Second Sex* as a template on which almost all feminist works are established. de Beauvoir's work continues to receive lots of encomiums and its relevance to feminist and gendered studies seems to be unfading, despite her extensive ontology to disregard the potency of anatomical differences as the main reason for the retention of binary in gendered roles. Butler (1986) notes that de Beauvoir's address of the burden of freedom which gender presents is indirect. Butler further states that such an act of comparison is an "attempt to infuse the analysis with emancipatory potentials," and not an attempt to destroy women's image but to draw parallel instances that help elucidate her convictions of the ways gender freedom is subordinated through creation of sexual differences based on social ideologies which gives credibility to the reverberating effects of her statement that "one is not born but rather becomes a woman."

In effect, social ideologies create the initial binaries of male and female and the woman's passivity creates a perpetual redundancy which can be destroyed only through the active adaptation of the male sex. Similarly, Karthyn Gines (2014) opines that she views mainly white women as prototype for women and as such, excludes women of color from her explanation of the oppressed women. Some of her followers also replicate these same women which results into the silencing of the same women whose oppression they decry since their theory is polarised. Gines went further to state that, in de Beauvoir's categorization of 'the Other', she comparatively categorised the Jews, the Semitic and The

Blacks. She notes that de Beauvoir draws in-depth analogy between characters of Blacks and that of a woman and Gines recites de Beauvoir's parallelism for emphasis, "Blacks are praised for being "carefree childlike, with merry soul," while "true" women are described as frivolous, infantile, and irresponsible. Gines also notes that this comparison is between white women and black men who are mostly male Americans.

Hence, de Beauvoir's disregards the existence of black women, or rather considers the supremacy of the white women and this notable exclusion of the black women depicts that black women are nonexistent to her or that she considers only the male black experience suitable enough to compare with white women. Based on the exclusion of black women, Gines concludes that Beauvoir's analysis of women oppression and her explanation of their passivity cannot be judged as a wholesome truth. She quotes Beauvoir's statement in *The Second Sex*: "the woman is originally an existence who gives life and does not risk her life: there has never been combat between the male and her." Deducibly, Gines' argument here is that, since Beauvoir's analysis does noticeably excludes women, she should not extend her notion of women's passivity beyond her exemplified field of comparativeness because she did not include black women in her analysis of active/passive binaries; she does not have ample information to determine their nature. Gines' arguments against Beauvoir's analytical accuracy is anchored on the fact that de Beauvoir fails to recognise the existence of the black female, hence, her analysis cannot accurately depict whether they are passive or active. To this extent, Gines' criticism is right.

If de Beauvoir could recognize the fact that the black males revolted against the oppressive domination of the white colonial masters, she should be able to, at least imagine that the female who is the black version of the male mentioned possess some level of resistance or a fraction of such resisting abilities. But rather than investigate her viability within her environment, de Beauvoir ignores the existence of the black female. This forgetfulness creates a visible binary between the white and the black woman. It connotes the existence and visibility of the white woman while it denies black woman the opportunity to be visible and to assert herself as the agency of resistance or revolt. Such a denial of the existence of the black women, Gines opines, creates sabotage on de Beauvoir's expressed insight.



Contrary to Gines' opinion of de Beavouir's lapses, Yateson (2003) again considers that Beavouir's analysis was much relevant and extraordinarily successful in the context of the time it was written and that its effects still reverberate even up till this moment. She asserts that Gines herself establishes the fact that de Beavouir didn't mention whether the woman she regularly compared to the Black, the Jews and the Semitic men is either black or white, so one cannot categorically say that de Beavouir outright ignored Black women in her analysis. Concerning the relevance of her work today, de Beavouir's most popular statement of "One is not born, but becomes a woman" keeps resonating in the works of scholars to connote different forms of women's evolvement from the state of passivity to a redefinition of their sexuality.

The most significant aspect of de Beavouir's work to this study is her establishment of a synergy between subjectivity and violence, and her discovery that the lack of transcendent aspirations in women contributes enormously to their under-representation in literary imaginations. Also, she recognises that the first reaction of a Black man to the colonial master's oppression was revolt thereby establishing a connective relationship between war and the change it can bring about in gender roles. Although her explication of the synergy between war and gender is not expressly explicit, her research affirms the effectual alteration the experiences of war can have on gender roles. Also, she essentially connects the possession of affirmativeness, focal strength and viability with transcendence which is a much needed potential for breaking binaries in the figuration of roles in imaginative writings.

As explicit as de Beavouir's research on the reason why women perpetually remain the second sex is, her indetermination about the revolutionary strength of Black women while it affirms those of the Black man makes her assumption about the characters and nature of women more of a generalisation. Thus, this limits the scope of her experiential explication of the notion of women as sex contrary to her popular definition of women as the ovum, Emecheta, cited in Olaniyan (2007), argues that, because of cultural differences and distinctiveness, sex is part of the African woman's life, it is not THE life". This creates a noticeable gap in de Beavouir's description of the nature of women. But her ability to draw a correlation between sex, binary, transcendence and war situates her research as the most

essential pioneering efforts to destroy polarities in the conceptualisation of gendered roles in literature.

### **2.1.6 Sex and gender roles classification: towards the re-affirmation for violence**

Stroller (1968) *disagrees* with the establishment of a relationship between sex and gender role, although he accepts that there can exist a connection between them, he affirms, both are independent of each other. In other words, sex does not necessarily have to be connected to gender and this also applies to gender. In his research, Stroller (1968) argues that the determinate factor of the gender of a boy or a girl child is not necessarily their physiological difference but their pre-natal and postnatal experiences. His main reason for this distinct opinion is based on the fact that it is the society who introduces false complicities into the categorization of gendered roles which stems from biological differences as a way to create differentiation between both sexes. His argument against the establishment of differences is based on the fact that both male and female features can experience innate differences when subjected to hormonal swap. This makes their categorical labelling as male or female unpredictable and capable of annulling the distinct biological classification of male and female. Overtly, this assertion again leads to the destruction of binary in gender roles since both male and female sexes share similar traits. He corroborates this view when he foregrounds the idea that “higher mammals show both masculine and feminine behavior in any individual, and as a result concludes that there is much evidence to demonstrate that there is no such thing as an exclusive feminine mammal.”

Based on Stroller’s elucidation about the non-definiteness of sexual categorization, one can infer that, as much as sexual individuality does not exist, sexual binary is also more imagined than real. However, he eventually agrees with the fact that what differentiates a male from a female being is the higher propensity of manliness in male than it is in female and vice-versa. He explains further that “Gender is the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person”. Contrary to his earlier assertion of the non-existence of sexual differentiation, Stroller explains that the difference in male and female is as a result of the higher aptitude of the masculinity and femininity in both sexes. Through this subtle shift in perspective, Stroller contradicts his earlier verdict about the nonexistence of sexual

differences in both sexes because what he considers as high propensity of manliness in male and high femininity in female accounts mainly for the physiological differences from which biological differentiation ensues. However, Moi's (1999) statement which asserts that in the "eighteenth century not much differences existed between the sexual anatomical categorisation of men and women; hence, the vagina was considered an inverted penis, the womb an interior scrotum" supports Stroller's findings. This assertion erases fundamental differences between male and female reproductive organs and biological differences are not taken as the bases for social differences.

But the vagina which is considered as the inverted penis still differs from the penis because it is considered "inverted". This statement, however, created significant hierarchies in the perception of male and female roles. These, in its entirety, still resonates gender differences based on anatomical distinctions between both sexes. Most of Stroller's analysis of sex and the relationship it shares with gender was laboratory based and, most of his examples are scientifically and not socially proven (xv). Nevertheless, because of its scientific orientation, his research was able to prove significantly that sex and gender are independent terms, they operate in independent spheres and societal culture connects sexual difference with gendered role. Specifically, he affirms scientifically that there is no enormous difference in the anatomical make up of both sexes and that their intellectual abilities share many similarities.

To validate Stroller's research, Rubin (1975) states that sex/gender division can bring about transformation in the classification of sexes and instantiate activities which are capable of creating genderless equal society in which women can be totally free. However, Rubin (1975) suggests further that, to achieve such equality, one must go beyond laboratory research and engage a social platform which places both sexes on an equal survival platform. The lack of recognition of the place of violence in destroying sexual/gendered binary makes Stroller's research appear much like a scientific research than a socially applicable gender research. Also, the effect of his research does not reflect in the literary imagination of assigned roles and this makes its analytical structure a bit unsuitable to interpreting stylistic indices of gendered roles in literary texts.

Yet, his research serves as a pioneering work that raises scholarly consciousness on the independent functioning of gender roles, and make scholars to question the existence of binary in the allotment of gendered roles since it has been proven beyond doubt by Stroller and foremost scholars that anatomical differences should not automatically lead to the creation of dichotomised role assignment. Therefore, Cade Bambara (1969) considers dualities in gender roles inappropriate and questions the rationale behind it in her essay titled, *On the Issues of Roles*. She discovers that most essays on the subject reinstate the gendering of roles. This division accentuates gender polarisation which itself is a reflection of male superiority versus female inferiority. Her study of the literary production of her time depicts the formation of polarity in the opinions of both male and female scholars generally. They either support the elevation of men and the subjugation of women or, if they are women-writers, they paint a meta-human nature of women, without reference to the processes that lead to the transcendent roles such female characters adopt.

Such depictions have created a regulated imagination of women as passive beings in fictional writings. Her study explicates the processes of self-discovery and authenticates that equal participation in revolutionary situations bring about a strong bonding which destroys the socially erected binary in gender role allocation because such violent situations forcefully destroy social hierarchies. Moreover, she believes it mandates all humans to project their real self in order to survive the turbulent circumstances of war. She notes specifically that, unlike in the western world where women have always been subordinate to men, during the pre-colonial times African women played diverse roles alongside their men and they were not inferior roles. She establishes that to be able to erase any polarity totally in figuration of duties in literature, especially in third world imaginative writings, it is compulsory to adopt the notion of blackhood or selfhood that gives a notion of equal identity rather than those of manhood or sisterhood which implies a sort of division. Thus, in order to project the self that is without segregation, she favours the term, “blackhood”, which according to Cade, can only be meaningful if it is acquired through struggles.

Cade was able to link the importance of discovery of self in its actuality to the revolutionary changes war produces in an individual, family and the society at large. However, her expressions about the difference between blackhood and whitehood also creates a binary of

the self from the other thus establishing a binary based on the differences in the cultural experiences of whitehood and blackhood. In view of this, her research appears more like a criticism of the white culture than as an attempt to depict the advantages that come through self-discovery and the links it has with the reconfiguration of gendered duties in literature.

However, on a closer look, one realises that her research is not written to create segregation between blackhood and whitehood because, according to Helene Cixous (1986), human's thoughts are fashioned in binaries, whether they intended it to be or not. Rather, Cade's segregation of whitehood from blackhood is significantly tied to her motivation of a black model that is got from their own revolutionary experience other than a prototype of other people's revolutionaries. Her essay is an emphasis on the need for a specific black revolutionary expression of self which erases stereotypes in the representation of roles in actual temporal setting and in literature. More importantly, her research is about dissolving binary in representation of gender roles, breaking limitations and establishing autonomy that can be enjoyed by all of human race rather than by a privileged set. This undertone explains why her insistence on the process of self-evolution that comes through revolution has an irresistible capacity that can erase polarised views of gendered duties since it places all humans on the same level and grants them the opportunity to structure their survival in unstructured, violent circumstances. Although she admits that its effects on the perception of roles might be gradual, at the long run, it results into the portrayal of dynamism in gendered duties.

Her study also outright links political consciousness with sexual differentiation which usually underlies gendered roles. Thus, her research discovers a parallelism between politics and gendered duties which serves as a background for other researchers who expatiated on her opinion of the connection that exist among sex, gender and politics. In conclusion, her study about the topicality of tasks allotted to both male and female as a result of their physiological differences not only authenticates the subjugated roles allocated to females but also foregrounds the link sexuality has with political ideologies. Although she does not offer an extensive study on the connection among the three concepts, she is able to identify the symbiotic relationships that exist among them. In order to better clarify the correlation between assigned roles and politics, Michelle Foucault (1978)'s *History of Sexuality* asserts

the fact that for duality in gendered roles to be well understood and to have a wholesome opinion of the reason polarisation has remained fixated in gendering roles for as long as history itself, it has to be investigated through its connection to sexuality.

In his study of the seventeenth century, Foucault establishes the fact that discourse of sexuality was rampant between male and female sexes without any form of segregation, sexual topics and anatomical differentiations were not considered as barrier to the rapport that existed in gendered relationships. His study reveals that contrary to the freedom of bodily expression that accompanied the expressions of sexuality, the nineteenth century reanalysed the concept of sexuality and restricted its discourse mainly to the home. This restriction, according to him, resulted into two significant kinds of repressions; the repression of sexual desire which mainly affected women and children. Children, he explains, were totally prohibited from engaging in sexual discourses while women, although allowed to express their sexual feelings, were placed under the institutional constraint of marriage to ensure a checkmate of their desires. Marriage then became a legal avenue through which the binary of subject/object was created in the family and, expansively, it spread into the society at large.

The second repression was manifested at the level of discourse; sex was placed under strict surveillance to monitor its multiple effects on individuals, to recognise how it distinguishes the impacts of power on different people. At this level, Foucault's study shows that the dichotomies in gendered roles exceed the ideological differences between male superiority and female inferiority at this level. He asserts that such duality transmutes into the political repression of the bodies which resultantly leads to the polarised portrayal of bodily expressions especially in literary works. His view also affirms that sex has become a yardstick for measuring human values. Hence, it becomes overtly relevant, not only in the classification of gender but in the connection gender has with power and authority which are viable for the determination of a group.

In his work, Foucault discovers various forms of power, and explains the channel through which these powers are projected and, how they pervade human thoughts and behavioural patterns. He connects the experiences of those with subjugated roles to the repression of the discourse of sexuality, he then notices that such a repression causes social polarisation.

Sexual discourse was banned from public gathering among the citizens of societies, it was used as a major yardstick with which social decisions are made within the ruling class, and this knowledge of sexuality result for the bourgeoisie into a mastery of language that allows them to manipulate or misrepresent the interest of others thereby giving them power over others.

The ability of the ruling class to manipulate other groups as a result of their knowledge about sexuality further contributes to the expansion of the duality in gendered roles. Sex then became the foundational basis for every experiential change the society encounters. It then becomes mostly impossible to discuss binary in gendered roles without establishing the correlation it shares with sexuality since it was through sexist categorisation that binary was introduced to gender role assignment. Foucault's work establishes significantly that, to erase gendered polarity, it is basically expedient to understand the enormity of the affinity sexual distinction shares with gendered roles for it is such knowledge that is able to produce an effective revolution. As a result, Foucault points to the fact that discourses about sex has increased since the eighteenth century and the amazing part of such discourses is actually in the fact that, they do not specifically talk about the physiological differences of male and female, rather they concentrate on how these distinctions has denied or allowed the full expression of bodily display in the realm of power structure.

Significantly, through this discovery, Foucault was able to establish the diversified nature of the discourses on sex and hence, he proves that the topicality of sex flows consistently into other fields of study and forcefully assert itself in relation to those other fields. So, in order to understand the working of sex in other fields especially in it connectedness to gendered role, Foucault ascertained the importance of the term, 'pervasiveness', in relation to the topicality of sexuality. According to him, the introduction of perversion into sexuality transmuted it main focus from pleasure to the level of discourse and, at this level, sexuality experienced a lot of restraints especially in bodily performance. Significantly, this level of distortion certified the heterosexual bodily categorisation and allows the transmutation of sexual restraints to result into a binary in the allocation of roles.

At this stage, a distinction was made between men's sexuality and those of women, and it became necessary to place, under strict restrictions, the sexuality of children, madmen and

women because these three, it was reasoned, if left unchecked can become uncontrollable as time goes on. His explanation here basically affirms the constant changes in perception that sexuality passes through and confirms the resultant nature of the repression in bodily classifications of duties. This segment of his study shows that sexual discourse brought a new kind of authorisation to reign over the body and on sex as a whole. Hence, power became associated with the repression of the sexuality of one group by the other group as a result of the difference in biological outlook. Sex then becomes the yardstick through which gendered role is measured, it thus appears almost impossible to examine the binary in gendered roles without examining the connection it has with sexuality.

Foucault's works on sexuality helps one to understand the correlation that exist between sex, gender and the manipulation of gendered duties to reinstate the sexual differences made based on the physiological differences between males and females. His research also helps to understand the political undertones that differentiations in sexual categorisation have on the allotment of gendered duties to both male and female sexes. However, he ascertains, through his findings, that the repression placed on sexuality and its discourse, especially female sexuality, can be revoked through revolutionary acts which rebel against oppressive traditional stipulations that permit continuous gender polarisation in the imagination of gendered assignments especially in literature. It is based on this conviction that this section serves as a crucial background for the present research on the transmutative relationship that exists between war and negotiation of duties. Appreciably, his research attests that repressions created around sexuality affect the use of language generally and this in effect makes the proclamation about polarisation of bodies based on biological distinction more of a political decoy than an anatomical complement for the procreation of siblings.

In furtherance to the effect of power on sex, Foucault discusses the effect power has on sex in five main categories. The first category has to do with the fact that power and sex share a highly negative connection; secondly, this connectivity brings about the partitioning of boundaries which develops into gender polarisation and, at the third phrase, dichotomies are manifested as continuous form of interdiction that consolidates the negative relationship between sex and power. Sexual prohibitions, according to him, act as a main tool that controls the full expression of sexuality. Such restrictions use logical ideologies to support



the authenticity of the right to silence sexual discourse among certain groups through laws, promulgation of myths and excessive examination of bodily difference between both male and female sexes. The fourth one is the need to interpret sexuality through confessions and the fifth one has to do with the relationship multiplication of pleasure has with the production of truth about sex.

Yet, Foucault agrees that the effect power wades on sexuality brings about the universality of the ideologies it propels; it is not necessarily the weighty strength it has to declare affirmatively the change in sexual discourses that conditions sexuality. But its most allied effect is the inherent negative force it carries and the fact that it is centered on nothing but reinforcement of the law and prohibitions of actions. Through these restrictions, an avenue for the violent nature of war to conquer the negativity of the power established through sexual differentiations is created and forcefully introduced through a surge of negative power. It possesses more potential negative strength that is capable of erasing the constituted power around sexuality which is mostly reflected in established gender binary.

In addition, Foucault asserts that the introduction of violence also helps to neutralise the effect of duality in classification of gender role. War or violence then serves as the appropriate tool which enhances the attainment of freedom from state institutions' regulation of sexuality and gender roles. The freedom occasions the adoption of a new theoretical stance which does not affiliate power with laws, rules or prohibitions. But for this adopted stance to be effectual, it has to evolve from new historical beliefs which can be a foreground to form a distinct conception of sex which is neither guided by the law nor accrediting power to male authorities. This separation of law from sex and patriarchal authority may not be possible, according to Foucault, if one does not significantly take into consideration the political undertones power has on sexual discourse.

Through his analysis, Foucault is able to establish, most importantly, the connection between sex and the resultant binary in gendered roles, and enunciate the stratifications of power that differentiations in sexuality creates within society. His discovery of the relationship that exist between sex, gender and power serves as a main issue in the discussions of gendered roles and authenticates the correlation that exist between sexuality, gendered duties, power and, the politicisation of bodies and gender roles. These invariably

lead to the recognition of violence as a vital tool for erasing the polarisation of gendered duties.

Although Foucault was able to establish the underlying reasons for the existence of binary in gendered roles, his analysis does not. According to Horowitz (1987), Foucault's "repudiations of the ideology of liberation rests on a fundamental misunderstanding of a Herbert Marcuse's work on repressive". He further argues that, although Foucault wishes to analyse the complex operations of power over the body, "he leaves us with no ground to stand on" in the obstruction to domination. Thus, in Horowitz's view, Foucault's analyses, rather than create distinctions among the authorities that mode subjectivity and historical power structures which create dominance, he reinstates the negativity of power in relation to sexuality, which, according to Horowitz, is an incorrect generalisation about the working of power and sexuality.

However, Horowitz, in his criticism, loses cognisance of the fact that Foucault and Marcuse agree on the fact that there is no single locus of great refusal, soul of revolt, source of all rebellions or law of the revolutionary. Rather, there exist multiple resistance frontiers from which revolution ensues. However, Foucault's philosophical position diverge from that of Marcuse mainly as a result of Foucault's insistence on the historical validation of the transversal nature of revolution and Marcuse's disregard of historical events as the main triggers for the transversal nature of revolution gives a major distinction to their views about the formation of power and its correlation with the political transmutations of powers. Despite Horowitz's criticism of Foucault's postulations in *History of Sexuality*, it is evident through his analytical exposition that Foucault is still able to establish significantly the connection which sexual categorisation within the society has on the formation of discourse. Basically, his explication affirms that the different historical attempts made to repress sexuality birth diverse discourses on sexuality and increases the eagerness to understand the impacts of sexual differences and its resultant binary allocation of gender roles has on the political notion of power.

His discovery serves as a main background for feminist works and develops further thoughts on the similarities which exist between bodily classification and the formation of political ideologies of polarisation that is most evident in the characteristic association of superior

traits with males and inferior ones with females. Also, his historical analogy creates a multi-dimensional background on which the diversified agitations of feminist oppositions against gendered polarisations are fashioned. In spite of his aptness in expatiating the implications of sexuality on the conception of power relations and gender roles, Sara Mill (2003) notices that his later opinions sometimes run contrary to his foremost declarations. But this is not enough reason to disregard the significant contributions of his assertions to the discovery of the correlation that exist between bodily classifications and political distribution of power, and Foucault works act as a foundational study for other literary writers to express the oppression which comes through the politicisation of the body.

The result of this politicization Marilyn Frye, (1983) discovers is the continued existence of dualised gendered roles as a result of the association of gender roles with bodily differences result in the oppression of the undervalued body by the ultimately valued body. Her study reveals specifically that the nature of women's oppression cannot be deciphered by looking only at it in specific situations or in relation to particular incidents. Rather, women's subjugation becomes lucid when one sees it as being surrounded by a wide authorised system of operations whose main aim is to ensure the continued suppression of her body under the governance of male authority. Hence, Frye, categorises most courteous depictions of men towards women as further schemes to display women's inferior nature and not necessarily as a genuine gesture of courtesy towards them.

Frye's statement corroborates *Sojourner Truth's* declaration of the independent ability of a woman to handle her own predicament without the pretentious help of a man. Because, according to Frye, this courteous extension of ritualised help men render to women are done only to reinstate the notion of their physical prowess over those of women. She further observes that the help men render to women most times serve a symbolic purpose that reinstates the systematic forceful construction of barriers to immobilise, reduce and restrict women's freedom. Although she agrees that everybody in a society suffers one form of limitation or the other, he understands the differential rate of gendered sufferings; sufferings have to be measured in the context of general happenings to ascertain whether it is a collective effort to subordinate one set and conspire to oppress the other.

Her explication of the nature of barriers and their different manifestations establish the fact that not all situations which seems oppressive are. For a circumstance to be considered as oppressive, such a situation must be studied beyond the present pain the subordinated individuals pass through. Rather, one should focus more on whether the oppression yields the same quality of result for everyone that suffers from the oppression. She distinctly was able to conceive the polarisation of gender roles as a form of barriers for women than for men. Because his ability to succeed is not measured by his physiology, a man's life is not defined based on his sexual status but rather on his individuality. So, social circumstances do not limit him as a result of his sex but as a result of his individuality and values. On the contrary, a woman's physiology defines her personality and she is judged basically in connection with her biological nature. This is the exact root of the duality which consolidates the continuance of gendering roles.

Her study importantly uncovers the political intention of the acts of showing courtesy to women and reinstates the relevance of this scheme in restricting women's personality by assigning them inferior/dependent roles in the performance of courtesies. She asserts this fact by drawing parallels between the oppressive distinctions of men and women. While women are oppressed because they are women, men suffer oppression as a result of the economic or social instability of their society, and not specifically because of their physiology. However, women's subjugation is as a result of their biological nature. Frye explains that such a distinction serves as the basis for the general association of inferiority with women and superiority with men. She, significantly agrees with Foucault that, despite the staunch system of oppression that exist in sex-based role allotment, it is still possible to destroy duality in gender role assignment to achieve a total erasure and create a noticeable shift in the portrayal of gendered roles. Frye significantly uncovers the politics of bodily suppression that subtly exists in the exchange of courtesy between male and female sexes, and attributes the continued existence of polarisation of gendered roles to the passive part women play in the reciprocation game, and she concludes this significantly adds to the division of the bodies into dualised groups of strength versus weakness.

Contrary to her advice that women oppression should be looked at from a macroscopic angle, and not a microscopic angle, her research concentrates mainly on exchange of

politeness between male and female sexes to explicate her notion of oppression. Hence, she does not look keenly into the other avenues where oppression can emanate from. However, Butler (1993) is of the view that such a discussion which include the topics about bodies cannot be discussed within a circle but must be analysed from a diversified point of view to yield a comprehensive understanding that reveals the symbiotic relationship anatomical categorisation shares with oppression and how this affects the societal perception of gendered duties.

Yet her study provides a thorough explanation of how exchange of courtesy suppresses women's independent abilities. Invariably, her inability to fill up this gap creates a detectable chasm in her analysis. However, Frye's focus in her research seems not to be directed towards the erasure of gendered duality but on analysing the distinction between male and female oppression, and not as much to proffer solutions that can erase dichotomies in approaches. In conclusion, Frye's research is able to significantly identify the political strategies involved in the process of courtesy exchange that leads to the segregation of bodies into two distinct categories and the category each body falls into determines the level of its relevance within the society, and according to Butler (1993) the implication of this classification result in the division of bodies into two groups: those that are important and those that are inferior within the society.

According to Butler in *Bodies that Matters*, bodies must fulfill certain significant obligations before they can be asserted as relevant within the community, this obligation, in relation to gender, has much to do with performativity. Here, her study reveals that sexual differentiation, apart from its connectedness with biological statuses, also has a linkage with performativity. This establishes the act of performativity as capable of creating dichotomies in heterosexual relationships. To that end, her study views sex as a dynamic phenomenon that constantly expresses itself beyond the limitation of physiological differences. Rather its expressions disperse into all fields of life and determine, most importantly, not just the anatomical differences of both sexes. Rather, it investigates also the correlation between performativity, subjectivity and its resultant polarisation in gendered roles.

Through her research, Butler asserts that nature has a historical basis that has an in-depth part to play in the history of sex. She affirms that the different assumptions about sex makes

it hidden while its effects are visible in the daily realities of human lives. Her studies reveal gender as the most visible field of display for the continuous changes in sexual experiences. She importantly, discovers that the construction of sex in gender fields is rearticulated continuously to affirm beliefs about sex although such reiterations seems to reinforce traditional values about sex. According to Butler, it also creates duality and disconfiguration of the actual potentiality of sex. Instead, what obtain are variations of sex which allows for the undoing of sex through its forceful erasure of other standard knowledge about sex. Her affirmation explicates the relationship which exists between sex, normative forces and violence. Her work reveals significantly that sex is the remote course of gender performativity. Thus, it is almost impossible for gender to actualise its divisional power especially in the allotment of duties to both male/female sexes. Hence, gender acts as the activated reality of the anatomical differentiation between male and female sexes. Butler's perception here is that it is not the actual physiological distinctions between male and female sexes that allows for gendered polarisations but the environment which interprets and associates physiological distinctions along specific patterns to accommodate the initiations of fissures and breaks in strict gender role allocation.

Her identification of sex as the remote course of gender duality further bifurcates into the two: those bodies that are active and valued (in this case, the principal examples are the bodies of men which, according to Frye, always take the active part in the courtesy initiation process) and bodies which are less tangible because they assume passive roles in the active initiation process. Since it is the women who mainly fall into this category as a result of the non-active roles they assume in the action initiation process, their bodies are categorised as the intangible bodies. This broad division of bodies, according to Butler, adversely supports the polarised allotment of duties to these bodies and the effect of the initial bodily distinctions affects the overall representations of both sexes in intellectual works especially in imaginative writings. Conversely, her research establishes the fact that the activities of sex in the society has laid down principles which allow for the formation of a new system of power that regularises the values accorded to bodies in general and this system, according to her, is instituted by the society through its perception of polarity as a result of the differentiation in sex established in the law of opposite.

On the diversification of discourse on sex, she recognises that the discourses of sexuality which are connected with gender topicalities are the most versatile. Yet, they are rarely discussed; she affirms the symbiotic relationship that exist between sexuality, gender and politics but attest to the positive abilities of violence to erase dichotomies in gender roles; she supports Foucault's assertion that the effect of violence on sexuality can bring about diverse forms of resignification that is capable of undoing the sexual politics of duality in gender roles when she recognises the developmental impact pain has on sexuality. She opines that the reflection of binary in representations of gender roles in literary works is the psychic projection of gender duality, and this opens up diversified intellectual opinions about the connection that exist between sex, politicisation of the body and gender.

In conclusion, Butler's investigation on bodies and its valuation investigates the connection between sexuality, gender, bodies and the process of the politicisation of the bodies which leads into the portrayal of duality in ways which pattern the societal modes of relating with the effect of sexuality on gendered roles. Her work significantly reinstates the vital role violence plays in erasing dichotomies, not just between roles, but specifically in literary representations of gendered duties. Here, Butler identifies the parallelism that exist between violence and the construction of the bodies that matter. Her resolve is possible only through a traumatic production of sexual antagonism which results from violence. Violence destroys the basic normativity that was created through the cultural organisation of duties based on bodily differences. Her essay contributes significantly to gender studies since it most importantly depicts the effect of violence on the representations of bodies in literature.

However, her explication of the relationship between bodies and sexuality can sometimes be too cumbersome to decipher. Yet, the importance of her research is in its ability to recognise the reflections of sexuality and the effect of body politics in different situational roles. But despite her insightful cross-references about the ideologies of the synergy which exists between violence and sexuality within the field of gender that result in the validation of bodies. Her examples, specifically her literary illustrations, are mainly drawn from Western ideologies of sexuality and its implication on gendering roles. This apparently limits any extensive adoption of her opinion about the workings of sexuality and gendered roles especially in Africa since her research does not draw much illustrations from the

portrayals of gendered roles by African writers and researchers. Despite this omission, her investigation, since it deals with the issues of sexuality, affects human relationship and its portrayal in literary works, expands the adoption of its ideologies beyond the Western region. This makes her ideas applicable also in most gender research studies irrespective of the cultures which shape such ideas.

### **2.1.7 Establishing erasures of binary in gender roles through reappropriations of violence**

Mazrui's (1991) explication discovers the paradox in gender and proposes war as one of the effective options which can erase duality in gender role apportionment. He reinstates that the division of roles between males and females is mainly a cultural construction which can only be destroyed through an understanding of the norms that forms the basic tenets of the society. He explicates the visibility of this duality in gendering roles. He named women as the senior partner in the adoption of reproductive roles while men are ranked the senior partners in destroying lives. The adoption of differences endorses the ratification of the self-based on the distinctions in their adopted duties, enabling the retention of a chasm in the description of duties which translates into the perpetual reflections of polarised gendered duties.

Here, Mazrui also reinforces the overt emphasis on biological distinction in the allotment of roles. This, he discovers, translates into the creation of dichotomies in the representations of gender roles especially in creative writings. However, he supposes that the solution to the permanent erasure of gender role division in imaginative writings has to evolve from the redistribution of roles which offers equal opportunities to both males and females. He suggests two main possibilities namely the demilitarisation of African politics (get the boys back into the barracks; military rule at the moment is more masculine); and the androgyny of African military (arm the girls as well as the boys).

As valid as the first proposition sounds, its realisation might not be possible considering the enormous impact militarism has on all functioning states in the world. Burke (1998:7) asserts that the hold military display of power has on the society and believes that militarism has close ties with the political running of any society since it is through it that authority and validation are given to the words of men and social leaders. Burke particularly stresses



the fact that women recruited into military fields do not enjoy the authentic version of power display allowed men. As a result of this denial, they are reduced to clerical and other service jobs. Also military women are known to face higher rate of sexual violence which are perpetrated by their male colleagues. Although, women in military are challenging gendered roles stereotypes by becoming soldiers, they are still being affected by these same stereotypes. Hence, it will take more than the eradication of the male presence from the society, which itself is not plausible, since militarism itself is constructed on ideas of patriarchy which itself defends the use of binary in relation to self and others.

Despite their overt subjection to sexual violation by male colleagues, military women rank higher than civilian men. Hence, they can perpetrate terror against non-military men in war situations alongside their male partners because of the several violent experiences they have been exposed to as a result of their power based on their profession. Since it is somewhat impossible to “get the boys back to the barracks”, to use Mazrui’s parlance, the other major option is to “arm the girls as well as the boys”. Although this particular suggestion contradicts the biological roles women play in the society, Mazrui opines that the only alternative solution to destroying gendered stereotypes, especially in the portrayal of duties, is to allow an equal level of exposure to violence to occur between both male and female sexes.

His investigation of gender and challenges attached to the attainment of gender equity identifies, first, the distinctions in the biological differentiations between both sexes as the main course of polarity in representations of gender roles. He further connects this reason to diverse forms of duality which exist in human relationships. He notices the existence of this reflection of anatomical distinctions during naming ceremonies of male and female children in Africa generally, and specifically cites the instances of duality from the main regional cultural groups in Nigeria – the Igbos, Hausas and Yorubas – and, others from Uganda and other African countries. His study depicts that benevolent sexism, just as Frye notes, is the show of generosity towards the weak otherwise considered to be the feminine gender in most African cultures.

His investigation also suggests that, rather than the courteous preface benevolence sexism has, it is actually aimed to disempower the considered weak gender from associating with

power or authority. He considers benevolence sexism a rarity in Africa because women do Herculean tasks alongside men and have more matrilineal privileges than their Western contemporaries. This general scenario makes the display of benevolence sexism almost non-existent in Africa. However, he notes the strong affiliation the African culture has with benign sexism, this sexism, he notes has more to do with giving a girl the varied version of a male's name or those tags that express their personalities. He considers benign sexism as a harmless practice within the African culture which is generally non-contributory to the duality which exists in the allotment of gender roles.

Mazrui considers the effect of sexism in Africa to have a direct correlation with malignant sexism which he describes basically as the most precarious of all forms of sexism. He discovers that this form of gendered polarisation evolved as a result of the depiction of women's biological weaknesses which has denied them relevancy in the most significant areas of the community. He ascribes the varied effects which emanates from the practices of malignant sexism to the main fact that women are basically allowed to nurture lives and are exempted from destroying lives when violent lives-threatening situations occur. This, according to him, not only make them mostly the victims of the situation but also the subjected other owing to the inactive roles they are consigned to in violent situations.

Consequently, this inability of women to match the destructive capacity of men results into a paradox which controls gender inequality. He discovers that it is the destructive endowment of men which allows them to perpetually dominate the other gender and control other vital aspects of his surroundings. On the other hand, it is the absence of this nature in women which leaves them disempowered despite the central roles of birth and nurturing they assume within almost all world societies. He argues that the woman's lack of control over coercive activities contributes enormously to the chasm which exist in the allocation of gender roles and explains why they consistently serve as the victim especially in Africa.

His study discovers that, in order to erase inequality in the representation of gendered roles, the weak status of the feminine gender must be upgraded by giving females access to apparatuses of violence which can simultaneously serve as liberating tools too. This will re-centre them within the major social praxis and create a viable empowerment platform to negotiate gender polarity which is encountered on daily bases. He further opines that the

decentralised experiences of women account for the polarised pictorial representations of roles, especially in literature, which mostly authenticate the importance of women as mothers and goddesses, and all these examples, he affirms, puts women at the centre and empower them. He concludes that, for a complete erasure of gender dichotomy in literary imaginations, it is expedient for women to depict their expertise in handling violent weapons associated with power.

His investigation asserts importantly that the continued existence of binary, especially in Africa, is premised on the fact that women's duties revolve mostly around the nurturing children and men while those of men are mostly linked with destruction. This, according to his study, is the only plausible way to erase the duality associated with gender roles completely. Hence, he advises strictly the need for gender planning schemes which can empower women. But for true liberation to occur, he firmly proposes the androgyny of Africa. His research depicts that it is only through the process of androgynisation that “*genuine power-sharing* between the two halves of the black world, male-female can be evenly distributed.”

Mazrui's observation about the causes of gender imbalance and the proffered solution sounds overtly logical, however, his most pronounced declaration for androgyny in Africa is contrary to his opinion and cannot be anchored in societies whose customary laws exaggerate the rights of fathers at the expense of those of women and mothers. Rather, if his suggestion of androgyny will be of any effect, it will be constructive to, not just superficially arm women alongside men, but allow women to see the need for taking up arms themselves to defend their own interests especially in violent situations. Only then will the process of androgyny be effective because it will come from the determination of the marginalised “other halves of the the black world”, to fight gender polarisation, to use Mazrui's term. In conclusion, Mazrui's investigation of gender and the troubles it faces in Africa identify the practice of sexism in Africa as malignant sexism which he affirms as the worse form of sexism. He also agrees with the fact that the eradication of this form of sexism and its effects, even in imaginative works, will need a forceful violent.

In affirmation of Mazrui's thought about androgynisation, Butler (1999) importantly corroborates the fact that, for gender roles and its perception to gain the equality it desires,

“the frame must break with itself in order to reproduce itself and, within this reproduction, there must be an emergence of a site where a politically consequential break is possible”.

Also essential to the understanding of the need for non-conformity to normativity is Butler’s suggestion about the way recognition is framed to accommodate the dynamics of the duality, significance and precariousness of life. At this point the essentiality of life, just like gendered roles, is also polarised to reveal its livability between the forces of existence in life and non-existence in death. She explicates further that existence itself is determined through the recognition of the differences between the ontologies that sustain the distinctions in the categorisations of all lives. She also affirms, based on her investigation of the way recognition plays a main role in effecting differences, that destructions and degenerations are vital to the visualisations of the processes of life. Hence, she identifies a synergy between these life ontologies and the politics which asserts the importance of recognition in the allotment of positions to the different subcategories of people, and refers to it as biopolitics.

According to Butler biopolitics gives an indepth understanding of life and its diverse expressions. This causes a significant shift to occur to the perception of life and allows modifications to be introduced to the synergised concept of war and reproduction which are offshoots of the biopolitical system that exists in a frame. But she explains further that, because of the force that the biological roles of reproduction enforce on the structural shaping of the frame, it becomes breakable if it comes in contact with violent situations, specifically war. She expatiates further that biopolitics undergoes a severe change as a result of the fact that recognition based on sexual categorisation during the times of war becomes irrelevant as much as a person does not function in line with the roles they are allotted during the times of sanity in the society. She asserts that it is almost impossible to have the same functional duties in war periods as other times because survival is uttermost; violence challenges the willpower of the individual to take on as many tasks as possible as long as it assures them of survival. Through this assertion she depicts that adequate protection from violence comes from individual’s will power to survive and not necessarily from the state. Hence, violence shifts the right of protection that a state owes individuals as it weakens the biopolitical standards used in assigning duties to individuals because, against the will power

of the nation-state, war enforces different multiple roles on individuals who adopt those roles in order to survive. This effectively destroys the biopolitical dualities attached to different genders.

However, Butler again affirms that, even within this situation of war, differentiations also exist between bodies which allows the continuance of sexual politics that authenticates the dualisation of the bodies as subjects or objects. But contrary to the social rating of bodies based on biological differentiations, violence rates bodies according to their productivity during wars. Productive bodies are those who initiate the actions and are recognised as subjects during violent times. Thus, the process of becoming subjects gives equal opportunity to both male and female sexes to become subjects through their participation in the turbulence of war.

Although as a result of the biological differences between men and women, men have been repeatedly asserted as the subject and initiators of actions in war, according to Butler's investigation, the realisation of unworthiness associated with the lives of individuals who are seen as minorities can lead to their determination to take subject positions through participation in destructive activities. Their assertion of will buttresses the fact that "we each have power to destroy and be destroyed by others (31)". Her statement here authenticates the enabling power of war to create a non-polarised environment that gives equal opportunities to all citizens of the state to defend their survival through their displayed abilities to perpetuate violence.

Invariably, Butler's research affirms the fact that the continued existence of polarisation in gender role is much as a result of the lack of the determination of the unvalued lives to strive for their worth and not necessarily because of gendered differences or biological distinction. She significantly links the experiences of war and survival to the impact of resistance they have on the literary works which evolve from such violent situations and explicates this through her analysis of the works of poetic writers on insurgencies that there exist a synergic connection between torture, coercion and the sound of resistance in the speeches of imaginative characters.

Her work is importantly connected to this research because it specifically relates the experiences of insurgency with the dynamic assertiveness of characters and their speech in

imaginative writings, and echoes Kate McLoughlin's (2001) assertion of the recreative abilities of war when she states that war recreates; this confirms that insurgency can be a catalyst for a re-ordering within the society and, specifically, in the depiction of gendered duties in imaginative writings.

George Macbeth (1967), in his poetic expressions, depicts the re-ordering features of war in McLoughlin's (2001) edited work when he describes the effects of the Vietnam insurgency as devastating yet restructuring. He writes: "It brought the garden to the house and let it in. I had no parrot scream or lion roar, but there were flowers and water flowing where the cellar mouse was before".

Macbeth's testimony about the refashioning abilities of insurgencies buttresses Butler's recognition of the synergy that exists between torture, force and change in gender role allocation, and further authenticates its potency for destroying binary in gender role assignment. Thus, it creates a fluid pictorial depiction of duties in imaginative writings that erases the biopolitical presentations of bodies in literary works. Assuredly, Butler discovers the effect of war on sexual polarisation and links the impact this has on the representations of characters especially the change in their use of language. However, she did not give a definite suggestion of how insurgency can help to erase the issue of sexual politics in gender roles. Her explication of body politics encrypted in her reiteration of valued and unvalued bodies does not have any literary explanation.

In spite of this gap in her research, her work is significant to gender studies in that it affirms the violent abilities of war to erase the binary allotment of gender roles and assert the fragile nature of the social normative instructions which frame the binary between both male and female sexes. Also, her investigation about the framing of war significantly discovers a trace of resistance in the construal of imaginative characters and establishes a symbiotic relationship between war and the changes it has on the representations of gendered duties in literature. Thus, it suggests a significant shift in gender role allocation as a result of violence. Despite the suggestion of revolution as the most assured means of erasing binaries in gendered duties, it still exhibits defects in its formation.

### **2.1.8 Revolutionary struggles and its defects**

The issue of oppression which is as a result of anatomical differentiation in gender roles has been a topical discussion of the feminist theorists for a very long time (Federici, 2012) literary feminist studies have particularly taken cognisance of the disparities which occur in the general representations of women as a whole, not just in the way their duties are distributed based on stereotypic measures. Hence, as a result of this, their research has identified various gaps in the relational delineation of duties in literature. According to Hook (1981) one of the reasons for the earlier feminist revolution is the anger against male domination which led to the creation of liberation movements. Agreeably, Millet (1970) version of the rendition of sexual politics ascertains that the first generation of abolitionists who had worked to end slave trade after the eradication of slavery transferred their energy towards destroying the sexist domination of male superiority over female as a result of their biological differences. To this problem of sexual duality, Sojourner (1851) asserts that a woman has equal capacities as a man, and that insurgencies and sufferings can help to bridges the disparities in roles. If a woman chooses to endure the sufferings of war, she acquires lots of experience which empowers and allows her to question, not just the establishment of differences in gender roles, but to wage wars against the tradition which allows the chasm discovered in gendered representations to be perpetuated.

Although scholars have agreed on the fact that war reshapes and recreates, feminist scholars have pointed out lots of gaps in revolutions staged by women and have noted that the existence of these gaps have not allowed for much improvement to occur to the portrayal of roles, specifically in literature. Barlow's *The Great War of British Literature (2000)*, although written in recent times, is a study of literary works which emerge during and after the Britain war of 1914-1918. According to Barlow, the event of the insurgency brings to the fore the establishment of young novelists especially during the periods of 1912-14. Writers like E. Foster, D.H. Lawrence and Catherine Reilly evolved as young writers. She notes that the war brought about the agitations of women's liberation and affirmed their chances for expansion in the modern world by fashioning female characters whose aspirations went beyond their era's traditional conceptualisation of roles. Mostly, their female characters especially aspired to adopt roles which traditionally were conceived as men's duties.

However, Barlow testifies to the fact that the effect of war on literature mostly ends at the level of advocacy for the elaboration of women's right. Most literary works were written by men who portrayed women and their roles according to their personal conceptualisations of them. However, in a bid to assert women's presence in the war, Barlow notes that much of the verses published from 1914 to 1918 were written by women, and still adds a significant dimension to the literariness of the period. But, in the same breath, she affirms the insignificant number of war poems written by women that were published in the anthologies. In other to correct the situation, Barlow's notes that Catherine Reilly published a collection of poems titled *Scars upon my Heart* in 1981 in which she included other women's writings. This makes it an anthology of women's writings alone and its subtitle, *Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War*, affirms this fact. Because it typically contains poems by females, it did not enjoy much scholarly criticism as those of men. And this allows the further portrayal of gender binary in literary works. Although, Barlow attestable states that "this publication challenged those of men but her comment about lack of vigor in women's writings nullifies her earlier statement of the challenge women's writing pose to those of men, she explains that women's works mostly talk about patience, loss, grief which reinstates the traditional description of women's duties and this further strengthens their pictorial domestic representations of in literary imaginative writings.

To further justify the effectiveness of war as a whole on the challenge of dichotomy Butler (2003) agrees that its impact is mostly not sudden but it is capable of destroying completely stereotypes that revolves around the allotment of sexes responsibilities in literary works when she states that, "each and every construction of life requires time to do its job, in other words, the job is never done once and for all". In other words, the British wars might not have been able to erase stereotypes in the allotment of roles, it, however, contributed immensely to the bridge which was later created in the allotment of gendered roles.

Federici (2012) importantly notices that the attitude of women to household work after the World War II took a form of resistance as a result of the lesson of independence their predecessors learnt during the war and passed to them. This made a life dedicated to housework, family and reproduction untenable for most modern women. Fanon also corroborates the change war can have, not just on individual personalities but on their minds



and he relates the effectiveness of this change to the abilities to create literary works which surpass sexual distinctions between men and women to asserting a shared experience of their realities which is devoid of polarisation. Fanon (1956: 108) further foregrounds that:

During this phase, a great many men and women who up till then would never have thought of producing a literary work, now find themselves in exceptional circumstances-in prison, with the Maquis, or on the eve of their execution-feel the need to speak to their nation, to compose the sentence which expresses the heart of the people, and to become a mouth piece of a new reality in action.

It is based on these affirmations of the productivity of war through its destructiveness that this study proposes war as a viable device for destroying gender duality since it erases all hierarchies; it invariably gives equal opportunities to all humans to defend their existence regardless of their physiological differences. To this end, Kropotkin (1909) and Mathis (2016) testifies that, despite the fact that the French revolution emanated from a coup, it ensured the removal of gender binary and placed all individuals and organisations on equal levels. In conclusion, as a result of the re-shaping ability of war, its meaning extends beyond achieving destruction; war as an event represents a zone where the essentials of bodies get redefined.

#### **2.1.8.1 War and the representation of bodies' valuation in literature**

Although the advocacy of the change war can cause on the relational difference between male and female has been asserted by several scholars, some scholars have noticed that it has not really been able to turn the position of women in war from those of objects into subjects. The inability of war to bridge the chasm in gendered relationship is not as a result of the non-occurrence of such in world history, especially in the African society, neither is it as a result of the absence of the outbreak of insurgency in Africa which as a continent has a very versatile history of war and women warriors who have become epitomes of strength and have defied the standardized gender polarisation. Queen Amina of Kano, Moremi of Ife and Alice Lukwena of Uganda were female warriors whose deeds depicted the prowess of females during periods of war.

These women were renowned warriors who, as a result of their heroic deeds, became exemplary characters for the modern women to emulate to the extent that literary writers

consider them suitable as staunch examples for the breakage of gender polarisation in war contexts. For instance, Femi Osofison's lead character in his historical plays titled *Morountodun*, Titubi typifies the historic figure of *Moremi*. Clearly, African women have some records of active participation in war and cannot be categorised as mainly victims in situations of war. But their activities during the periods of war mostly leave them at the centre and not necessarily in power, to use Mazuri's phrase. Looking intently at these female characters used as heroic literary figure in literature, one notices that they are represented to have had major significant faults which leads to their ultimate death. For instance, *Magajiya*, in Muhammed's *Dais of a Princess* is sexually weak and this leads to her death; *Titubi*, on the other hand, despite her valiant deeds eventually dissociates herself from the character of *Moremi* because she feels a sense of inadequacy which makes her an unfit heroine in this story to receive communal recognition for her heroic performance. Also, the character of Titubi in *Morountodun*, according to Osofisan's statement cited in Ajidahun (2014) reveals that the play, *Morountodun* is actually an imaginative work that emanates more from the "urgency to revise historiography, to give voice to the voiceless, and make visible those who have been kept conspiratorially in the margin of history..." So his creation of the character of Titubi mostly evolve from the eagerness to give to those he considered voiceless and not necessarily for the fact that the heroic deeds were performed.

Based on this, one notices that historical archetypes do not really depict the prowess of the historical figures they represent. On the other hand, Muhammed and Osofison's efforts at creating historical female archetypes in literature are perhaps desires that stretch further than trying to give voice to the voiceless but might also be to encourage the voiceless to act vibrantly in order to bring their own voicelessness to an end. In spite of the heroic efforts of both characters, they do not really exhibit much valiance which will assert their position in their communities as heroes. For instance, *Magajiya* dies as a result of her lust and not for defending her community while Titubi clearly declares her incompatibility with the heroic figure of *Moremi* who she is supposed to represent. For these reasons one may not categorically affirms these two literary works as war literature because they lack the emphasis on prowess and violence. And they do not aptly describe the shift insurgence can create in gender roles assignment.

On the other hand, one cannot solely condemn the imperfect figurations of these historical characters because these literary works are created long after their actual existence. Thus, the vital descriptions of the lead roles may not be accurate. On the contrary, both literary works acknowledge the reality of the presences of the African women in war. Although her effect on war may not have been portrayed in these works as strong enough, her participation is recognised. As a result of this, Mea King cited in Patricia Vertinsky (1998) states that this challenge is as a result of blurred imagery overtime, yet, its contours remain faithful to their origin in slavery. Yet, Butler (2009) claims that a lack of evidence of such display of bravery connotes a denial of subjectivity which forms an oppositional alternative of an object position. Inferably, it takes more than a look back at the history of women's exploits to destroy any binary which exists in gender role apportionment. Rather, a new history of the demonstration of women's strength should be the focal point. Barbara Christian (1988) concludes that there can be the formation of a new sexual order built on the reflections of the past and a re-imagination of the present which allows for a dynamic representation of gender roles that demystifies static figurations of duties.

However, Vertinsky (1998) suggests we look at the authentic ability of black women, especially during violent times of war. In spite of the blurred nature of the picture that might still exist, a thread of truth which can lead to what Hooks (2000) refers to as an act of restoration of black women's history exists. Hence as Hooks submission indicates, to understand the effect of colonialism is not to fully live in the present. Invariably, to have a comprehensive understanding of the present, the past experiences are vital foundations on which present formations must be laid. Without such a foundation, the agitations of the presents may be erroneous and wrongly grounded. Sandra Harding's *Feminism: Reform or Revelation*, cited in Hooks (2003), argues that those historical representations were based on the reforms which started gradually but constantly through agitations that could have led eventually to a revolution. These agitations which were steady but gradual were transversal in nature, according to Adolfo Gilly (1965: 15, Foucault 1978: 780; Butler,2009: 10). Since their eruptions can happen at different places and are not limited to particular locations, they exhibit distinct traits which distinguish them and their significances to other wars that have taken place at other regions of the world.

But one ability most insurgencies exhibit is that they allow all participant to operate at the same level of vulnerability and this gives the same opportunity to all humans to strive for the translation of themselves from the object to the subject positions where the expression of diversity of duties is possible. However, the transversal nature of these insurgencies make their resultant effects on gender roles allocation differ from one region of the world to another. In affirmation of this observation, Aijaz (1992) states that, apart from the elevating standards of war, it also helps in the reconfiguration of ideologies in literature. In other words, Aijaz testifies to the fact that war enables the creativeness of artists since it destroys the reality they are familiar with and forces them to think beyond the limited frontiers, he concludes that great ideas comes after the insurgency of violence. However, the effects of different wars are distinct and they birth the variegated representations of roles in literature, making it possible for literary writers to think beyond the polarized conception of duties, to create dynamic characters whose orientations have been reshaped through violence.

The outcome of this reshaping ability of violence results into a versatility which makes it almost impossible to relate the significance of all these wars to the noticeable shift which occurs in the reconfiguration of gender duties in imaginative writings. It is expedient to concentrate on specific incidences of war that has direct influences on the issues of sexual differences, gender roles and how all these affect the description of power relation in literary writings based on the experiences of insurgency which have occurred in some regions. This is to depict a distinct re-orientation in thoughts and life patterns that culminates into a parallel thought which makes Nagara (1990:405) concludes that “Writing about war is akin to building...or re-building...a city. It is an act of creation of binding together...”.

Despite the assertive re-ordering effect war has been said to have caused in societies, the challenge of polarity has remained a constant one. Regardless of the different eruptions of war in most continents of the world, the challenge of inequality has remained continuous despite the regularity of these wars. In order to effectively resolve the issues of gender polarity, it is expedient to give an intent look into a historical war which focuses on the erasure of gender roles through the process of androgynisation of both male and female humans, as suggested by Mazrui, and how this destroys the stereotypic allotment of gender roles in literary representations.

## **2.2 Ugandan: historical preview and reflections on gender roles assignment**

In spite of the different changes which are aftermaths of war, the assertion of gender duality in the configuration of duties still remains binding. The search to the solution to this challenge has been an endless one which has not yielded a satisfactory impact on the description of gender duties in fictional writings. Hooks (2015) states that the main reason for the continued existence of this duality is the fact that we have not advanced enough our discussion of gender and sexuality. Recognising the influence of sexuality on gender roles and the limited research on the discourse of sexuality and its relationship with gender, this research aims to look at the relationship war has on the allotment of gender duties, and how this creates a shift in the perception of war, gender and its impact on fictional characters.

In order to duly explicate the link between war, sex and the shift it has on gender role allocation, this study indepthly investigates the changes the first and second phases of the Ugandan war, which lasted about 20 years (1955-1975), and the second phase which spanned about 12 years (1983-2005) has had on gender role reconfiguration (Kusterbauder, 2010: 454; Ottemoller, 1999: 87). This investigation examines the impact war has on the creation of dynamic roles for fictional characters and how the influences of insurgency destroys the politics of differences established between male and female characters as a result of their biological differences, using poststructuralism, and feminist theories.

Poststructuralism accounts for the textual rebellion against traditional norms, since poststructuralism's tenets displaces the ascendancy of rules and can account for the unpredictability of war and its capacity for gender reconfiguration. Feminism explains the different approaches women have adopted to effectively erase constructed binary in gender in roles assignment because of biological differences. This study aligns more with the radical approach to feminism which expresses firm rebellion against the expression of stoic norms especially in literary writings. Feminism ascertains and illustrates the political undertones of gender binary in literary representations of male and female characters to unearth the societal differences which contributes to their constructions. Poststructuralism, and feminism are adopted here because the basic tenets in them evolve from specific experiences of war are not confined to specific locations as a result of their versatility, the

theoretical stances help to explicate better the identified shifts made to gendered duties allocation in selected texts on the Ugandan war.

### **2.2.1 Impacts of war on gender role reconfiguration in Uganda**

The Ugandan literature at its inception reflects the typical traditional beliefs on gender binary which is based on anatomical distinctions between male and female sexes. As a result of this reflection, the chasm in gendered allotment of roles between both sexes, reflect vehemently in the description of both feminine and masculine characters in literary works. Such pre-war imaginative writings as those of Robert Serumaga's *The Return to the Shadow* (1969) and Peter Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle* (1972) both reflect the dichotomy of gendered roles and places women at the background of creative works by acknowledging more the existence of men than those of women. The few times women were featured in their works, they take on derogatory roles which synchronises with the socially sanctioned gender distinctions. Serumaga and Nazareth's literary accounts portrays the male chauvinist narrative angle earlier male Ugandan authors' wrote from. And as a result of this fact, Sylvia Tamale's (1999) comment about the voicelessness of Ugandan women in foremost literary writings noted that women had "little opportunity to 'crow in Uganda's literature because usually 'female chicken do not crow".

But as soon as the opportunity to express self was granted to women writers in Uganda, the foremost literary female writers were only able to re-authenticate pictorial representations of polarity in gendered roles which became noticeable in their writings. Hence, Kiyimba Abasi (2008) observes about Barbara Kimenye's two earliest literary works titled *Kalasanda* and *Kalasanda Revisited* lack the ability to depict equality between both male and female sexes. Rather, it portrayed women who do not strive for equality but are contented with their peripheral duties. This makes their construction of gendered role a mere replication of old traditional values. Hence, there is the retaining of the simplistic division of gender into roles where men are perpetually the perpetrators and women the victims.

The existence of stereotypic division of gendered roles as it reflects in earlier imaginative works makes it differ significantly from the recent works of imagination written as the attitude which manifest in current creative works depict resilience, equality and resistance

of stereotypic descriptions of gender duties. Danson Kahyana (2014:507) attests to the fact that Susan Kiguli's works are written to overwrite the former depiction of Ugandan women as docile and submissive drawing from the experiences of war to represent valiant women who resist the traditional segregation of themselves from the opposite sex by fighting to regain their freedom of self. They thus erase binary in gendered roles which is the resultant effect of the Ugandan women's resolution to break free. She asserts in her poem titled "The Resilient Tree" (1998: 3) that:

I am tired of old sun;  
I am tired of standing in one place  
I am breaking free.

The willingness to break free affects the attitude of women during the war and testifies to the long-existing independence of women in the Uganda society. However, the insurgency has contributed immensely to the recent shift experienced in the portrayal of gender. The situation during such violent times exposes both males and females to the brutality of abduction and the adoption of same roles which leads to the discovery of the falsity of gendered duties. After having been sexually assaulted severally, women were assigned same duties as men and they performed significantly better than men; this discovery serves as a reinstatement of Hooks (1982) assertion that the black women slaves did the same quota of chores as black men slaves. Hence, Tamale (2011) affirms that, in order to understand sexuality and gendered duties deeply, including its continuities and changes, it is crucial to analyse matters from a sound historical perspective before checking out their implications in other spheres of studies. So, as a result of the gap in historical records, the change in the re-imagination of gendered roles has not really been researched.

### **2.2.2 An overview of Ugandan literature**

Literature visualises the total existence and struggles of human life which emanate from historical, communal, cultural, political, economic and religious facets of society. Ugandan literature developed from her cultural variations during the pre-colonial era and writers' observations of happenings in the polity. Historically, Ugandans represented their dynamic experiences through storytelling, dramatic performances, dances, and later, written forms. The diversity and orality of cultural norms from which Ugandan literary productions emanated make it difficult to archive them all. Not much has been written about the

existence of Uganda and her literature before her alleged discovery by colonisers who made it a protectorate of the British Empire in 1894. This supposed imperialistic discovery contributed mainly to her expansion because of the rapport she established with other parts of Africa and the world. This interaction exposed her culture and artistic tendencies to other societies which further transformed the status of the nation and her literature. The name, Uganda, is an aftermath of the mispronunciation of Buganda by Swahili traders, a mistake the British adopted and deployed as the name of the country.

The Colonisers' decision to relinquish power in 1962 and give an opportunity to indigenes to rule the country plays a main role in the development of literature. The departure of the colonialists further exposed the inadequate preparations of the indigenes to handle power and engage in self-governance due to the manifestations of various ills, including corruption, cupidity, and selfishness among the home-grown leaders. Efforts were made to proffer practical solutions to eradicating such maladies which rather grew worse because of the politically diverse expectations.

Literature becomes the viable means through which errors can be corrected. Native writers wrote works to condemn the degenerating ills in their society. This led to the evolution of organised literary groups in Uganda during the nineteenth century. Many historical and literary works were published; significantly, Buganda a dominant tribe in Uganda captures the interest of scholars resulting in exponential studies on her cultural spheres. The *Journal of Eastern African Studies* has published a number of research works on different thematic preoccupations in the literature of Buganda. These themes look into aspects of sexual behaviour, politics, health and identities. Other themes reflect the margins in the historical progression of Uganda.

The nineteenth century witnessed the productions of massive historical and literary works. For instance, Okot p'Bitek wrote a pioneering Luo language novel *Lar Tak (White Teeth)* which was published in 1953; the text examines issues of concerns in northern Uganda. Likewise, p'Bitek's famous works, *Songs of Lawino* (1966) and *Song of Ocol* (1967), were written to condemn Ugandan leaders' adoption of western ideologies over indigenous belief systems. The main thematic focus of these early works during the nineteenth century was



the criticism of the nation's romanticisation of western standards. However, literary texts produced at this period significantly deployed oral traditions Richard Reid, (2011).

Meanwhile, the combined tension from internal regional wars and the conflict on territorial demarcations exposed Uganda to the protracted menace of brutality especially during Idi Amin's era. This consequently formed the subject of Ugandan literature. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many writers began to write long narratives in order to give expansive expressions on the decadent conditions of the country. Notable fictions of the 19th century are Barbara Kimenye's *Kalasanda and Kalasanda Revisited* (1969), Robert Serumaga's *The Return to the Shadow* (1969), Peter Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle* (1972), and Austin Bukonya's *The People's Bachelor* (1972). Most of these works depict the deteriorating state of Uganda.

Although cultural norms influence the literature of the early nineteenth century, the latter periods of this era and the early twentieth century in Uganda witnessed the emergence of literary writers who recreated the horrors experienced in their diverse communities. This is done through the characterisation of individuals and groups of people in the community; and the effects of socio-economic and political realities on them. At this point, Ugandan literature has gone beyond the didactic functional purpose it serves, it has become a refraction of the people's expectation of growth after the brutality of war. Therefore, the narratives of the contemporary writers' present confrontational reactions from different facets to the long suppression of violence. Such works include Timothy Wangusa's *Upon This Mountain* (1989); Julius Ocwinyo's *Fate of the Banished* (1997); Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000); *Snakepit* (2004); and Ocwinyo *Footprints of the Outside* (2002).

It should be noted that the Ugandan war triggered multiple reactions that provoked rebellion from both male and female authors. Female writers also began to raise gender concerns to refute oppression, pain, anguish, poverty and horror meted out to females. Themes of survival, transformation, resilience and victory dominate these works. Gerotti Kymuhendo's *First Daughter* (1997); *Secret No More* (1999), *waiting* (2006), and Mary Okurut's *Invisible Weevils* (1998) foreground similar thematic concerns about the margins of power, rebirth of war and, the relationship between women and peace building.

### 2.2.3 Writing beyond the borderlines of selves

Goretti Kyomuhendo has produced different literary works which continue to reinstate her affirmation about the need for equal representations of both genders in imaginative writings. To this end, Kiyimba (2008) interrogates recent Ugandan literature to investigate their unique way of expressing themselves through their characters and identifies some salient features of Kyomuhendo's style of self-assertion in his examination of her fictional works titled *The First Daughter* (1996). Abasi confirms that, Kyomuhendo's first novel is basically a reflection of the cultural roles women are made to adopt in the African society to suit their biologically defined inferiority. And identifies her explication of how this results in dualisation of roles between both male and female characters which further creates the polarisation of power between both sexes. And births the idea of male superiority and female inferiority.

Women in Kyomuhendo's fiction are portrayed as men's possession, and not necessarily as independent individuals. His explanation of the *First Daughter* position as depicted here connotes that no matter how foremostly placed women are, they still submit to the dictates of men, irrespective of the fact that they are older. Truly, *The First Daughter* is an exposition of the six challenges African women face on a daily basis. However, the novelist's constant portrayal of men as the main facilitators of women woes does not erase the fact that most of the women in the novel allow themselves to be the victim of the situation without seeking alternatives to their woes. For instance, Kymuhendo does not explain in details how Kasemiire escapes Mutyaba's attempted rape and constantly just narrates Kasemiire's mother woes in her marriage. This is noted by Abasi; he calls attention to the fact that the victim is only supported when she reprimands her daughter without listening to her because she fought with her brother. This is supportive of Abasi's observation here that Kymuhendo mostly points to the man as the devil.

Kymuhendo's depiction of Kasemiire's professional accomplishment as her main victory against Kyamanywa's downfall at the end of the novel typifies the laudable portrayal of formal education as a viable tool to end women's subversion. But this does not necessarily empower women to possess the independence they need to destroy polarised representations of roles in literature. Her account here, depicts more miseries for women

than men and such portrayals, rather than erase the stereotypic portrayal of gendered roles, only reinstates the imaging of duality in gendered representations without the attempt to create characters whose performativity erases binary in the distribution of gendered duties. Consequently, Kasemiire's mother dies in her miserable state without any form of justification. Despite his acclaimed remorse, Kyamanywa still admits the expertise of his destructive abilities over his victim when he announces that he killed her because he has dominant authority over her.

Also, while Kyamanywa asserts his deeds, Ngongi's voice is muted even in death. This still portrays the masculine voice as the main literary voice despite Kymuhendo's attempt to suppress it. Also, Kyamanywa's escapades with a younger woman at the end of the novel shows his determination to continuously oppress women. Contrarily, the death of Anita, Kasemiire's supposed best friend who had an affair with Steve, Kasemiire's boyfriend, portrays women more as immediate victims of wrong choices while men are rewarded with more vigour to continuously afflict women. Ngongi dies, Anita dies, although Mrs Mutyaba is alive, her situation is portrayed as irreparable while their male counterparts get rewarded with new opportunities. Steve gets married to Kasemiire, Mr Mutyaba marries a younger woman while he displaces the older one, Kyamanywa finds a younger love while the fate of Ngongi's is sealed with death. These events, rather than reinstate Kymuhendo's portrayals of men as the devil, authenticates the traditional representations of women as weaklings whose lives can be twisted based on men's wishes or decision.

Apart from the fact that Kasemiire takes main responsibilities for her sexual explorations with Steven and was able to pass through law school, she is not actually portrayed in a determined light else she would have refused to marry Steven who abandons her to raise the child he fathers with her alone. Yet, she still goes ahead to marry him, such a depiction makes the continuance of traditional male/female role duality re-enacted during her times. Abasi's observation of Steven as a man who has refused to emerge from the shadows encrypts a potent patriarchal figure for Kasemiire. Despite, Kymuhendo's reprimands of men's oppressive injustice towards women, she mostly ignores the accommodating tolerance of women towards the oppression dealt to them by men.

On the other hand, Abasi does not acknowledge Kymuhendo's ability to effectively identify the chauvinistic attitudes of most male characters presented in the novel. Rather, he views the novelist's attempt at exposing and criticising the unjustifiable attitude of Kyamanywa's as witch-hurting him the more (2008: 109) to make him appear more than the devil that he already is. Contrary to Abasi's opinion, Kyamanywa confesses to be more than that devil when he confesses to have killed his wife through his cruel maltreatments. The apparent error Kymuhendo commits here is evaluating her heroine's strength based on her educational achievements since, according to Pumla Dineo (2007: 115), it means that only a small segment of women will be empowered; others will still suffer disempowerment.

Also, John Stuart Mill (1829: 39) notices that there are sentimental aspersions surrounding the quality of women's education. However, Kymuhendo, in this novel, was able to project the harsh outcome of this polarisation for women especially. But the fact that some of the women in the novel dies while their victimisers are alive may be her subtle way of erasing the traditionally domesticated women who does not represent the change envisioned in her latter works. Her words align with the figure of the gender dualisation which she was trying to project to enhance her description of the scenarios. After her exposition on the situations of women in traditional Uganda in *First Daughter* (1996), she wrote her second novel, *Secrets no More* (1999). Kymuhendo writes basically the developmental and historical account of the life of her heroine, like her previous novel, *Secret no More* has attracted scholarly attentions.

Here, Kymuhendo developed the character of her heroine through the violent experiences she made her encounter apart from the general undertones of war and political agitations which worsens the recovery case of self-identity of the protagonist. According to Ogaga Okuyade (2015:20) *Secret No More* is a Bildungromans since it narrates, in a chronological manner, the struggles of a female child heroine for self-identity from childhood to adulthood in the most violent and miserable setting of war, agitations and struggles for survivals. Through the protagonist's violent encounters, the ills of the society are mostly revealed and the empowering ability of violence to enforce growth is made evident.

Set in two historically volatile sites, Rwanda and Uganda, *Secret No More*, according to Okuyade, is seen more as a Bildungromans and as Kymuhendo's imaginative attempt to

correct the Western media mistake of streamlining the essence of the insurgency into a case of an “ethnic conflict” instead of construing it as an organised attempt to erase the existence of an entire race. Okuyade is able to identify the significance of rape in ascertaining the bodily superiority of men over women in war, and reiterates its impact during the mass performance of the act on the Tutsi women by the Hutu men right in the presence of their husbands. He construes this act as an expression of significant authority over the other clan corroborating the assertiveness of his observation with Brownmiller’s (1975) statement about the relationship rape has with the politics of power. She opines that “rape helps to solidify male powers absolutely and establishes a fixated patriarchal rule over women.” This serves as a supportive background for Okuyade’s submission about the extensiveness of rape in violent situations in the work. Yet, Okuyade does not consider the fact that Brownmiller (1975) projects the possibility of eradicating rape permanently with the right type of defense education. Most importantly, he does not connect Marina’s expression of sexual freedom at her maturity stage to her earlier exposure to sexual violence.

Although, Szymanski, Moffit, Carr (2011) in their findings, states that the first impression that comes on after the incidence of rape is the feeling of being a sexual object which establishes women as tool to satisfy men’s sexual pleasures. This feeling, however, aligns with the socially subjugated position of women and thus makes mental and psychological recovery a slow process which makes them continue to live in the subordinated state that allows duality to exist between male and female gendered roles. Thus, Okuyade’s affirmation of rape as an instrument of subjecting women during war acts as a re-affirmation of the researched effect of rape but does not look beyond the historical effects of rape in war to the future possibility of its eradication as proposed by Brownmiller (1975: 404). On the contrary, this research diverges from this popular assertion but rather supports the fact that repeated use of rape during the periods of war can change the notion of women sexuality about themselves and give to them a bold confrontational attitude towards men.

Since the notion of sexualised differences can be violently destroyed during rape, this research argues that such violent destruction of sexualised distinctions established during the periods of rape, especially the repeated performative acts of violation, can cause a significant shift in the adoption of gendered roles and, in turn, affect the representations of

gendered roles in literary works. Hence, Brownmiller's omissions, as recognised by Hooks (1982), can also be extended to Okuyade's essay. Hooks states that Brownmiller discussed the topicality of rape generally, without considering its social and political implications on the lives of black women. She opines further that Brownmiller minimises the impact oppression has had on black women, especially black American women, since all she was concerned about was to place rape on the map of history as an established crime.

All of these gaps identified in Brownmiller's research weakens the foreground on which Okuyade based his affirmation of rape been only an instrument of force which proves the superiority of male's genital over those of female. He does not foresee the fact that repeated use of rape can lead to confrontational attitudes in women which can be a step towards erasing duality in the adoptions and allotment of roles in imaginative writings. And this inability to connect the strength violence can sometimes cause makes him miss the point that Marina's sexual self-expressive freedom has a link with her past violent sexual experiences. Significantly though, Okuyade is able to identify, quite importantly, the fact that Marina tremendously learnt the anatomy of the female body and the process of socialisation without going to any formal school (128). Yet, he maintains the fact that "there are remarkable distinctions between the novel of development in both male and female texts, for a male sexual experience is something positive that is another step towards maturity", whereas, for a female "the move means a complete change of status[...] ...it is the stuff of ostracism, madness and suicide for a female" (129). He uses the incidence of rape Marina had with Matayo to support his argument. But, he does not interrogate Marina's attitude to sex after she heals from the sexual violation from Matayo and boldly dares to cheat on her husband, George, with Dee. despite her knowledge of the brutality of the behaviour of George she still dares to experience a different dimension to sex (145-146).

This demonstration of the ability to not just initiate sexual activity but sustain the rhythmic pleasure it gives her makes it clear enough that Marina experiences total healing from her traumatic past. This contradicts Okuyade's assertive profession of the outcome of rape as ostracism, madness and suicide. Although a painful healing process, Marina's attitude demonstrates a female's ability to appropriate male sexual duties thus destroying the politics of power play in representations of female roles during sex.

Her actions depict lucidly that she is not unconscious of the impact she is making and the encounter also destroys the dominant picture of sex as being pleasurable to males alone. Thus, there is an erasure of the notion that sexual politics as belonging to the male heroes alone. This is a fact to which Okuyade reluctantly but briefly testifies to when he states that “Dee’s sexual encounter with Marina exposes her to new discoveries –her sexuality and the importance of asserting herself (132)”. Although Okuyade does not want to admit the extent to which Marina participate in the sexual activity between both lovers, it is not Dee who exposes Marina in this encounter but Marina who discovers the activeness of her sexuality during the encounter. Her withdrawal of consent to Dee’s elopement plan and her decision to marry Mr Magezi signifies her ability to make willful decisions that contradict Dee’s visualisation of her as the sex, and this demonstration of power signals through her willingness to stop the relationship she had with him confirms the authority she holds in the sexual affair as equal to Dee’s. In spite of the discovered gap in Okuyade’s conception of the situation of women in war contexts, his inability to conceptualise violence as a viable channel through which bodily expression of freedom can be attained undermines his claims of women subordination through rape during the circumstances of war.

However, one should understand Okuyade’s non-connection of the change in Marina’s character to the violence that shaped her views about life since he states from the outset that the subject of his research is not anchored on the dialectics of violence and politics in Africa. But Okuyade’s treatment of rape and its application by men in war situation as a restatement of their authority over women is a main type of politics which Kate Millet (1976) refers to as ‘sexual politics’ and Remmy Shiundun Barasa (2017) references as bio-political strategy.

Finally, Okuyade’s analysis does not factor in the developmental languages of Marina in articulating her sexual experiences and, as a result of this, he does not explore the firm connection between his study, violence and politics, in this case, a sexual one. Overtly, Okuyade significantly identifies “*Secret no More* as a quintessential narrative of how injuries are (un)consciously inflicted on the self by the self and others and how literary texts negotiate the issues of violence and of remembering as a reconciliatory process.” Aside from his omission of the centrality of impacts of sexual development and politics in the

novel, Okuyade's account gives an explicit analysis of the growth stages of the characters and the incidences which occurred in their life.

In other to elaborate the significance of Kyomuhendo's *Secret No More*, Barasa (2017) also notices the pitched violence meted against women's bodies in times of insurgency. His investigation, as Andrew Armstrong (2009), corroborates the fact that the female body is "abject and marked". Despite the violent desecration Marina faces, Barasa describes her as an active victim who struggles to establish safe solutions. Barasa's explication of the author's use of rape establishes it more as a tool for enforcing obedience out of the victim. Mukundane's husband, Bizimana, who the Hutu government officials believe was in possession of explosives is psychologically tortured when the colonel rapes his wife right in his presence. This activity establishes the agony Bizimana's suffers for witnessing his wife's violation. The main purpose of rape here is to enable rulers to assert their bodily superiority over those of the victims. Barasa recognises Kyomuhendo's expertise in allocating the essential traits of each character to them and her explication of how the action of each character affects the eventual shapening of Marina's character.

Chantal's betrayal of Mukundane, the colonel rape of Mukundane, Matayo's rape of Marina, Sister Bernadette's judgmental attitude towards Marina and Fr. Marcel's subtle patriarchal support of Matayo's actions all contributes to Marina's latter determination to overcome the subjection of women by men when she chose to have sexual relations with Dee and ignores the consequences which may occur from such a decision if her husband George had discovered.

Barasa further observes that the female characters in *Secret No More* are dynamic characters who are complex and shifting unlike the linear passive female characters. Kymuhendo's creation of her characters allows them to experience growth rather than the passive female persona presented in most literary writings. To support this observation, Barasa quoted Newell (1977) who notes that most female authors, through their characters, critically redress the shortcomings of male authors' creative works. Howbeit, it is a bit difficult to understand the bases for this assumption that Barasa made. Although, most of the women depicted in the novel cannot be categorised as passive victims because most of them put up resistance against their tormentors, no matter how feeble. Yet, the shift Barasa claims to



exist in their growth is particularly not quite visible except in the case of Marina. For instance, sister Bernadette, rather than understand the plight of Marina, decides to support Fr. Marcel judgement against the heroine, thus, giving subtle encouragement to the continuance of the patriarchal notion of women. Chantal betrayed Mukundane in a most unrepentant way and still confirmed the consistency of her nature to do so when she rudely tells Marina that “What I’m talking about is that this country is fed up with the likes of you. And we shall cleanse it of all Inyenzi” (26). The most surprising things about this is that Barasa also quotes this same passage in her essay, yet, she considers the characters of the women shifting.

Perhaps, Barasa’s conclusion is drawn from Sister Bernadette’s narration of her patriarchal betrayal: “I was mad, Sister Bernadette continued regaining her composure, “I wanted to murder him”. Though she puts up a resisting stance against her former husband, her respect towards patriarchal values still remain intact judging the fact she condemns Marina as the tempter of Matayo rather than understand Marina’s plight since she had a similar experience. Yet she leverages Fr. Marcel’s influence to condemn Marina. Thus, this does not portray any kind of shift in character. But importantly, Barasa notices, through Kyomuhendo’s narration that “the killing of female character is a manifestation of gendered intention that targets the female subjects in civil strives.” (293). Also, her assertion about Marina’s lack of authority over her own body until Matayo forcefully has sex with her is faulty because Marina’s self-expressions with Dee shows that she only needs time to recuperate.

On the contrary, the restoration of her psychological health is demonstrated in her acceptance of Rosaria, her daughter, the product of the rape. Barasa made two crucial points which are also significant to the development of the study underway when she points to the fact that, “the text highlights a woman’s place in a masculinist context of extreme violence in creating female’s covert forms of protest to state their position. Finally, to her credit, Barasa, unlike Okuyade, importantly notes the dynamism in Kyomuhendo’s use of language to mark the woman’s body and states that the dynamism in language use is a main signifier in the process of self-recovery. Although Barasa also does not connect the effect the erasure in biological distinction has on Marina, after her sexual escapades with Dee, Kyomuhendo

repeatedly affirms her change of attitude towards traditionally domesticated roles which she had performed, Kyomuhendo emphasise this change when she repeatedly points to Marina's lack of vigour to fit into traditionally allotted roles that women play. She narrates this thus: "She just wished to be alone and reflect on her feelings and actions of the morning. She went straight to bed, not bothering to think what her husband would eat for dinner if he came back at all that night (147)."

The inability to connect the effect sexual freedom has on the re-construction of gender roles, especially as a result of violence, makes it difficult for Barasa to wholly comprehend the change in the revolutionary stance of Marina. Abasi in his (2008) essay also expresses his reservations about the effect rape creates on Munkundane and specifically insists that the rape of the heroine's mother is only an act inflicted on her in order to torture her husband and humiliate the Tutsi clan as a whole. Although Abasi observation here is right, he never however, considers the psychological impact the rape had on Makundane and even her daughter afterwards as lasting beyond the two clans in question. The only consideration Abasi gives to the implication of Mukundane's rape, and Marina's rape on her psychology makes him conclude disturbingly that "Marina could not enjoy sex because she could not get over her violent sexual experiences" (209). He does not point to the fact that George is an aggressive chauvinist who, rather than have sexual relations with Marina. "pounds her" like the colonel did her mother and excusably discharges Matayo's rape of the heroine as a result of a spontaneous urge under the influence of alcohol and instantly supports his claims with Matayo's reaction after the rape, (57). He, however, does not contextually relates Matayo's constant effort to get closer to Marina before the rape to the eventual incidence of the rape neither does he trace Matayo's sexual records to the incidence of the rape before he links Matayo's attitude to the effect of the alcohol he had taken.

In spite of the fact that he notices that the decision of the heroine to have sexual intimacy with her husband's friend is a rejection of the politics of sexual control (211), he still subtly indicts the heroine's actions when he opines that the sex she had with Dee "was pleasurable but fugitive (210)." His reason for his criticism is basically hinged on the societal disapproval of such act without equally criticising the aggressiveness of George's character and relating the negative impact George's former relationship with Louisa has with the

manner in which he treats his present wife. And this fact makes Abasi's analysis re-echo still the traditional sentiments of gendered relationship. Finally, he does not identify the effect of the erasure of this politics on her re-appraisal of gendered role and her firm refusal to bow to Dee's pressure to elope. He just views Marina's experiences as an empowerment which helps her to make more beneficial decisions (211), a statement which makes her appear more like a parasite, when one compares Mr. Magezi's educational attainment with Marina's. Consequently, it becomes a bit difficult to draw parallelism between Abasi's analysis of this imaginative work with the establishment of the subtitle he uses as opening for the examination of the novel, *Sex and the Male-Female Power Game*. Yet, his analysis does not equally depict the negative or positive impact sex has on gendered relationship, and as a result, does not explicate its connectedness with the change it has on power game.

Despite the identified gaps in Abasi's investigation, his interpretation of Marina's rejection of Dee's elopement proposal as "...a rejection of the politics of sexual control (211)," assert the possibility of the evolvement of women's ability to actually get involved in the game of power as Abasi's subtitle suggests. Through the investigations build on previous studies on on Kyomuhendo's *Secret No More*, the researcher discovers the intellectual gap which exists in the analytical discovery of the correlation between violence, sex and its effect on the reconception of gendered duties. Among other discoveries, the research under study also intends to pay attention to the dynamic use of language to illustrate the extent of gender polarity and, the tropes for the reversal of such in literary representations.

As a reauthentication of her view about the change insurgencies can bring on gendered roles and its perceptions, Kymuhendo, in *Waiting*, features female characters who, despite their performance of traditional duties, demand men to perform roles that matches theirs. Set in the Hoima Western District of Uganda, the home town of the author, *Waiting* narrates the encounters of the villagers in Hoima with Idi Amin's soldiers and the later intervention of the Liberators whose eventual intervention restores stability to the village of Hoima through Alinda, the thirteen-year-old narrator of the novel who gives a vivid description of the terror that is about to be unleashed on the villagers as a result of the fact that Amin's army used their village as a passage to their destination.

However, rather than go on their way, the soldiers use this opportunity to commit several crimes against villagers with looting been the least of them all. As a result of this instability, most villagers seek refuge during the night in makeshift shelters to escape the soldiers' unleashing of terror. While the villagers await the restoration of peace to their community, diverse incidents occur which accentuate individual's roles during the waiting period. Alinda surrounded by her father, her heavily pregnant mother, two other siblings, grand aunty and other neighbours completes the circle of her life.

Kyomuhendo's ability to capture the distinct essence of individual characters through Alinda's view and her dialogue makes the expression of their roles and nature so explicit. Despite the negative effect war has on human lives, Kymuhendo, in *Waiting*, captures the opportunity it affords women to gain gender role equality with men. Thus, roles become complementary and not gendered. So, women do not have sense of subjection as mostly presented in literary works. In recognition of this, Simon Gikandi's (1984) statement asserts the political undertone of most Ugandan literary works thus: "all East African novels have politics as their motive force". The way of feeling and seeing politics...may vary...but always, it is how politics affect the physical and psychology experience that matters most to these novelists".

In *waiting*, this physical and psychological experiences, according to Lynda Spencer's (2014: 20) analysis, portrays women as compulsory participators in war. As a result of this, the space in war zones become united as everyone shares one another's traumas. In furtherance of her assertion, Spencer investigates the roles of each character in asserting Kymuhendo's intention and aligning them to specific roles during the insurgency. She associates Tendo, Alinda's elder brother with the guard, the defender of his family and this still reinstates masculine protective roles. She also notes his access to the violent weapon of war represented here with *panga*. She reinforces this assertion by citing his illustration of his readiness to confront Amin's remnant soldiers with his own violence: "He removed his hands from his pockets and started punching the air, fists folded in a mock fight. "I'm ready for them," he said..., "Who?" Maya asked. "Who else? The soldiers" ... "Father said they have guns but a man has got to be prepared for a fight." (17).

In her final investigation of Tendo's behavioural traits, she concludes that he represents all the gallant soldiers who go to battle in defense of their nation. Her assertion of Tendo's character represents a typical portrayal of masculine supremacy especially when she describes Alinda and Maya as domestic. In order to support her observation of their domestication, she declares them as "immersed in various household chores" (33). Despite, the truth about Spencer's observation of the differences in the adoption of Tendo's duties, her investigation does not pay any close attention to the complementarity in the allotment of roles that exist especially between Alinda and Tendo in the novel. Notably, in the novel, Tendo also has his own domestic chores allotted to him which does not have anything to do with being a defender or protector. Rather, they are given domesticated roles: "I called Tendo and asked him to go and fetch two cans of water." "I am tired," he snapped. "Shut up! I shouted at him. "Mother wants to bathe... (27). Although the girls carry out more domestic chores than he does, Tendo, during most of his appearance in the novel, also undertake particular domestic chores within the family. And on the days he does not execute his roles, Alinda, although his younger sister, questions him with authority: "And you, Tendo, where did you disappear to? There is no water in the jerry cans." (54). The language Alinda uses when addressing Tendo does not depict the usual polarity between male and female sexes.

Unlike Kasemiire in Kymuhendo's *The First Daughter* whose mother beats up because she fights with her brother, Alinda expresses a high level of confidence which makes her to question the masculine gender without a second thought. Rather than get chastised for questioning Tendo's movement, her father calmly answers her when she questions her brother in his presence... "He went to help Uncle Kembo, whose head is hurting again... (54). The fact that he went with the liberators to fight in a war although reaffirms his depiction as a man, it also echoes his vulnerability to danger. Also, this statement is reinforced through the fact that Bahati, one of the soldiers who falls in love with Jungun, Alinda's friend, stays back to enjoy a stable life with Jungun but unfortunate for him, Jungu has gone in pursuit of him when she heard that the liberators had gone or she had achieved her aim of becoming a girl-soldier as the author informs us. With this, one cannot say it is only Tendo who takes a patriotic step, Jungu's also does: ... "I want to live with him in

Tanzania, and I can also become a soldier.” “Are there women soldiers among them?” “No...but I can be the first!” (86).

Almost all the women in the novel exhibit this sense of authority when speaking to men. Affirming the confidence in Alinda’s mother’s address to her husband, Spencer notes that Kymuhendo reverts to the allegorical roles of women in the narrative not only to negate the imagination of women and their roles as submissive and abstract during insurgencies but also to reflect the change in attitude (36). Although her participation in the novel is brief as a result of her death, her husband feels her absence and weeps openly at her grave side to show his awareness of the enormity of the loss (59). On the day of her burial she is buried alongside her husband’s grand aunty who is also a depiction of prowess and courage.

Right from her first appearance in the novel, Kaaka represents contradiction and rebellion against the traditional masculine world, her views always defer from those of others and she mostly values her own opinions over others. Right from the moment she announces her divorce from her husband, Kaaka’s formidability becomes established. Spencer elaborately testifies to Kaaka’s bold nature and notes that, despite the fact that she bears the brunt of the physical violence of the soldiers while Alinda bears the psychological effect, her ability to assert herself against established traditional norms, makes it difficult for readers to allot maternal stereotyped roles to women in the novel.

Spencer’s interpretation of the dynamism of her role is wholesome but she does not seem to understand Kaaka’s character beyond that fact, apart from her obvious display of courage, Kaaka also appreciates the features of courage in the younger generation and, perhaps, will like the continuity of its display in women, generally, to ensure the fulfillment of her desire for the erasure of women’s subjugation. During the child birth of his wife, she stops her nephew from inviting a neighbor: “That woman behaves like a child. She would n’t even know how to cut the cord. Anyway, what, can you expect from a woman who let her in-laws chase her away from her own home?” (32). The intolerance she has for weakness depict her orientation of equal rights between male and female. She believes a woman, just like a man, should be able to have a firm stand in her marital home and should be able to control the affairs of her home, such that if she decides to leave, she will do so victoriously. And that is the reason she announces her divorce with much apparent pleasure.

In this novel, the female character's role complement those of the males and their biological differences are not used as yardsticks to determine their worth within the society and the home. As a result, the girl-child has equal right to education as much as the male-child. Although, as portrayed in the novel, the bodies of women still remained a site where violence is marked, the soldiers, during their raids, declares "they want women, food and money, Kymuhendo (37). Yet, they meet a woman who is not armed with panga like the men but whose assertion of self, disenchant them of any form of authority they have, it is out of frustration that the last soldier shoots Kaaka and kick her repeatedly to forcefully reinstate his authority over her because despite her age, she threatens his sense of authority.

Her ability to face danger without fear during the period of war creates a significant shift in gender role and erases significantly the motif of masculine eminence in the novel which further erases the strict dualisation of gendered roles. And the effect of this erasure is noticeable in the conversation between Alinda and Tendo's. In addressing her older brother, Alinda, does not exercise any constraint in expressing her feelings. Although she has to take up more domesticated roles than he does, she retains the main authority in assigning duties. Despite having experienced psychological trauma than most of the adults which eventually resulted into her physical break down, she is still able to assume her duties as she anticipates the changes that the future brings. Alinda's character matches that of Kaaka in her display of courage. As such, to build her courageous attitude to its heightest degree, her father takes the domestic burden of childcare off her and sends her back to school for proper grooming.

Kymuhendo's ability to blend perfectly the effects of violence on both men and women allows for a total destruction of polarity in gender role assignment and allows unity to exist among people of different preferences. This thus erases all forms of prejudice and reinforces as true Foucault's (1982:20) observation about the manifestation of war as "having the ability to manifest in a massive interlock together with power relations which produces an effective interaction". However, according to Daymond (2006) "...there is a new, and perhaps even more fundamental, meaning of "politics" that is evident in Ugandan writing, particularly in novels by Ugandan women, and that is the questioning of gender allocation and the exercise of power". Although most female authors take into cognisance the effect violence can have on the duality which exists in sexuality between male and female humans,

and sometimes connects with the erasure of polarity in gendered duties, it is however rare to read works of male writers who portray the impacts of war on the change in the perception of sexuality and gendering of roles.

Notwithstanding, similarities in war experiences are evident in the writing styles of the writers cited in this study. Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2001) fictionally captures the scenery of the Ugandan peace and war eras and explicates the effect of violence on gender role reversal. As a result of its versatile stance, some researches have been done to accentuate the impact of war on the flexibility of the representations of characters in the novel. Thus, Edgar Nabutanyi (2012) investigates the impact of violence on children's perception in war situations. He notes the violent attitudes of the child narrator's mother and comments on the destructive effects of violence and the abuse it eventually results into. He significantly notes that parent's demonstration of domestic violence on children turns them to monsters who further perpetrate act of violence on others.

In his explanation of the effect of violence on a child psychology, he does not link the eventual violent outbursts of Padlock to the violence she had experienced during her childhood era. And as a result, Nabutanyi does not ensure that Mugezi, the child narrator, does not end up making the same mistakes his parent made. Although, Padlock's outrage towards Mugezi is mainly as a result of Grandma's prophecy towards the latter's future vocation as a male nurse to women during childbirth, it is also essential to recognize her effort towards averting that future for her first son despite the forceful way it is established. She still wants him to turn out better than a birth attendant. In a conversation with her husband, Serenity portrays her intention thus: "They offer very good education. On the other hand, you can't imagine how bad government schools have become" (182).

Looking at it from this angle, one can recognise the good intention behind the somewhat harsh discipline Padlock mostly administers on her children. Consequently, Nabutanyi does not account for the changes in the child narrator's language which mostly signifies his sound understanding of the happenings in the world of his age mate and those of the adult. Hence, he does not examine properly the child narrator's view of political change in the aspect of gender role allotment. Thus, his investigation mostly expounds the ethical responsibilities



of parents towards their children and not necessarily the effect the shift in the application of ethical values and discipline has on their social perception of gendered roles.

This results into his inability to explicate how the shift of authority in the family affects, not just the child's perception of gendered duties, but significantly how the shift in authority affects his psychology of self in relation to others, and how this prompts him to rebel against the authorities which tries to reshapes his character so that he becomes both a perpetrator and victim of violence. He does not connect how this domestic violence inflicted on Mugezi; the child narrator shapes his perspectives on sexuality and the dynamics of self-representation in the novel. This gap in the research work prevents wholesome parallels to be drawn between the child's narrator's experience and his ability to express himself even when describing events which occur among adults. Therefore, this investigation does not take into consideration the violent occurrences which shape the child narrator's apt description of the relationship between sexuality, politics and shifts in gendered roles within the family and how this shift creates rebellion in children which enable them to perpetrate violent acts on adults within the family and the society at large. Thus, this significantly erases the political partitioning of gender duties which exist among adults and children, and destroys the reflection of polarity established in the categorisation of gendered duties. His omission of this vital aspect of the novel limits, to a great extent, his exploration of the effect of domestic abuse on the child's psyche and how this affects his/her readiness to perpetuate violence especially during insurgencies.

According to the narrator's testimony, the battering he experiences on the home front prepares him enormously for the brutality he experiences during the war and allows him to interpret the impact of the change on political agitations and the forceful destruction they have on children's psychology. Hence, there is the destruction of the partitioning of duties. From the moment Mugezi, the child narrator decides to defend himself against the harsh punishment meted out to him at home, he discovers a new form of confidence that evolves only through the influence of violence. He explains: "...a war has just been declared. I had no illusion of winning this trench warfare, but I have determined to become a very costly, very destructive victim" (113). As a result of his resolution, the reader recognises that violence propels a shift in, not just the victim's orientation of self, but aspects of society in

such a way that it erases the stereotypic segregation of power and allows for the presentation of dynamic self-expressions to occur especially in imaginative writings.

To demonstrate the enormity of the shift, language and experiences of the narrator do not replicate that of a child but that of an adult whose psyche has been restructured to accommodate the brutal effects of both domestic violence and war. This fact explains the expertise with which he draws a synergy between sex, politics and shift in gender roles and corroborates Nabutanyi's opinion when he quotes Scarry's statement about the capacity of war to actively destroy language rather than resist it (2). Yet, Nabutanyi's investigation do not recognize the central attention given to the issues of sexuality within the context of war and how these outcomes mainly affect the use of language. This then creates a gap in his investigation which needs to be filled; it is necessary to examine the connection sexuality and politics has on the eventual shift in gender role allocation which results from the war.

Although, Nabutanyi later explained that his focus mainly is on the domestic abuse of children, and not necessarily on sexual violation, since he considers it as not the only source of violation that impact lives especially children's lives. In furtherance of the explication of the versatility of Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles*, Michelle Brown (2008) discovers the juxtaposition which exists between colonial and trauma studies mainly in respect of race, gender, identity, and post-independence nation-state that the repeated perpetration of violence after its initial stage of violent actions and eruptions translate into an unhindered ability to express the violence experienced in speech. This expressive capability, she notes, only gets heightened after one's interaction with violence. Brown's connection of the difference between the non-verbal and verbal self of Mugezi's pre-war and post-war period lucidly expresses the insistence on the representations of past violence as a means of navigating the complex psychological and political processes of colonial trauma and recuperation (1).

Yet, the effect of this eventual voicing on his perception of gendered experience is not adequately included. As Brown only concentrates on the latter relationship Mugezi shares with Magdeleina and concludes that Mugezi's refusal to be a typical black male stereotype helps him to avoid the performance of male subordination to his white girlfriend. But eventually, he realises the possibility of constructing a non-patriarchal form of masculinity.

Brown does not link the impact of war on this decision Mugezi conclusively takes. And this negates her foremost observation about the child narrator when she notes that “Mugezi’s experience demonstrates that an important link between the body and the voice is immigration” (191).

Yet, she does not connect the violent stigma the risk of immigration impact on the body which compel the voice to express the sentiments of a changed political understanding of trauma and its eventual recovery. This recovery, however, can be a discovery of the non-existence of strictly stratified polarisation of roles within the circle of trauma and the testimony of the change it births in Anglophone literary works. However, Brown cannot effectively leave out the role insurgency plays in shaping Mugezi’s final decision to adopt a non-patriarchal decision. This decision, it can be inferred, is made as a result of his multifaceted experience with domestic violence, social violence and bodily violation, which culminate in his rape by women soldiers, evidently gives him a sense of fluidity in the perception of all concepts, especially those of gender ideology, since he realises, through the incidents of his abuses, that traumatic suffering can be inflicted on victims irrespective of the gender factor. And this makes Brown to submit eventually that:

At the close of *Abyssinian Chronicles*, untied to nation, gender or race Mugezi belongs nowhere and his epiphany of belonging everywhere erases formalized boundaries and ideological constructions. He sees “motion and inversion everywhere as patriarchal hierarchies, frames of reference and social structure collapse into themselves and destroys each other (195).

Although Brown’s analysis, among other assertions, certainly demonstrates that traumatic suffering is fixed neither in time or place, she does not demonstrate, especially in her analysis of *Abyssinian Chronicles*, the aspect of women’s rights, which she affirms in her explication of the investigation areas she hopes to cover in the research. However, based on her investigation of women’s rights and the change trauma can impact on other literary novels, she uses and does not see the gender-related issues in *Abyssinian Chronicles* as viable contributions to her notion of trauma and testimonies. As a result of this omission, she does not assert the connection between bodily trauma and the testimonies of the erasure of duality in gender roles. Hence, her research does not deeply examine the relationship between war, trauma and the change it impacts on the psychological and political processes

of thought, and how this change in expression affects the depiction of gender roles in literary writings.

Significantly, this still leaves unexplained the impact of war on gendered duties and how this culminates in the destruction of gendered polarity during the period of insurgency. It also questions how this creates dynamism in the adoption and reflection of gendered duties in war-based imaginative works. Again, this explains the effect it has on reshaping gender duality in the readers' mind thus, destroying mental and political subjugation of sexes in the portrayal of the allotment of roles especially in fictional narratives. As admitted earlier, few scholarly works have been written to show the synergy between war, psychology, politics, sexuality and the connection that exist between war and gender roles but not much has been said about the influence war has on the representations of gender duties as a result of the forceful change in perceptions of sexuality, which eventually leads to the erasure of duality in the pictorial depiction of duties in imaginative writings. Also, most of these studies also do not consider the establishment of polarity between males and females' roles as politics which has allowed the continued existence of subjugation in the allotment of gender duties and which has reflections in literary works.

Such an omission in the literature prevents the recognition of the dynamism of roles in literary works on war. Notably, also despite the availability of works which talk about the relationship between insurgency and sexuality, Karen Anderson (1981) notes that "the effect of war on sex role socialisation and family structure and role division have been treated only cursorily." Although, in order to fill the gap in this knowledge area she tries to "examine the nature and the degree of the war time changes as they affected the status of women and the development of family life and values..." (19); she does not situate her essays within the literary circle and her research is basically Western in focus.

Again, Hooks (2015) complains that much work have not been done in the aspect of sexuality and gender, which, according to her, has limited our freedom of expression in literary works and have encouraged the stoic presentation of roles. In order to fill this gap, this research examines the influence war has on gendering of roles and how this influence in turn destroys stereotypes in the allotment of gender roles so that there is fluidity in the expression of self in imaginative works. But this explication gives cognisance to the impact

insurgency plays in destroying established polarity in gender roles. It investigates the unique style each author contributes to the erasure of duality in gender duties. For instance, Isegawa's narrative ability in *Snakepit* gives a fictional account of the coups, corruption and eventual eruption of violence during the Idi Amin era. Isegawa's expertise at capturing in details the effect of each character's corruption and self-conceitedness contributes to the eruption of the violent war.

As a result of its complexity little research has been done on Isegawa's *Snakepit* to assert the connection it establishes between war, sexuality and their impacts on gender role distribution. Yet, in his preoccupation with the narration of the dynamics of power and the diverse politics played to retain the luxury which comes with the possession of power and how this politics also affects, not just their relationship with others, but ideologies about self generally. Isegawa carefully portrays the reshaping effect of violence on the minds of both sexes to illustrate the influence of war on human minds.

From his narration of the *Snakepit* Isegawa differentiates, connotatively, the distinct species of snakes living in the pits of Uganda and assert that each of this characters exudes different degrees of venom which is based on their experiences, not their anatomical distinctions. From his description of Bat Kitanga, Isegawa establishes him as a man with high intellectual capacities who comes home from Cambridge University after his master's program to secure a job at the Ministry of Power and Communication which is under the leadership of General Bazooka. Bat's interview was conducted inside a military helicopter so General Bazooka could display his authority to him. From this initial meeting, Isegawa's highlights the difference in the perspective of Bat and his boss, the General. The most significant aspect of this difference is that Bat believes education can help him achieve his goal while he serves the country while the General opines that the only way to achieve any result is through force. This principle defines their world views and help the readers to understand their ideological stands and how the violence meted out to those close to them has formed their eventual perspectives on justices.

General Bazooka's determination to succeed, despite his lack of education, is connected to the rigour his mother went through while he was growing up (12). Bazooka's mother's

determination to survive the violence meted out to her during the war explains her demonstration of strength even in her disability. Her son wonders:

He decided to take care of his stressed-out mother as a result. He was unable to see her upright with her spine bowed, collecting papyrus reeds while standing on green swampy water that reached her thighs. He could still make out her slicing the stems with the blade moving blindingly quickly across (12).

Evidently, the imagery of his mother's effort to erase the challenge of lack in the family as a result of her husband's irresponsibility prompts General Bazooka's eagerness to succeed at all cost. After the death of her husband, Bazooka's mother gets another lover. Despite the displeasure it causes her son, she moves on with her life (47). Also, the independent nature of Victoria Kayiwa, General Bazooka's mistress, who is paid to facilitate Bat's downfall, enables her to abandon the General's plan in order to execute hers. Despite General Bazooka's acknowledged expertise in crime, Victoria's encounters with many violent experiences shapes her resolve to assert her own will over those of others, especially General's, which results into a battle of self-assertion in *Snakepit*. Although Bat's intention when he first sees Victoria is to use her as a sexual release from the tension associated with his career and position (21), she also has a plan contrary to Bazooka's plan to nurse a child through Bat so their sexual commitment is even. He thought within himself: "What speed could not massage away, a thick crotch might." (22). To get him to also fall into her trap, Isegawa explains that she usually baits him with signs of respect in her speech (22).

Despite the diverse traps he set against her, he bears more the consequences of their sexual interactions. Isegawa's representations of political decision and activities in this novel affirms the connection which exists between sex, politics and the impacts it has on the polarised allotment of roles to both male and female sexes. Through his language, imageries, ideological stance and the impact of war on human minds which create a dynamic picture of the change in gendered duties, as represented in the novel. Overtly, Isegawa's portrayals of characters in *Snakepit* reveal the psychological effect of violence on human mind and how this importantly erase the duality of gender roles. Thus, it ruins the destructive effect of polarisation in the representation of duties and human traits and this resultantly allows the dynamic depiction of gender roles to occur. Isegawa's novels mostly reflect the impact insurgencies can have on the minds and usually explicates it as the main reason for the

destruction of sexual politics in literary works, especially imaginative works written from the experiential angle of war. In conclusion, the re-creative ability of war which is demonstrated lucidly in these literary works, depicts that war does not just destroy but can reorder lives, and this reordering mostly results in erasures of dichotomy in presentations of gendered roles in literary fictional narratives.

### **2.3 Theoretical framework**

The study is predicated on feminism and poststructuralism. The study embraces both theories for considering and interpreting gender issues in the selected Ugandan novels. According to feminist theorists, sex is central to women's oppression. Hence, gender issues in literary texts are deduced from the construal of females as sex objects. The objectification of human experiences substantiates the process of women's subjugation and promotes the foundation for inequality in the allotment of gendered roles to both male and female sexes. Essentially, this study owes a lot to feminist poststructuralism, especially feminist poststructuralism, which mainly centralises on the task of undoing inherited stereotypic gendering of roles in literary texts. It probes the conception of subjectivity as well as the centrality of an author to a text. It is used as a diagnostic tool for analysing the connection between gendered role change and the language dynamism of characters in literature. Maggie Humm (1995) asserts that poststructuralism breaks apart systems of representation rather than celebrating them. Hence, it seeks to dissuade readers from concentrating much on the author of creative works. Rather, it encourages the reader to do an independent study of the work as a cultural or historic testament and this affords the development of the reader's own critical opinions.

As a result of the connection between feminism and poststructuralism, feminist poststructural theory has become so versatile that it accommodates diverse views from different readers and cultures. Aijaz (1992) uses the term, "metropolitan", to describe its wide level of adoption by critics and theorists to explain representations in literary texts. Feminist poststructuralism combines insights from poststructuralist and feminist and thoughts to emerge as a viable tool with which duality of gendered roles can be investigated in almost all global contexts since it allows the expression of a diversity of opinions (Ahmad, 1992). This study, therefore, adopts both models for a captious analysis of gender issues in the

selected literary texts. The central issues being interrogated are the inter-connectedness between social customs and the fluid representations of gender roles occasioned by the creativeness in the destructive nature of insurgences.

Moreover, feminist poststructuralism is proposed as an appropriate theoretical stance which emphasises regional distinctiveness in accounting for the differences in gender discourse. It attests to the fact that, although war is a universal occurrence, it propels different levels of changes in different societies. It also supports the assertion that any significant transformation of true creativeness can be achieved in the representations of gendered characters and roles in literature particularly where the damaging effect of the war has been witnessed. The analysis is explicable and draws heavily from Millet's and Foucault's models for poststructural analysis of the literary texts. The study adopts both theorists' criteria for considering and interpreting gender issues in the selected Ugandan novels. According to Foucault (1982), gendered issues in literary texts are deduced from the following points of view:

- (a) The centrality of subjectivization to sexuality;
- (b) The impact of pastoral power on the process of subjectivization;
- (c) The objectivization of human experiences which authenticates the process of subjectivization; and
- (d) The promotion of new subjectivity through strategic struggles.

Alongside the highlighted views, the four prerequisites for considering the feminist poststructuralist criticism of a text for this gender study, as recommended by Millet (1970) in *Sexual Politics*, are also considered. The determinants are:

- (a) Sexual differentiation as a prominent factor for gendered role distribution;
- (b) The socialisation and dualisation of sexuality;
- (c) The expression of cultural sexuality in literature;
- (d) The centrality of revolution to continuous transformation of gendered representations of roles in literature.



### **2.3.1 The emergence of feminist-postructuralism**

Feminist-Postructuralism is a synergised field of criticism that emerged out of two distinct fields of theories – the feminist and poststructuralist fields. Poststructuralism, as an independent theory, came forth as an aftermath of the war in Algeria. Most of its proponents witnessed the destructiveness of the Algerian war of independence which occurred from November 1st, 1954 to March 19, 1962. As a result of the war experienced, they resisted and have continued to resist conventionalities in the reading of literary texts and materials. Young (2007: 624) describes this as the “undoing of the ideological heritage of French colonialism.” However, the undoing of the ideological heritage is not limited to the centrist attitude of French imperial culture alone; it also extends to the dismantling of the popular dominant culture of the author’s supremacy over the text since one of its strong tenets advocates the impersonalisation of the text. This expressively asserts the fact that all experiences flow from social interaction of events; thus, the author cannot claim absolute ownership of the text.

Roland Barthes’s idea of the unabsolute power of the author in *The Death of the Author: Roland Barthes and The Collapse of Meaning* (1967) and Foucault’s *What is an Author* (1969) serve as two main texts which encourage poststructuralists’ belief of going against conventional laws, especially in literature. Combining the spirit of defiance gained during the war with Barthes’ and Foucault’s proposal of the displacement of the overt centrality of the author to creative literary construction further enables the task of undoing established conventional readings of literary works. Frantz Fanon, Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Derrida, Helene Cixous, Althusser, and Lyotard are the foremost theorists of poststructuralism whose war experience and literary enlightenment made it possible to revolt against canonical interpretation of creative writings. Thus, poststructuralism creates cracks or openings in the systems of representation instead of supporting its unification.

This gives room for the diverse distinct contribution of thoughts from different individuals and fields, thereby making it an open-ended theory rather than a closed-ended theory which follows strict rules. So, it concentrates on how literary imagination works, despite specific cultural differences. It also takes into consideration the ways in which men and women are included in, or excluded from, the narration, depending on the person that controls and

expresses the language of representation. Poststructuralism asserts that literary style is an expression of specific cultural age and historical context, freely adapted by the author or creative writer. This fact establishes literary dynamism as evolving not from a definite place in the canon but in a text's ability to offer dynamic changes in meanings. It also gives attention to representation of difference that forms polarisations in the representation of characters, since its proponents believe that the dualisation that exists in literature shares a strong link with social norms and system of categorisation.

Poststructuralist interest in binaric representations in literary works, as well as its revolts against regular pattern of interpreting literary texts, makes it a suitable theory for feminist theorists to team up with. Feminism, as a theory, has long been in existence; however, it became popular in 1949 with Simone De Beauvoir's publication of "*The Second Sex*" which she wrote immediately after the Vietnam war. Her work serves as a major input that helps to centralise women's experiences of sexuality, work and family. It pointedly criticises gendered oppression and the diverse effects it has on the life of women in all ramifications. Beauvoir's '*The Second Sex*', according to Aijaz (1992:59),

...came after the war with the issues of colony and empire served to open up a whole arrangement of other consealed areas as well, from ontology to gendering which eventually encourages literary radicalism from 1940s onwards, as well as Beauvoir's emergences in 1950s as the seminar figure in feminism cannot be separated.

Literary radicalism, which began in earnest in the 1950's as an aftermath of the wars in Algeria and Vietnam, criticizes the notion of origin, of the significance of male or female authorship (Humm, 1995: p xii). This criticism further asserts the validity of feminism but allows the expansion of the feminist theory, such that it became interdisciplinary because it presents itself as a political activity which occurs in all world countries. And as a result of this, it gives room for diverse opinions and fights against dominant views just like poststructuralism. However, feminism focuses more on the disparity which exists between men and women and fights against the correctness of the notion that forms such disparity. They believe that social stereotypes are re-invented in the construction of gendered characters in literature and this further widens the gap in gender representation of characters. From its inception, feminism, just like poststructuralism, does not conform mostly to

conventions or chronological ways of addressing social issues, or interpreting literary ideas that are embedded within creative construction, as it continuously seeks to break away from the established norm. According to Humm (1995), feminist norm breaking attitude, started after the Algerian and Vietnam war, with their critique of the notion of the origin, and the significance of male and female authorship, continues during the second wave era with the significant breaking of ties with the fathers. Critics, such as Kate Millet, Germaine Greer and Mary Ellmann, made revisionary readings of what Ellmann calls 'phallic writings'. Also, the breaking of ties with the fathers, during the early second wave period of feminism, radically legalised expressions of dis-satisfaction about gendered inequality and misrepresentation in creative works of arts.

To allow a vivid expression of their displeasure and to ensure it achieves its main aim of erasing binarism in gendered classification of roles, feminist criticism, allied with the poststructuralist theory for significant belief that the text does not just belong to the author but also to the reader. This gives room for an inclusive opinion of all people from different backgrounds and, specifically, gives resonance to the voice of women. Also, it provides feminist theorists with a strong anchor on which their criticism of gender stereotypes holds since it makes available a reading procedure that is transparent and not hindered by the author's expertise. It rebels against social ordering of language use to create a chasm in the distribution of power. It also makes a viable theory that can help erase the division which has long existed in the distribution of gendered roles among the male and female sexes. In her compilation of work on feminist theory, Humm (1995) concludes that "Women who are often made to feel outsiders in particular academic discusses.... could use poststructuralism to open up such discourses," such as the relationship between war and the re-definition of gendered roles, especially in creative writings.

#### **2.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter presents a critical review of existing literatures that are relevant to the study. The reviewed literatures are germane to various sub-topics within ambit of the work. The literary scholars' opinions about the connection between war and gendered role shifts reveals different aspect of gaps which exist in the present study. Although, most of the reviewed texts attest to the possible reconstruction of the human minds after situations of

wars, few of them specifically construe the fluid implication war causes to gendered roles. The depiction of sexuality as politicised foregrounds the reasons for women's continued oppressions.

Howbeit, Ugandan writers and their works reveal that the emergence of self, after the destruction of war, evokes different stylistic representations in literary writings and establish expressions of differentiation as creating of assertive selves in victimised female characters. The portrayal of characters' dynamic adoption of roles as an aftermath of war, denotes the fluid progression of gender roles deconstruction of stereotypic depiction of polarity in literature. It is rightly posited in this review that women are more vulnerable to abuse during situations of insurgences, however, their vulnerability as portrayed in these texts leads to demonstrations of resilience against their tormentors.

Another fundamental discussion in this review is the historical record of African women's active participation in wars as leaders of menfolk in volatile circumstances. The contribution of these prototype female warriors invalidate the presentation of the perpetual subordinated women during insurgencies resultantly creating what Aijaz (1992) terms as 'the reconfiguration of ideologies in literature'.

Similarly, the reviewed literatures in both the broad literary fields and Uganda are able to delineate the historical phases and developments of societal issues which bothers on the synergy between war, shifts and the evolving of assertiveness in victimised characters after occurrences of wars. However, the scarcity of enough literature on the connection between war and gendered role shifts in literary scholarship establishes the justification for this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Study setting**

The physical location of this study is mainly Uganda although visualised characters occasionally oscillates between Uganda and Rwanda. The choice of these two settings is premised on their protracted experiences of war, as its provides corresponding reinstatement of the brutalised determination to survive menace of oppressions, while the immediate location of events covers mainly Eastern and Northern Uganda, the spatial setting represents actual world realms. The use of multiple settings to relay events in the stories is to establish the vastness of characters' traumatic experiences. Within its ambit, the setting provides space for the elucidation of significant movements which foregrounds the formation of characters' resilient growth.

#### **3.2 Research population and sampling procedure**

Ugandan women constitute the research population in this study, since their reactions to threats, torments and oppressions in war situations determine the possible identifications of shifts in textual analysis. Meanwhile, female characters who demonstrate their flair for the adoption of violent confrontational roles after encounters with war are purposively selected to portray the possible implication of re-invention war causes to gendered role assignments. Purposive sampling is best used in qualitative research where the researcher's intention is to reveal participants' qualities as it relates to the outcome of the research study. It nonrandom technique gives the researcher the flexibility of choice to invite participants with the knowledge, experience and information needed for textual analysis of the primary data (Ilker Etikan, Sulaiman Musa and Rukayya Sunusi, 2015). The current study examines gender issues in literature, using the qualitative method for its analysis. The focus here is to utilise the textual analysis of the primary data in answering the research questions.

### **3.3 Research design**

The research design used in this study to investigate the data collected is the grounded theory pattern. Grounded theory design is adopted because it is one of the data collection modes in qualitative research methods that gives critical attention to the interpretation of data. This expands researcher's intellectual thinking and theory building capabilities which enables the commitment to examining collected data from varied angles rather than subjecting data validity to empirical testing. Therefore, generated research questions and literature review leads to inductive theory building since it ensures that the secondary materials, which yield useful conceptual insights for analysing the primary texts, are drawn from relevant fields of study, such as critical research works on gender roles, and war in Uganda from journals, textbooks, books of essays, conference proceedings and other internet sources. "In grounded theory data collection, analysis and eventual theory stand close in relation to one another...grounded theory, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and offer a meaningful guide to action" (Charmaz 2014). This research design allows the researcher of this present study to analyse constructive paradigms that results to shifts in gendered roles categorisations.

### **3.4 Method of data collection**

Qualitative research method is chosen for its apt interpretation of the way people make sense of their own real life situations in their thoughts and words. Hence, reality becomes subjective because of the diverse ways it is interpreted by individuals. The multiple stances people have towards similar happenstances foreground the flexible nature of qualitative research. To accommodate the broad purview of human reality, this method gather data mostly through narratives means, comments, interviews, statements in written texts and other oral modes of expression. This allows the reflection of both corporate and individual opinions to shape the conclusion of its analysis. The ability of qualitative research to amass large data through narratives according to Arthur Cropley 2015 makes it influence on modern thinking very strong and acceptable across most disciplines.

The close affinity qualitative research shares with real life situations makes its adoption suitable to feminists' researchers who considers it direct observation strategy more

appropriate for analysing and correcting anomalies in human gender relationships. According to Jane Wambi (2013: 2):

It has therefore been argued that qualitative methods are more appropriate for feminist research as they are best suited to reveal and understand experiences of women in contemporary societies and adequately address their needs by subjective knowledge...thus challenging the partial accounts of the gendered lives of both men and women.

The above excerpt corroborates that qualitative research method because of its flexibility remains the most applicable method for investigating life, since it studies the change in human demeanor from a holistic context and values the perspective of the others in explications of researches, thus providing the right avenue for feminists' advocacy to expand contributions to global gender justice. However, it is important to note that the approach is mainly analytical and library-based; thus, it employs an in-depth reading and analysis of primary texts.

### **3.5 Method of data analysis**

The thematic analysis model is adopted to the interpretations of data within this research. Thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into, patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset (Victoria Clarke 2012). Strategy in thematic model permits the researcher to link analysis of the prevalence of a subject matter with one of the whole content. This bestows precision and elaboration on the investigation and further enable holistic presentation of meaning. Thematic arrangement describes both implicit and explicit ideas thus, creating a balanced relationship between research objectives and the summaries of ideologies. Furthermore, the fact that it focuses on interpreting data and is suitable for generating theory makes it a germane tool for the explications of issues in this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING TRANSMUTATION OF SELVES THROUGH VIOLENCE OF WAR AND TRAUMAS

#### 4.0 Chapter overview

Emerging narratives from Uganda represent the impact of the brutality of war on humans, especially on women. Studies in literary scholarship reveal the fact that the visible effect of war is mostly written on the body of women (Miller, 1970; Ifeyinwa M. Ogbonna, 2008). While women are more susceptible to sexual assault, the portrayal of their perpetual position as victim cannot be adequately asserted. Anyone can be a victim of violent circumstances male, female and children alike. Judith Butler (2009) observes that the experience of violence at heightened point makes all bodies vulnerable and liable to suffer the violent impact of the injury of war. In the same view, (Shoshana and Doris 1992: 43; Dori Laub 1995: 70; Cathy Caruth 1996: 58) affirm that the occurrence of violence can also instill determination to survive. In spite of these affirmation, the dual depiction of gendered roles during situation of war continues to re-create binaries in the representation of duties in literary narratives.

Inversely, such confrontation further results in the erasure of stringent categorisation of roles based on anatomical differences. In this chapter, therefore, the focus is on the transformational influence of war and trauma on the re-configuration of selves after its occurrences as portrayed in Gorretti Kymuhendo's *Secret No More* and *waiting, Moses Isegawa's Abyssinian Chronicles* and *Snake Pit*. The texts are analysed to elicit the responses of the characters to violence in the selected Ugandan texts to determine the comparative traces of transmutation in the characters which culminates into the re-visualisation of selves. Significantly, this chapter explores the authors' strategic deviations from the norms through their narrations. All the four novels through their characterisation



establish the connection between constant encounter with war and the formation of an assertive self.

#### **4.1 Towards the eliminations of margins in gendered role representations**

The existence of polarity in the replications of gendered roles has persistently influenced the visualisation of bodily signification for a long time and this has created chasms in the figurations of the allotment of roles in imaginative writings of male and female characters. The continuous depiction of disparities in assigned roles to characters in imaginative works foregrounds the division of roles into two distinct categories: the class of the oppressed and that of the oppressor. This division empowers the domination of male roles over those of the female and allows the constructed difference to amplify bodily distinction which results in the formation of dualistic opinion about selves as superior or as inferior; this creates stereotypic alignment of selves to the duties allotted in order to consolidate the description of one's roles. This reason, according to Miller (1970), serves as the explication for the perpetual subjugation of women's role within societies and the repetition of its expression in literary works. Miller (1970) expounds the representation of selves and the roles adopted in fictional narratives as the extension of the portrayal of sexual politics that ensures the perpetual subversion of women. She introduces the concept of "sexual politics" to create the awareness of the political undertone the notion of binaries has on the representation of bodies in literature.

In order to achieve fluid representation of selves in literary works that disabuse the mind of dual visualisation of selves as a result of the division perceived in the allotment of duties, Miller recommends the deconstructive power of revolution. This suggestion, according to her, is premised on the fact that body significations are identified mostly during periods of revolutions which affirms that equal participation of both sexes can result in the re-figurations of selves in fictional narratives. Trinh.T. Minh-ha (1989: 103) states that "violations of the gender divide, which have occurred in all times and places, mostly result from...public calamity, private misfortune, or occasional emergencies". The main determinant factor for the trans mutative re-creation of gendered roles is the deconstruction of expressed polarised behaviours among characters.

Avil James (1983: 1146) notices that all expression of painful emotions shares similar traits as a result of their authenticity, and as such all emotional expressions of selves during war are same, and not polarised. Goretti Kymuhendo's in her debut novel *Secret No More* chronicles horrific experiences of war and trauma. A Ugandan and an internationally recognised prolific writer, Kymuhendo vividly captures traumatic impressions of war on the appropriations of gendered roles. The novel begins with a prologue that explicates the intertribal marital status of Bizimana and Mukundane. The omniscient narrator intimates' readers about previous clashes that have ensued between the Hutu and the Tutsi clans. But since those are scores long settled, the narrator concentrates on present issues. The inability of Bizimana and his wife Mukundane to conceive promptly after their marriage result into his wife's depression. To ensure her happiness and forestall her relapse into the terror of violence she has experienced before they are married, Bizimana employs Chantal as his wife's housemaid. The eventual birth of her first child, Marina, settles Mukundane into the normalcy of a happy living.

The novel at this stage, reveals the infiltration of rumours of unrest into the peaceful existence of the family. It subtly interlined with the expectation of having another child overshadows the violent agitations about to erupt. However, being a very sensitive person, Mukundane expresses her confusion to their maid "But the things I hear on radio, Chantal, I am so frightened" (*Secret No More*, 9). Her sensitivity establishes her erstwhile encounters with violence and expresses her fear of losing the stability she now enjoys. However, the reassurances of her maid and her husband who is a topnotch official in the government parastatal continuously douse her fears. Although, Bizimana occasionally gets afraid about the news of the building tension in the oppositional political circles between his wife's tribe and his, he never voices his fears in order not to upset the serenity she now enjoys as a result of her progressive procreative abilities.

Meanwhile, the yearn for retaliation slowly built over the years suddenly erupts into a massive uproar of war. The Tutsi and the Hutu exchange violent missiles; in spite of his pretending decoy Bizimana confidence wanes when his clansmen declared intertribal marriage with the Tutsi an unforgivable offence: "Any Muhutu who befriends or marries a Mututsi woman shall be considered a traitor" (*Secret No More*, 11). The writer's exposition

of how seemingly unimportant decision can culminate in unrepairable damage is an indictment that dismantles the relevance of anatomical polarisation during frightening situations. Bizimana finds “himself an enemy of the government” (Secret, 11). This early annulment of differences in the reaction of characters to terror is to foreground a connection of synergy among all bodies in trauma. This aligns with Rosi Braidotti (2002: 94) assertion that at this point, the notion of the significant “I” detaches itself from authenticating the masculine essence and resolve into a singular affirmation that is impersonal, that is to say it expresses the immanence of a life, not Life as a metaphysical idea”.

With the notion of hierarchy recently redefined by the vengeful marauders of violence, Bizimana and his wife are supposed to demonstrate their emotional specificity in responding to the traumas of oppressions. But the enormity of the violence places both Bizimana and his wife on the same vulnerable platform. Their roles within the community differs. Bizimana, apart from being the social archetype of superiority because of his anatomical framing, has also attained a level of profile which marks him significantly as an elite in comparison to his stay-at-home wife. Mukundane’s representation as reticent, unadventurous, static character at this point makes her totally dependent on her husband. While he operates in the public domain of life, work and influence, she remains attached to the private circle of loneliness, depression and panic. These obvious differences sometimes put a strain on the couple’s relationship. Readers are informed about this thus “Her husband had been desperate to make her happy. He always tried to draw her out in conversation. But she always kept mum, never explaining her source of unhappiness. (*Secret No More*, 2).

The distinction the narrator shows here follows the dyad polarity in gendered roles. This exonerates the adoption of sexual politics to support the correctness of the ideology of inequality which enables one group to dominant the other. According to Millet (1970: 32), the modern terminology reechoes this fundamental division of temperament traits constructed to reinstate the pattern of “aggression is male and passivity female”.

Meanwhile, the narrator discloses some discrepancies and affront in Chantal’s behaviour towards community laws before she becomes the family’s maid. She is an inferior defaulter of communal laws whom Bizimana converts to his wife’s maid instead of serving prison terms. The fact that his position guarantees him safety makes him ignore some irreconcilable

signs of danger about the defaulter at the point of interrogation: “And your children, how old are they.” I have no children, Chantal answered flatly. I lied, I hate Umuganda. She continued indignantly” (*Secret No More*, 3).

In spite of exhibiting dangerous criminal nuances, Chantal still gets employed as a maid. Probably because she ranks low to being his equivalent, her figuration as a wretch gives him a sense of accomplishment when he remembers how well he has changed his wife’s life. Her reaction to the description of Chantal as a nonentity before he employs her, gives a parallel connection to the lives of the two women.

She sounds helpless, desperate, like one would in a foreign country. Lost, homeless, unwanted. Tears were beginning to form in her eyes and she had a faraway look. He detected the sign. He knew his wife was about to lapse into one of her sad moods. He wished he had not talked about the strange woman. (*Secret No More*, 5)

Having experienced the same fate as Chantal after her parents are killed in the violence of war, Mukundane’s resonance with the strange woman’s description made her recognise their shared affinity. She is nothing before she meets her husband. It is in this enormity of being the saviours of inferior wretched women that he flippantly ignores the signs, so when Chantal took the news of her employment calmly rather than become suspicious of her, he gets so annoyed that she did not pay obeisance to him: Bizimana felt a tinge of disappointment....do you understand he asked irritably” (*Secret* 5). He is the “self”, and they are the others. The narrator’s consistent identification of dichotomies in the gendered relationships here is to reinforce the extent of disparities in gendered roles. The fact that the writer draws hierarchal demarcations between figuration of both sexes in affiliations with their status and duties, contributes to the polarised imagination of both sex and their roles. Bizimana, the policemen, are all depicted as reveling in notable positions of authority, while Mukundane, Chantal, the foremost female castes exist in derogatory subservient situations. The problem about such imagination, apart from the fact that women through persistent imagination of women as weak, becomes targets of social vices. It empowers continuation of violent masculine show of prowess while it invalidates women’s strength through faulty representations. According to Phil Collins (2000), the continuous portrayal of women as perpetually objectified is a political decoy that ensures their extortion is unending.

However, to readily confront deprivations, it is important to reflect repeatedly the actuality of one's condition in order to act accordingly. Haraway (1991) again suggests that the ideological resources of victimisation must be accepted for proper strategic planning of a real life. Thus, in order to transit the illusions of fixation with consistent dynamic flow in the imagination of gendered roles, the author reflects the imperfection of polarities.

In the same vein, Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* recounts the emergence of violence as being ingrained in family rivalry. The omniscient -protagonist through the deployment of flashback and foreshadowing reveals to the reader his father's background. The novel begins with Serenity's unwholesome attachment to tall women. Having lost his mother at a tender age of three, he craves motherly attention which makes him visualise most tall women as having the features of his mother. Disconcerted after receiving a sudden jolt from one of the strange women, he withdraws to himself. To justify Serenity's predicament, a synopsis of his mother's experiences is presented. Married to clan chief in an atmosphere that is deeply entrenched in patriarchy, Serenity's mother soon finds herself, isolated and abandoned by her husband whose position of authority grants him the autonomy to marry lot of women. An ardent patriarchal Serenity's father marries women from autocratic circle to display the splendor of his wealth and to also breed male children who will succeed him. The competition to have a male child becomes so sever among the wives:

In an ideal situation, Serenity should have come first- everyone wanted a son for the up-and-coming sub county chief Grandpa was at the time- but girls kept arriving, two dying soon after birth in circumstances reeking of maternal desperation. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 4).

In order to secure his love and attention, his wives keep going into successive pregnant state. Apart from the fact that this might easily lead to the death of any of them, it clearly indicates their low level of worth, which ranks them as severely below their husbands. Similarly, as a group, their competition for the attention of one man establishes the ancientness of the practice of sexual duality in Africa. Besides, that each wife is a prototype of the other makes them easily replaceable. Reinstating this fact, the narrator says:

Serenity knew what Grandpa meant. He wanted his women tall and elegant, wasp-waisted but firm-buttred, and without the kind of boobs "which fell in the food while it was being served". Without buckteeth, too. All Grandpa's women looked alike. He admired consistency of

choice-it demonstrated character. He believed a man fell in love with one woman who appeared in different guises (Abyssinian Chronicles, 26).

The cloning of sameness in the traits of grandpa's women is a politics that reinstates the autocrat belief of women as universal prototypes. This ideology apart from the fact that it denies any actual possible transition of growth for women, portrays them as predictable, thus enhancing the manipulation of their oppression. According to Florence Stratton (1988) this usual generic imagination of women despite the cultural specificity in its manifestation is a cultural constant. It is in the midst of this slavish portrayal of women that the character of Serenity's mother is appreciated. She represents an exception of change and struggle that threatens to rupture the conventionality of fixations. The youngest among the princesses her husband marries, she enjoys the best cordiality with her husband she is able to put to an end the long wait for a male child she gets the best he could offer: "I gave her the best silks, fed her the best goat meat, treated her the best way I knew... (52)". Dissatisfied with owning material things at the expense of having an intimate rapport with her husband because of his polygamous status, she demonstrates equality with her husband when she starts a love affair with another man. In a strictly patriarchal nineteenth century period, the decision to assume dominance over her own sexuality devastates the illusion of manly honour attached to the practice of polygamy. It rather foregrounds a parallelism of equality between the sexual performances of both genders and flaws the dichotomous ranking of sexuality as mainly a means that sustains the political discrimination of opposites in the imagination of gendered roles.

Furthermore, that she does not only cheat on her husband but conceive for her lover while still being married to her husband shows the extent of her bravery to attain sexual autonomy. The narrator's attestation to the villagers' awareness of the love affair when he describes the excitement the news of her pregnancy elicits from the people: "...was it Grandpa's or did it belong to the man she was deeply in love with?" (4). Their conjecture about the paternity of the baby confirms that the rumour must have reached her husband. This creates expectations of indictment towards Serenity's mother in order to forestall other wives from continuing the desecration of the patriarchal authority. However, his feigned deference to his wife's deplorable behaviour under a stringent autocratic culture establishes his affection

for her in spite of his staunch attachment to polygamy: “She was my favorite wife” (52). For this sole reason, he endured her excesses, so that she could nurture her children within close proximity. The depiction of Grandpa’s tolerance of his youngest wife’s extramarital affairs belies the impression that endurance is mainly a woman’s virtue which sustains her under the guise of subjugation. Revealing this instance of circumstantial constraint that subordinate grandpa to readers, the narrator denounces the consistent myopic imagination of men as adopting only the roles of the oppressors. Men have also been and are sometimes still victims of circumstances or oppressions from either men or women. Therefore, since marginalisation is usually unexpected occurrences that happen to all humans, figuration of subjugation in fictional narratives ought to reflect this dynamism. Unable to get satisfaction for her sexual cravings, Serenity’s mother abandons her royal lonely ambience, and seeks intimate satisfaction with her unidentified lover.

The choice of an unidentified man over the royal autocracy of her husband is the last unpardonable desecration Serenity’s mother could commit against unquestionable patriarchy. So she is exterminated through the *deus ex machina* of her lover’s poverty. The narrator captures her travails:

...Before anybody could find out the truth, she left. But her luck did not hold—three months into her new life, her uterus burst, and she bled to death on the way to the hospital, her life emptying into the backseat of a rotten Morris Minor (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 4).

The struggle to acquire a personal definition for herself outside the matrix of masculine dominance reduces her to nothing. This depicts the risk involved in attempting to bridge the chasm of duality that exists between self and other. According to Firestone (1970), since the ancient times one dictates, the other obeys. Hence, the miserable end of Serenity’s mother further reinstates the staunchness of sexual politics. This implies that in spite of their best intention, fictional writers unconsciously reveal the binaries of biological differences while allotting roles to gendered characters. Dual presentation of roles is an enormous challenge that keeps the lead of constraints on self-developmental realities. With the mental stereotype of distinctions in place, the demonstration of power remains one sided still. Ngcobo (2007:540) decries the continuance of the partial description of power as enfeebling to women since in most of the literature written by African especially, male

African writers, women are punished severely, even by death, for daring to exhibit independent values apart from the template men and the society creates for her.

Again, Goretti in *waiting* explores the polarities of selves in order to foreground the marginalisation of women within the home in the midst of an ensuing violence. Alinda and her family members' shuttle between their home and the plantation, which provides safety for them from the destructiveness of Idi-Amin's soldiers. A female child narrator, Alinda, relates the stories of the instability from an autobiographical point of view, she explicates with clarity the complications it involves to combine the cautiousness of surviving under besiegement with fulfilling static gendered duties. Alinda's family and other families within the communities experience the terror of violence that threatens the survival of the whole societies. To avoid the destruction Idi-Amin's soldiers who use their highway as an escape route from the Ugandan and Tanzanian allied forces usually perpetrate, the people decide to take turn to watch out for the deranged marauders. In need of an outlet to relieve the plague of fear, the narrator exposes relational ties and the impact of its dimension on the possibility of a communal survival.

The narrative reflects the perception of differentials about the adoption of gendered duties. It opens with the immediacy that unveils the responsibility of each characters towards preventing the sudden attack of the soldiers. The protagonist-narrator reveals the chasm of inequality as the story commences. Tendo, Alinda's elder brother and the only boy in the family of five is charged with the duty of ensuring the safety of the whole family. Unfortunately, he leverages this opportunity to unleash terror on his family in order to validate the significance of his role. The narrator paints the picture of the pandemonium he creates:

It was Saturday evening. Tendo was perched high up on one of the inner branches of the big mango tree...Suddenly, a whistle rang out from the mango tree. Startled, we all looked up expectantly. "What is it, Tendo?" Father asked sharply, nervously. "Nothing," Tendo answered with a light laugh. "Nothing," he repeated as if we have not heard him the first time (*waiting*, 3).

Assured of the superiority of his position over all other members of his family, Tendo validates the supremacy of his assignment over that of his sisters. This time he elicits reactionary fear from others to exhibit the centrality of his authority which trivializes the



domestic contribution of others to the effort of liberation. Readers are informed again about his attempt at polarising:

The sound of a plate hitting the ground made us all jump. Tendo! Father shouted. What is with you today? Did you have to throw that plate? Couldn't you have come down with it? Is that the way you thank the people who have worked hard to prepare a meal for us? But you told me not to come down, Father! Tendo answered, defensively. I'm supposed to... I know bloody well what you are supposed to be doing (*waiting*, 4).

The excerpt above reveals Tendo's attempt at asserting control over others. Through the influence of his elevated position he visualises distinctions between himself and others. The fact that Tendo derives pleasure from the vulnerabilities of others reveals his innate desire for power as mainly for orchestrating sinister purposes. Although this attitude is unwholesome and unethical, it is depicted as foregrounding the prowess of the masculine self. This is in line with Millet's (1970: 31-32) submission that "the basic division of temperamental trait is marshaled along the line of "aggression is male and passivity is female".

Furthermore, that the teenager's belligerent demeanor could only be curtailed by his father reinstates the powerlessness and voiceless dispositions of others. This portrays the synergy of influence that exists only in the patriarchal circle. Although he is on the tree, his activity controls the reaction of others beneath the tree, except his father's whose command redresses his excesses. Since his father's command enacts more control over his activities than his on his father, he reverentially submits to him. He could identify with his father's autonomy because he imagines himself as being in the realm of power just as his father is. Meanwhile, the silences of others especially his mother depict her lack of control over him. Heavily pregnant and on the verge of delivery, his constant pranks most likely have sent shivers down her spine but she keeps quiet. This signals her lack of control over him. All through the novel she never has any conversation with him nor does she even send him on errands like she does his sisters. The quietness she exhibits around him is closely linked to hero worship. Her silence makes her an insignificant part of his life despite being his mother. The fact that the male child is socialised to typify the dominant figure of the father makes it mostly agreeable for mothers to submit to her son's domination. This is based on a

patriarchal coherent principle that “male” shall dominate female and elder male shall dominate younger” (Millet 1970). Hence, Tendo’s mischievous jokes carried out amidst tension of uncertain survival is to demonstrate his capability to dominate the females around him, including his own mother, a living testament of the continuum of binary between the duties of self and others.

The community is characterised by amalgamation of starvation and displacement as they await the soldiers. That the effect of this internecine struggle adversely subordinates women is indubitable. Women again assume the roles of defenseless victims, not just as a result of the war but to reinstate the constancy of their devaluations. A permanent house wife, Mother exhibits the immovableness of repeated routine that makes procreation a suitable preference to other independent pursuits. Restricted to existing for this sole purpose, she is forced to combine her husband’s role with hers. Since Father works in the city, she ensures the smooth running of the home in his absence. Her complaints reveal the strains attached to this assignment; remonstrating her daughter, she blurts: “You think looking after you kids is a joke with Father far away in the city (*waiting*, 18). Yet, she neither complains to her husband about the difficulty of the role nor does she make any effort to extend her influence beyond the private space caved for her. The lack of wherewithal to rectify this situation does not only imply her aptness to restriction but also visualises her as irritant to change; making the demand of visiting her daughter’s school an unpleasant discomfort. Her daughter exposes her nervousness when relating to people outside the jurisdiction of home; she narrates through flashback:

When I first started school, I never talked. I was shy and timid and would not answer any question in class. The teacher told me to ask my father to pay her a visit so that she could talk to him about me. But I told her that Father did not live with us, but stayed in the city where he worked. Mother had to go to the school instead. She was furious when I told her. You! What have you gone and done? I kept quiet because I did not know what I have done. I have enough troubles. You think looking after *you kids is a joke with Father far away in the city? When you go to school, you must study and do nothing else*”. I had never seen Mother so upset. (*waiting*, 18)

This expressed agitation depicts her ineptitude at relating with people outside her immediate surroundings and identifies her aloofness as one main reason for her victimisation. Her silent becomes the main reason for her oppression. Beyond authenticating women's oppression, the author indicts women for elongating their own voiceless situation. Rather than demonstrating eagerness to show her independent identity, she recoils at the prospect. Carole Boyce Davies' (2007:562) reiteration of Ogun-dipe-Lieslie (1984) establishes that it is the duty of the African woman to define her own freedom. Until African women learn to take actions that liberates them from all encumbrances their imagination exists only in perpetuity of their oppression. Similarly, the excerpt above reveals the dialectic in the meaning of the word "father". While the teacher deployed the word "father" to refer to the pupil male parent, both Alinda and mother use the word "Father" to mean a male figure in an elevated position of authority. The emphasis of this inflection in Alinda's statement depicts a reverential awe a child should have for a parent. But in Mother's statement the respect implies a childish submission to patriarchal authority which reflects the inability to relate as equal with her husband.

The character "Mother" in this novel is a symmetrical attestation to the servile portrayal of women in fictional narratives. This explains the reason her husband controls the totality of her life, especially her sexuality. She represents a means through which "Father" establishes his virility and perpetuity his genealogy. In spite of the tragic experience of losing a child, she continues to breed to fulfil her husband's desire for another male child. Disregarding the strain of incessant conception on his wife, Father creates a reward system to sustain his power over mother's sexuality. The narrator's response to her younger sister's inquisitiveness validates this: "Yes because there are only two males. One he is reserving for Mother if she produces a baby boy. The other is to make the other females pregnant" (*waiting*, 30). This explains the reason her functionality is solely reduced to reproductive obligations.

In the same vein, the analogy drawn between the slaughtered female goats and the preserved male ones further foregrounds the inclination to justify the hierarchy in the perception of gendered roles. Two male goats impregnating groups or a whole community of female ones. The commonality of the female goats' duty makes them easily replaceable, thus, they are

the insignificant target of the slaughter. This aligns with the traditional interpretation of female roles which, according to Adrienne Rich (1986:186), conscripts her to a singular purpose: “She exists for one purpose: to bear and nourish sons”. That gendered role figurations still retain these old stereotypic divisions in contemporary imaginative works ascribe a constant rigidity to power relations that make it impenetrable and none emerging. These female prototypes invalidate women’s growth and achievement over the years and negates the possibility of portraying dynamic gendered relationship in fictional narratives. The challenge of this static narrativisation of gendered duties in Audre Lorde’s (2009: 55) opinion is that “it only re-represents our own characters in the same old weary way which grinds our earth and human consciousness into dust”. Inferably, the binary recast of power only fuels the dichotomy of differentiation in human relationship without proffering an enabling solutions. So, Mother’s eventual delivery is made difficult by the soldiers’ appearance as she struggles to birth a son without the assistance of her husband’s paternal aunty, Kaka, whose massacre intercepts the birthing process. It is noteworthy to mention that only the character Mother and the old matriarch Kaka die as a result of this terror, others are shielded by the safety of the plantation. The narrator recounts their plight:

We had begun moving towards the house when we heard the gunshots. Their harsh barks sounded very close. Father pulled me to the ground, and I crouched beside him. More shots rang out from all sides. Father beckoned me to crawl closer to where the banana trees were at their thickest and would shield us from the light of the dawn...Kaka came out of the house. She seems unafraid...Kaka slowly managed to sit up. The soldiers who had assaulted her muttered something, and the other soldiers laughed as if they were drunk...the soldier whom she had addressed pointed his gun at her and fired. Then he fired again aiming at her stomach (waiting, 38).

With Kaka dead in the pandemonium, Mother has no one to assist her, so when her daughter rushes in to check on her she seizes the opportunity and promptly instructs her:

I severed the cord. Nervously, too quickly. Only half of it was cut. It was thick, thicker than I had imagined. The baby was crying loudly. It had lots of hair, but it was covered in caked blood. Mother was commanding me to cut. I put the razor on the cord again and cut. Slash! It fell off... “Give me the baby,” Mother told me. “Is it a girl”? Don’t throw the afterbirth in the latrine”, Mother was talking to me. Her voice seemed distant and weak. I could see her mouth opening and closing, but I could not hear what she was saying. (waiting, 42)

The foregoing depicts the agonising demise of Mother in the course of delivering another baby. Her eagerness to ascertain the sex of the baby before she passed on connotes dedication towards fulfilling her husband's expectation. This makes extendable the parallelism drawn between the significant duties of the male goats and the female ones to the role Mother plays in this novel. Her death as she gives birth to another male child denotes an exchange of life between the significant self and the irrelevant other. That she already prepares her daughter to raise him in her absence attaches a sense of insignificance to her personhood. Father's accommodation of another woman in their matrimonial bed not long after his wife's demise demonstrates his inability to withhold sexual pleasures and affirms the availability of alternative options. Jungu, the narrator's friend, reveals this intimacy between the refugee woman and father to her friend: "We should at least tell Nyinabarongo where we are going; otherwise she'll wonder where we are... where does she sleep, by the way?" In your father's bedroom, I think they're still asleep. (waiting, 79)

Although motherhood is considered an essential obligation that ensures smooth generational transitions, mothers themselves are represented here as replaceable objects which further reinforces the chasm of differentiation and gives credibility to their trivialisation and thingification. Again, the generic name given to both parents symbolises the affinity their portrayed roles shares with the actual world. This schematised reduction of women's imagination to their sexuality is a politicisation that supports their perpetual victimisation. Hence, most of the women represented in this narrative are either family rejects or social recluses. None of them have independent notion of their personhood but are defined through patriarchal standards.

Nyinabarongo becomes a victim of annihilation and maltreatment because she has a difficult conception. With the arrival of her first child footling breach and the second child grows her upper milk teeth first, these pattern of irregularities are taboos to her husband's community until rituals are performed. The sex of the first child compels her husband and his family to perform the financially exorbitant ritual to avert the tragic consequences such birth attracts according to tradition. Thus, the child's mother is forgiven for inflicting such pain on the husband's family because the child is a male. Her second delivery is dispute free, until the girl's upper milk teeth grow before the others. Unwilling to spend extravagant

ransom to rectify the problem, the wife's family is asked to finance a feast to prevent the reoccurrence of such taboo. However, Nyinbarongo mother's ailing condition coupled with her financial incapability makes it impossible for her to afford the feast of propitiation which leads to her forceful exile. The need to survive and nurture her daughter makes her return to a sick mother who soon dies leaving them to fend for themselves. It is in this improvised state that Nyinabarongo becomes a victim of several tragic circumstances. Although her mother's home protects her from wandering the street physically, it lacks of warmth after her mother's demise resonates with loneliness which reinstates the enormity of her displacement and dispossession. She often oscillates between her former abode and her present home, a habit which denies her a sense of belonging. Her despair becomes so conspicuous: "She always lamented about how much she missed her son, wondering if he was well, or if he had eating well" (*waiting*, 9).

To exist in this constant hollowness is a clear indication of what Homi Bhabha (1994) cited in Olaniyan (2018: 118) refers to as "unhomeliness". According to Bhabha (1994), being "unhomed" defers from being homeless. "To be unhomed is to feel not at home even in one's own home because one is not at home in oneself: one's cultural identity has made one a psychological refugee so to speak. The term "home" connotes multiple locations that allow a sense of belonging and identity at a given moment." Denied the opportunity of relating pleasurable with her immediate environment, she feels bombarded with disillusionment over her past, hopelessness about the unpredictability of her son's wellbeing and horrific fear about their uncertain survival of the recently erupted deleterious war. Through Nyinaborongo's characterisation, Kymuhendo thematises unresolved family vendetta as possibly leading to women's degradation and denigration.

Unable to stay alone after her mother's death and to avoid the risk of getting herself and her daughter killed, she seeks shelter in Father who immediately accepts and replaces his lost sexual object. Also, her neighbour's decline to accommodate her on such a ferocious night is a clear indication of her nothingness; her death would not have stirred mournful laments. This also confirms her as a victim of abject rejections. She is rejected by her husband and his family, her mother's eventual death shortly after she arrives, and her sisters' refusal to visit her mother's town to commemorate her loss signifies a life of loneliness,

hardship and hopelessness. Virtually women are preponderantly dehumanised because of their sexuality, thus, most of these female characters have to seek help from the male ones to gain either their identity or security. This makes it somewhat acceptable when the writer links the recent widower, Father with the refugee in search of love, security and financial stability. Such visualisation, however, is the outcome of inequality, maltreatment and commodification which further expands the chasm of differentiation in the allotment of gendered roles.

Isegawa's *Snakepit's* portrayal of duality further emphasises the realities of women's alienation in volatile circumstances. *Snakepit* begins with the exhibition of power and its glorification. Narrated from a third person perspective, it exposes the hellish rigour it takes to live within the socio-political cauldron of power. Through the technique of flashback, the narrator describes Bazooka's unbowed determination to excel. Practically raised in poverty, General Bazooka's attainment of success stems from his decision to alleviate his mother's financial burden. Unfazed by her husband's disdainful attitude after his failed military career, Bazooka's mother is committed to her son's wellbeing. In spite of her disability, she diligently provides material and emotional support for the family. Her effort at bridging the gap of lack attracts her husband's criticism and accusations. The memory of her victimisation etches itself in the General's mind that long after they have crossed the painful hurdle he could not get over the dismal of her plight. With a sense of nostalgia, he reminisces:

He had disliked having to be accountable for depleting the funds used to support his father's reckless behavior. He decided to take care of his stressed-out mother as a result. He could not endure to see her standing with her back bowed, collecting papyrus reeds while kneeling in green swampy water up to her thighs. (*Snakepit*, 12-13)

The above affirms the exploitation women sometimes suffers which prevents them from achieving financial freedom despite working tirelessly for it. Although, the writer establishes the industrious nature of the African women through his depiction of Bazooka's mother. However, that her financial stability is contended by her jobless husband shows one of the vices which sustain African women's victimisation in a circle of continuum still. This also explains the reason patriarchal oppression is still the very notorious burden feminism in Africa confronts, women are still portrayed as unable to negotiate their own rights without

the masculine presence. Thus, Bazooka vouches to liberate his mother from poverty and perhaps from his father's violent booze induced outbursts. A woman who is skilled enough to work with "the knife travelling lengthwise with blinding speed" (*Snakepit*, 12), should not be harassed by anyone let alone be in need of a masculine protection. Similarly, the stunted presentation of women's strength despite their long affirmed involvement in rigorous labours is a political opaque gimmick that obstructs them from realising their formidableness. Emecheta (2007:556) confirms this as the reason for their inability to escape from the shackles of poverty despite being very versatile, women sometimes contribute to their own oppression because they have over time chose to remain loyal to their oppressors.

In fact, that Emecheta's observation made eons ago still address the same dichotomous challenge in gendered role presentation, literary works reveals either the insincere attempt to eschew women's progress and the subsequent possibility of transmutations or that narratives mainly exemplify the historical marginality of women to explicates reasons for the persistent severity of their oppression. Hence, that it takes the intervention of the son to extract the mother from subjugation is a mastermind counterintuitive deployed to ensure women are eternally dependent on the same source of their trauma for deliverance. Much as it is a parent's pride to enjoy the fruits of their labour because they have earlier invested in their children during their formative years, it is devastating to delay the fulfilment of a life till their children are capable of retaliating the favours. Sometimes the favor never gets compensated like the case of Emecheta's heroine in *Joys of Motherhood*.

Furthermore, that it is women who are depicted in this light of perpetual waiting, and that most likely they await a son's liberation is a vicious cyclic portrayal of dependence. This has exacerbated their figuration in literary imagination, and has also denied their replication a true expression of independence. The most dangerous aspect about this enforced retention of duality in the visualisation of gendered duties is its ability to discredit the possible mental perception of all bodies as metamorphosing after exposures to hideous circumstances. Having attained an esteemed height in the military, his mother's victimisation seems almost impossible. With President Amin's favour and his record breaking achievements as the head of the anti-smuggling department, Bazooka's gore days are long past. The employment of



Bat an educated southerner to work directly under him, an illiterate military officer, is a confirmation that things have changed for him. He has abhorred southerners since he was young, they enjoy every luxury denied him while growing up. But all that is in the past, his possession of power enables him to assert his might over the southerners. This narrative establishes power as having a mental viral effects on all its possessors which enables their dissociation from the experiences of otherness. Although Bazooka emanates from a humble background, the hierarchal ascendant nature of dominion accentuates the constructed polarity between himself and others, enhancing his capacity to perpetrate devious fits. The powerful always announce their arrival in authority through the exhibition of their expertise to annihilate those who are feeble. In other words, the secret to achieving all assertive autonomy is ingrained in the ability to polarise which explicates the urgency in Bazooka to exemplify the vehemence of his formidableness. Capturing his reminiscence, the raconteur exposes his relish for cruelty: “The mayor of Masaka was made to smoke his own penis before his body was dragged through the streets of the town” (*Snakepit*, 15). One reason oppression is ever thriving within political strata is because power is unequally distributed; it, permits the recycled binary of superiority versus inferiority which hinders the chances of achieving and portraying fluid gendered roles in imaginative writings. The General busies himself with how to diminish the relevance of the southerners working under him.

On the other hand, Marshal Amin’s egocentric fixation upon emergence as a despotic ruler makes him resort to divisible means to enshroud his insatiable desire for control. His prohibition of the astrologer, Dr. Ali, from consulting for anyone but him validates the tendency for reinstating his significance above everyone else. This essentially corroborates the polarising instinct as a generic trait of all humans. However, distinction becomes unethical if its sole purpose is to denigrate, maltreat and victimise. Virtually, all citizens feel the impact of the aristocrats’ effort to parade their elevated status and in order to foreground the extent of the difference between the masses and them, they periodically commit large scale savagery to declare their hugeness. Their callous performances bespeak their presumptuous nature. Bat’s cautionary word to his girlfriend confirms the on-going tension: “It's getting too heated. On a daily basis, individuals are murdered.” (*Snakepit*, 54) Extermination of lives becomes rampant. This further accelerates the vastness of duality. The narrator sheds more light on the rampage:

SEVEN DAYS LATER When Bat heard that the Professor's brother had been discovered dead... "If things keep going this way, I'll really think about moving abroad. What kind of nation is this where individuals are slain without cause? Boys from the State Investigation Bureau discovered him while he was returning home, accused him of helping dissidents, took his money and watch, and when he resisted, they killed him. In broad daylight! (*Snakepit*, 55)

There is no doubt in saying that the masses are the ones bearing the brunt of the brutishness of autocratic power contenders. Their traumatisation is psychologically degenerating because it is facilitated by those charged with the onus of promoting justices and peace. Victimisation among civilians shares a symbiotic correspondence that inundates the hierarchal presentation of body significations. The implication of violence here is portrayed as an encompassing transversals. Bat's agitations after the birth of his baby reeks with regrets in spite of being one of the power pushers in the *Snakepit*, the future in the midst of the chaos for every citizen looks bleak. Although he has focused all his energy on making affirmative professional decision that will avail him the autonomy of precision which he is sure will force the illiterate sociopaths on the throne of authority to bow to his ingenuity. His aptness pays off, and made him so invincible among dignitaries. Yet, the attainment of his desires seems to pale, in lieu of the instability he realises that "He had given up his towering feeling of freedom and aloof supremacy. He was attempting to get away, but now he resembled his fellow citizens.... (*Snakepit*, 58). Bat's reflection expounds the abstraction that is affiliated to the loftiness of dominance; nothing is significantly different at this point as everyone assumes similar traits of vulnerability. Power is revealed as fragmented during violent times, observably because all aspiration is channelled towards survival. Again, victimisations are depicted as equally absorbing of both male and female sexes almost enshrouds the specificity of women's marginalisation. However, Victoria Kayiwa's sojourn with the General and her evolvment as the State Bureau Research agent confirms the existence of the void of marginality in the presentation of gendered roles.

Victoria comes from well-to-do family. Both parents run very big textile business, while her extended relatives are also admired elite. She lives within the ease of her parents' affluence which makes her respond to life in general with much laxity; Victoria is a love child. The combination of her parents' wealth and her good looks makes having exceptional favours within the community easy. Life goes smoothly until a regrettable incidence

destroys her parents' business and reputation. Tried as they could her parent could not recoup their status. To recover from the devastation of the tragic incidence, she meets and becomes intimate with Colonel Bazooka. In response to Victoria's mother's effort to stop their relationship, Bazooka orchestrates the disappearance of Victoria's family, the narrator in its omniscient style confirms: "Victoria's household did finally experience something. Men wearing civilian attire and operating an unidentified Vehicle attacked them. (Snakepit, 27)

The above foregrounds the outrageous consequence of a collusion with power. Victoria after the sudden disappearance of her family becomes lonely and fragile to Bazooka's control. Hence, she gets gradually exposed to living a life of enslavement. Aware of her vulnerability, the Colonel sets towards disarming her significance: "Rolling brats like her in the gutters, which they believed destiny had spared them from and put aside for one reason or another, was fascinating to him." (*Snakepit*, 27). The news of his marital status, plunges Victoria into a hellish psychological situation. She realises his blatant exploitation of her sexuality which comes with the torment of being cheap, dispossessed and annihilated. Since she has nowhere to go, she remains in the midst of oppressions. The portrayal of Victoria's predicament as insurmountable is a deliberate demotic attempt to reduce her to a perpetual state of dependence. In view of the way in which her family and extended kins are portrayed as elevated power shakers, it is more of a decoy on the part of the writer at this point to encumber her with disastrous happenstances which send her on a sporadic journey downhill. Although her immediate family members leave town because of terrorism, her extended family members could not all have fled judging by the influence the narrator accords them: "A doctor and a judge were among her father's well-educated family members. Her aunts had wed wealthy men." (*Snakepit*, 25). Therefore, it is more of an exaggeration to force the character into a marginal position. Moreover, not all southerners could be easily overthrown since, according to their imagination here, they form the crème de le crème members of the society, even General Bazooka during his early days as a junior soldier steals his much coveted Oris Autocrat wristwatch from a civilian, who is his age mate at the time. The narrator foregrounds thus:

He boasted to his pals about how he was going to be the very first sergeant to own a gold-plated, round-faced Oris Autocrat timepiece with bright hands. They laughed at him. Autocrats were worn by bank managers, generals, doctors, and people in higher leagues. He initially noticed the timepiece of his aspirations at this celebration, shining on the hand of an individual half his age. (*Snakepit*, 14)

Apart from the fact that it would be impossible to be that rich and not have a means of security, so it is safe to conclude that some of the southerners are supporters of the Idi Amin's administration. The implication of this is that not all southerners are harassed with the northerners' display of power, which makes the portrayal of Victoria's sudden desertion an effort to create what Stratton (1988: 143) refers to as "images of living burial, homicidal and suicidal impulses". Hence, it is in bid to make Victoria's victimisations very intense that she suddenly plummets into the abyss of dehumanising slavery conditions. Significantly, this portrayal mainly corroborates the age long traditional replication of women as mediocre. Bazooka's statement about the change in the matrix of power exposes the binaries in the imagination of power. He intones: "The princes and monarchs of the future are those of us in the armed forces. We act as we please (*Snakepit*, 27). The presentation of the military and all autocratic position as excluding of women is a politically indicting binaries that sustain the interiorised passivity of women. This imbalanced trope of differentials is a drawback from the possibility of reflecting fluid selves in fictional narratives whose activities gradually erase the bodily exploitations of oppositional binaries. Butler's (2009:182) vehement refusal of this melodrama, reveals its mendaciousness:

No subject has a monopoly on "being persecuted or "being persecuting", even when thickly sediment histories (densely compounded form of iteration) have produced that ontological effect. If no claim to radical impermeability is finally acceptable as true, then no claim to radical persecutability is finally acceptable either... In effect one has to come up against violence to practice non-violence (they are bound together and tensely so.

This statement is a declamatory debunk of the usual incommensurate statuesque of women's personhood. However, Victoria's experience is characterised by this marginal dictum which persistently reinforces the process of othering, thus, worsening the challenge of duality. It is evident in this narrative that women's oppression is undoubtedly multiple. Within the same context of victimisation, she is subjected to dehumanisation, alienation, humiliation,

exploitation and commodification. She deciphers her annihilations as a definite goal towards her ruinations: “She realized that the General had used her and then cut her loose.” (*Snakepit*, 31). Despite suffering the same horror of unrest with the citizens, women undergo hostile inhuman treatment that emphasises the distinctness of their devaluation. They are used as commodities and disposed at will to authenticate their “downtrodden” specificity. These images of misuses are reiterated on almost all the pages of the novel. Bat’s introspective dialogue when he meets Victoria after General Bazooka has dumped her:

...He had to be willing to take a chance since his goal was this intriguing female. She had to be a great fuck, a great way to escape the stress of work, but he didn't see too much of the future with her, not with someone moving in these dark circles. He needed to wallow in irrationality and indulge in a little impulsive behavior after spending hours reading dry material, processing estimations, and understanding mathematical forecasts. He yearned for actual bodily euphoria and intoxication, real physical satisfaction. What speed could not massage away, a thick crotch might. (*Snakepit*, 21)

A reinforcing game of sexuality, the identification of Victoria again as a prey for erotic pleasantries confirms the hierarchal ratification of “self” above the other. One must be above, the other beneath. In spite that both of them were within the same suspicious circle but only the “she” gets tagged as bad for being within such company is an indicting political ideology that restricts women’s bounding relationship or association. In the same vein, that Victoria has long attained womanhood before she meets Bat makes his “girlish” referent to her personhood an insult because it indicates more than her beauty but foregrounds his innate perception of her lifestyle as irresponsible.

The relationship between both characters immediately reveals the objectification of the other which enhances the self to assert his formidable extent. Victoria is made to repeat the same process of entrapment; thus confirming her as an irredeemable chattel. However, the experiences of other women typify hers, the chaotic dendliness of violence is depicted as reflected mainly on women. According to Bat: “when troops may compel a parent to have sexual relations with his daughter in front of everyone while people are being killed?” (*Snakepit*, 60). Seemingly the vulnerability of otherness never ceases to be but only gets worsened during violent circumstances. Therefore, these writers’ insistence on representing these disparities in narrative works acts as main catalysts in projecting the chasm in

gendered duties which also gives accent to the cyclic experience of women's victimisation. More so, it is important to project the concerted effort towards exposing the menace of traditionalistic ideologies which hinder the fluid representation of selves. Thus, their historical narrativisation of the oppressive predicament of women in Uganda re-echoes women's shared marginality. Thus, to skip such annals of historical adversity will make the feminist agitations against oppression baseless. These narrative explications earmark these Ugandan authors from the intentional obnoxious acts of devaluating women through imbalanced figuration that pictures the masculine self as having absolute authority. Rather their submission about the consistent exertion of self over "other" proves the likelihood of a provocation of resilience after an encounter with violence or traumatic circumstances. To this end Claire Colebrook (2002: 8) posits that "repetition allows for a reformative branding".

To, achieve progress, it is expedient to deconstruct the execrable implication of polarisation in order to forge a sustaining exemplification of transmutations which replaces the disastrous nuances of duality in representations. To correct this variance, Ojo Ade (1992: 525) advocates a complete rendition of African history so as to attain validity.

#### **4.2 Imagining transmutations in Ugandan narratives**

The confirmation of the fluid nature in all humans to appropriate power beyond the segmentation of bodily significance attests to the similitude of power operations. It substantiates the fluid transposition of gendered roles and expounds the dynamic interplay of shift in the re-configuration of characters. Demonstrating the enormity of power regeneration, the writers of the selected texts acknowledges the needs of the victimised characters to control as existing beyond the constructed binaries of gender. They illustrate the breakdown of polarity in the conception of differences as evolving into a system of power replicates, where it becomes difficult to distinguish between the roles allotted to either male or female sexes. Hence, all roles resonate the unified instinct to dominate. Kymuhendo's *Secret No More* portrays the eventual arrival of the soldiers at Bizimana's home is an eruption of violent chaotic situations that authenticate the contention for authority. The realisation of the soldiers' entry into his household gives a crippling fear to the couple which draws lines of similarities between their emotions:

He felt hot tears sting his eyes as he looked down at his children. God! he did not want to lose them, he prayed silently...Mukundane sat up abruptly, startled. The sound of a heavier gun, something like a sub-machine gun, rattled in the air, close to their gate. Mukundane swiftly got out of bed and began struggling into a night gown. Bizimana felt his legs go weak. He was frightened beyond words. (*Secret No More*, 13)

Bizimana's realisation of the inescapable looming terror creates for him a sudden shift from his autocratic position which subjects him to sharing some vulnerable traits of fear with his wife. At this point, all emotions possess similar traits which begins the erasure of polarity. War and all other violent encounters dissolve most division in the categorisation of emotions thus enhancing the gradual emergence of fluid presentation of roles. Avil James (1983: 1158) maintains that "the projection of emotional segmentation male and female sexes is as a result of the fact that our knowledge about anger and other emotional related topic is largely, intuitive and unsystematic". This essentially reveals that aggravations gives a corresponding similarity to responses of self and other during volatile situations, hence, bridging the gap of differences in bodily valuations. Howbeit with his plummeted self-confidence which the narrator describes as a "feign machismo", Bizimana walks to the front door. With his captivation so easy, the soldiers declare an incessant raid in his home and the futile effort it produces elongates his harassment: "Where are those guns?" he asked in a dangerously quiet voice" (14). His fear grows as he gets confronted by the notoriously Hutu Colonel, Renzaho whose bestial acts gives him a reputable awe for brutality. The breakdown in the social system has enabled the Colonel to flaunt his authority publicly, now with the support of the Hutu government to get rid of Hutu men married to Tutsi women, he goes berserk demonstrating his control. His possession of dominance is a hyper-activated climax which he has used to demonstrate his excessive brutality. A continuous display of absolute vehemence which Bizimana inner monologue exposes: "So the government has sent the bastard to finish him off, Bizimana thought angrily. He felt a cold shiver, born of both the early morning chill and the fear, running through his whole body." (*Secret No More*, 14)

The fruitless efforts of the soldiers made him resort to a more humiliating strategy to get the victim confess to an uncommitted crime, after he had been severely battered. Having no strength to defend his family, the soldiers' discovery of their hideout soon exacerbate the scenario. Stunned to see her husband disfiguration, Mukundane is soon subjected to her own

misfortune which the narrator confirms through the lustful glitters on the Colonel's face: "The Colonel watching her in amusement the gown which she wore had a long slit in front. A lump of shiny black pubic hair was visible as was a soft thigh." (*Secret No More*, 16) At this point it is easy to decipher the specificity of the Colonel's action. Rape is one of the main factors fueling dichotomy in gendered duties. Beth. A. Quinn (2002) observation that "girl watching is a targeted tactic of power where men use their gaze to demonstrate their right to physically and sexual evaluate women" confirms rape as the main horrible sexual stereotypic crime committed against women. Therefore, the writer through her portrayal of the excitement in the Colonel's demeanor reinforces this fact: "Sergeant, "the Colonel called one of the soldiers, "maybe we can use another method to make the Nyakubahwa tell us where he keeps the guns" (*Secret No More*, 16). That the Colonel intends to use the sexual violation to demonstrate the condescending of the Hutu union with the Tutsi is an intensely political weapon that is associable with power possession and because of its versatile usability, the Colonel's encrypted gesture is easily deciphered: "The soldier who had been called Sergeant immediately understood" (16). This reveals sexual oppression as an agreeable indictment on women between both the Colonel and his low ranking officers which erases the differences in their ranking and confirms such alignment as having some broad consequences on women's personhood. To perpetuate his devious act, Mukundane becomes trapped:

With the help of another soldier, they got hold of Mukundane and proceeded to pin her to the floor. Mukundane kicked and squirmed, lashing out at the soldiers. The soldiers were momentarily shocked by her strength. One of them slapped her hard on the face...Marina, who had been hiding in a different place, had also come out when she heard her mother's screams...But then her eyes caught her mother's figure. She was spread-eagle on the floor with two soldiers holding her down. A giant of a soldier was towering over her, consciously rubbing his manhood which was slowly foaming a bulge in his trousers. He wore a stupid victorious grin and kept on licking his lips... Like a possessed man, he began pounding at her. (*Secret No More*, 16)

The foregoing vividly illustrates the traumatic implication of war on a woman's body. As traumatised as Bizimana is he is not sexually violated. The fact that it is his wife who bears the stigma of the violence enacted, supportively reflects sexual violation as women's insurmountable challenge during periods of socio-political disturbances. The depiction of



rape here reinstates the generic perceptual association of sexual stigma on mostly women's body. According to Armstrong (2009: 259), this rendition "foregrounds the female body as abject and marked- a thing to be violently 'written' on and as a site of amputation and disablement". Inferably, women experience more violation in war because their body is a template on which social vices are comfortably written. However, that Mukundane puts up a resistance against this devilry act of cruelty reveals that women cannot just be intimidated into being sexually violated and it also suggestively indicates that perhaps had she been more vehemently dramatic, she could have escaped this violation altogether. A possibility which is corroborated by the "momentary shock of the soldiers about her strength (*Secret No More*, 16)". Overpowered and violated by the men who reduces her husband to an unrecognisable mass, it is understandable she could not withstand their strength, giving especially, her earlier portrayed non-forcible nature. She is made to bear the humiliation of their marriage on her body. Although the role Mukundane plays here typifies the defeated posture women are mostly believed to assume in most crisis, her husband's effort to intercept her moments of horror results in diverse dissolutions of roles. Awaken to consciousness through his wife's screams, Bizimana's decision to intervene in his wife's dehumanisation culminates into the climax of the ferocious drama. In time he meanders his way to the Colonel aimed with the latter's baton which he has hastily left under one of the chair, to violate Mukundane. The distractions of the soldiers who watch in amusement how the Colonel rapes the victim and lustfully imagine when their turn will be, Bizimana crawls almost unnoticed to the Colonel with all the energy he could muster he hits the merciless evil mastermind on the head rapidly twice. All hellish frenzies are let loosed because of this action, "The Colonel was jerking away involuntarily when the pain seems to penetrate, and he withdrew abruptly" (*Secret No More*, 18). The death of Colonel Renzaho alongside the victims he terrorises after a brief encounter with violence certifies all bodies as susceptible to pain during violent circumstances. His immediate death after Bizimana's singular attack despite his high ranked position signifies limitation to all demonstrations of power which reverses the absoluteness of power. Foucault (1982:794) observes that "every intensification can only result in the limit of power".

Through the occurrence of fragmentations here, the writer reveals eruption of violence as capable of erasing the construct of duality that enhances the division of performance of

gendered roles into static matrix of perpetrator/victim without depicting a possible interchange between both roles.

Although this novel also visualises rape as a crime committed mainly against women which perpetuates the politics of sexual dichotomy in this presentation, it establishes all bodies as vulnerable during violent situations and projects a possible rupture in the stringent categorisation of duties: “The soldiers were shocked by the Colonel’s death” (19). The destructive implication of violence is beyond the wound it writes on the body of women, it draws a parallel of similarities across all bodies and authenticates the transversal nature of pain making it impossible to mainly associate wound, disablement and psychological trauma mostly to instances of women’s violation. Judith Herman’s (1992:23) interrogation on the rescind implication of the agony of rape concludes that:

...It is now apparent also that the traumas of one are the traumas of the other. The hysteria of women and the combat neurosis of men are one. Recognizing the commonality of affliction may even make it possible at times to transcend the immense gulf that separates the public spheres of war and politics-the world of men-and the private sphere of domestic life-the world of women.

The excessive demonstration of power forces these dictators to share the same abyss as those of their victims. The nexus established between the dictators and their victims creates a symmetric existence which destroys all hierarchies of binaries and reinstates human fragility through the challenges of domestic conflict, hunger, rape, insecurity and political unrest, result into the formation of a transmutation which enables the duplication of similar traits in all characters during their apprehensions. This generic portrayal of the implication of violence on all human deconstructs the chasm of significance in bodily categorisation. Beyond this fact, that Mukundane outlasts her husband and the Colonel despite the severe brutality she experiences connotes a possible transformation of all bodies from the object position to becoming a subject. Eventually, the soldiers after the death of Bizimana and the Colonel turned their accusing indictment on “Mukundane: Madam, now we have to depend on you to tell us where those guns are. Your husband has stupidly got himself killed” (*Secret No More*, 19). Their respect of a woman whose devaluation they just orchestrated might be seen as a lampoon but the fact that these same soldiers are shocked by her strength confirms

the iota of truism in their elevated reference to her personhood despite the despicable situation. Rather than recoil from fear, having witnessed the terror of the soldiers' bestiality, their persistent question infuriates her, thus, she orders: "Let my little girl alone. I know of no guns," Mukundane sobbed" (*Secret No More*, 20). Observably, her traumatic experience enhances her effrontery to dictate to her oppressors, according to Armstrong (2009: 206) the narrator makes an obvious choice of speaking through the wound of traumatic memory/recall." Therefore, Mukundane decision to renounce silence starts a process of speaking through pain in the novel which reverses the expectations of voicelessness, docility and perpetual tolerance. Importantly, this portrays violence as a channel of empowerment for victims. When, eventually the soldiers shot at Mukundane in her state of unconsciousness, it is to exonerate their completeness of the task which might help them escape any acute penalty because of Colonel's death. While Marina escapes from the house as a victim of psychological disillusionment, the soldiers also leave with a sense of nostalgia which reveal their disappointment: "My God! How are we going to explain the Colonel's death? he said. Let's get out of here!" he shouted (*Secret No More*, 21). This text then relays the Second wave feminist culture of rereading, resisting and re-vision as Maggie Humm (1995:10) observes because underneath the seemingly obvious continuance of patriarchal progressions is some undercurrent intensities of breakdown which signal the near end of polarised figurations.

Essentially, the selected texts feature nodes of rethinking that projects what Colebrook (2000:35) refers to as a resistance which necessitates an ongoing turning away from present conditions. This newest portrayal she observes continues to be of interest to feminists and women, who in the present climate of globalisation are faced with dangers of molarisation". Definitely, for feminists, the figuration of possible metamorphosing from the static visage of bodily difference even in the most ardent circumstances of agonies signals not just the attainability of subject positions but it bridges the chasm which disrupts the actualisation of dynamic roles in fictional narratives.

In furtherance of this course, *Isegawa's Abyssinian Chronicles* exposes characters' inclinations towards reversing the imminent nature of duality in the expression of gendered roles. Having lost his favourite wife, Grandpa automatically moves his attention towards ensuring her children are properly married and stay within the confines of the marriage

approved by him. Nakatu, Serenity and Tiida are expected to willfully submit to their father's plans. Being the first girl, Nakatu gets married according to her father's expectation to a Christian man with whom she has no child for eight years. But with Grandpa's consistent persuasion she stays rooted in the marriage despite the enormity of the challenges she encounters. Undoubtedly, he does not want his female children to have an affair like their mother had. But his withdrawal of consent the narrator exposes was for personal gratifications: "He was fond of Nakatu's husband a bond of loyalty linked to the new Raleigh bicycle this son-in-law had given him before wedding his daughter (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 18). Therefore, Nakatu is objectified to ensure the progression of a patriarchal relationship within the masculine clan. A former clan chief, Grandpa firmly upholds the staunch indictment of patriarchal ruling on women. Rather than correct his son-in-law's licentious lifestyle, he suppresses his daughter's decision to leave the man. His exhibition of subtleness towards his-son's marital unfaithfulness in spite of its contrariness to his daughter's happiness depicts, his firm adherence to the patriarchal sexual dichotomous belief in masculine virility as dominant over women's passive libido. In spite of the nostalgic feelings he nurses each time he remembers Nakatu's mother's decision to elope with another lover as a result of his unrequited love, Grandpa still believes a woman is an appendage of a man and should remain so regardless of the enormity of her substantiation.

With Nakatu's eventual realisation of Grandpa's schematisation, she repudiates his marginalisation and revolts against the partiality of judgement. However, the fact that Nakatu eventually marries a Muslim cleric who has other wives contradicts her initial show of disdain for concubinary. Her actions propel further marginalisation which Grandpa immediately intones with sarcasm: "They are not going to circumcise you, are they?" he asked in an attempt at humor (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 20). Unfazed, she sustains her decision and works out of her former marriage, rattling the continuance of her existence as a chattel through which Grandpa most exorbitant possession is maintained. The display of doggedness in this female character as a motif is well accentuated in this particular character. She exemplifies a defiant resoluteness against traumatic oppression. Through the representation of such active woman within the ambit of history, the author foregrounds the peculiarities of women's responses to the challenges of subjugation which decrypt the universal representation of women as subordinated. In other words, aggression against

victimisation cannot occur except conscientious effort of the writers are directed towards revealing intense personal choices of revolting against scrupulous expressions of powers. This is what Ugandan novelists achieve through the diffraction of history in their literary works. To project a modern progressive society where reclamation of freedom is possible, the pictorial uncertainties of inequalities must be redressed. Therefore, Nakatu assertively indicts Grandpa's autonomy when she confronts: "Sir, it was you who began the invasion, if I may use the word. Kawayida's mother is our mother too, and she is a Muslim (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 20). Though the challenges of polygamy widen the polarity of hierarchies in the categorisation of gendered roles and makes it difficult to establish equal relational rapport between both genders because of its dual system of sexual politicking, its political differentiation of "otherness" can be an alternative avenue through which deferential resoluteness can be developed to reverse the oppression of marginality. Therefore, for Nakatu rather than succumb to a subservient wait for an unfaithful husband with sexual meandering instinct, she settles for the honest frankness of the Muslim cleric's admittance of having other wives. Hajj Ali's foremost confession delineates his respect and loyalty for Nakatu, his new bride and establishes a possible evolving of equal confidential friendship between both of them. To this end, Obioma Nnaemeka (2007: 575) clarifies the opinioned definiteness of portraying African women in polygamous marriages as automatic relegates when she says:

As a matter of fact, an African woman in a polygamous relationship seems to be in a step or two ahead of her Western counterpart living under the illusion that she is not sharing her husband: the African woman knows who else her husband is with. In teaching and understanding polygyny, the issues is not the uncivilized Africa but men.

Through the repudiation of the patriarchal supremacy Grandpa's insistence represents, Nakatu demonstrates resistance as capable of enabling "otherness" to transgress the division of reticent into the domain of assertiveness. As a result of this relocation, the portrayal of dominance, mainly as the feature of a definite "Self" becomes contestable through the exhibition of power as assuming fluid and exchangeable relation of transference between the self and other. Validating this, the narrator depicts Nakatu's eventual expression of power as overriding Grandpa's oppressive willpower: "Grandpa sanctioned the marriage,

but without the knowledge that Nakatu was going to convert. By the time he got this particular detail, he had given up.” (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 20)

The above reiterates the fact that power after its confrontation with remonstrance loses its fixedness and reverses into flexible oscillating modes which negates the fixation of masculine anatomical prediction of superiority. At this point, dominance becomes regulatory through persistent affirmation of control. This shift transmutes the adoption of gendered role beyond the social figuration of binaries in order to visualise the fluid bodily expressions captured in the frequent exchange of the subject position between self and other. Therefore, to demonstrate revolutionary activities as a viable enhancement of transformational possibilities, the narrator’s support of Nakatu’s struggles is reflected in his creative initiations of liberation as emanating from her decisions to break free from the shackles of repression: “Something special eventually did happen: she became pregnant after the drought of about eight years”. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 20)

The alignment of Nakatu’s struggles with her victory reiterates the writer’s commitment towards revivifying the hidden historical past of the African women’s agitations against the humiliating symbiosis patriarchy and sexism represent. The writer’s recasting of women as building tenacity during violence diverges significantly from the usual figuration of women in most African fiction narratives. Women here rather than being featured as the constant object of ridicule, shame and humiliation on whose bodies the impact of violence or conflict is conveniently etched, the writer portrays women who visualises violent or conflicting confrontations as opportunities to reenact their assertiveness.

Women encounter degradations during volatile circumstances and are stereotypically abused at such periods. However, encounters with violence do not always elicit docility from women, while it shatters the reputation of some humans, including women, it energises others not just to survive trauma but to vehemently refute persecution. In other words, much as warfare and other traumatising situations subjugate women especially bodily, it also provides a platform on which audacity can be built through aggravation. According to Lorde (2009: 128) experience “pain can be a sign of a disintegrating tumor”. Thus, the place of pain, humiliation and menace sometimes culminates into growth, bravery and boldness. The portrayal of this intermittent realignment of gendered reactions to violence establishes the

evolving of the feminists' desire for a radical brand of heterosexuality that is based on a mutual recognition of each sex by another, Lorde (2002:38). One main reason for this preference of a mutual assertion of selves by feminists is that it gradually undoes the repetitive trajectories of earlier portrayed inequalities in the minds of readers. Since it projects historical happening in a much familiar way, it tends to redress the dichotomous lapse in readers' perception of gendered roles, making them more determined to confront marginalisation. Isegawa's depiction of characters especially female ones and the progression of their evolvment is a typical illustration of transmutations that destroy the centric dominance of power. This shift is what is fictionalised in Padlock's marriage to Serenity, Grandpa's only legitimate son. At the end of his affair with Kasiko, the mother of his first daughter, Serenity falls in love with Virgin a woman he is sure fits into his description of a proper wife. Kasiko and Serenity have fallen out because of her overtly submissive demeanor. Having grown up in the midst of decisive women, Serenity considers Kasiko's niceties a decoy to overpower him through treacherous means. Her malleable nature reeks with disdain which affirms the appropriateness of her displacement: "Kasiko, a real peasant girl despite her long limbs and good looks, was the husband-has-said kind of woman..." (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 21-22).

The above statement foregrounds the reason behind marital commitment as having more than domestic and sexual disposition. This supposedly confirms that as early as the nineteenth century not all marriages were negotiated based on women's sensuality and vulnerabilities. This castigates the tendency of evaluating women mainly from the pivot of their sexuality. Serenity's desire for a capable, independent woman is a disavowal to the famously presented cravings of men for subservient women during the historical era. His specifications portray diversity in preferences and dismantle the stereotypic visualisation of gendered relationship during the pre-independent era as usually polarise. Moreover, the narrator's admittance to the fact that Kasiko and her prototypes are mostly admirable for substantiating roles underscores the criticism of undesirability of her personality. But the need for Serenity to demonstrate his assertiveness over a new bride is also an autocratic behaviour that limits the role women could play: "He found himself being studied, analyzed, manipulated and negotiated like a river...He wanted to be the one doing all the negotiating" (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 21). Furthermore, the mood of the novel right from its pre-colonial

historical inception possesses resilient undercurrents that gravitate towards instabilities and shift in the visualisation of selves and roles. Since Kasiko is portrayed as not possessing this resilient abilities, her displacement and removal is an expression of an incapability to change from a flat character to a progressively round one and such ineptitude contradicts the attitude of vehemence which permeates the atmospheric setting of the narrative. So when Serenity meets Virgin, she reflects his expectation of “a total package” (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 22). The fact that she is from a very humble background and has never been in any intimate relationship before gives Serenity the opportunity to exhibit his superiority.

Extracted through marriage from a backward community and from a family whose state of dilapidation summaries her worth of nothingness, Virgin otherwise referred to as Padlock pre-nuptial preparation reveals the depth of her insufficiency as far reaching. Summing the impoverished pitiable imagery Virgin’s abode elicits from the travellers who accompany Serenity on his first visitation, the narrator says: “...for now it resembled the nest of a weaver bird crammed under an iron roof” (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 31). Her already poor background places her in a juxtaposition with her fiancé whose father’s wealth, fame, authority alongside his sexual prowess give him a competitive attention among their clan’s maidens, this further confirms her inferior status as the visitors take a onetime glance at her immediate environment: “This nest of a village had a sad, subdued air about it”. (31) The foregoing description foregrounds the atmosphere in which Virgin is raised as hellish. The staunchness of the poverty in her community and family makes her obscurity very poignant and further confirms her inferior status. The narrator expresses:

Women were cheap here in the central region, in contrast to the cattle-rearing peoples in the west and the north, where bride-price could rise up to one hundred heads of cattle. Here people asked for calabashes of beer, bolts of cloth, tins of paraffin, ceremonial chickens, a lump sum of money and a few other minor things. Bridegrooms often felt compelled to outdo themselves in dazzling displays of generosity. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 33-34)

The poverty-stricken background she emerges from gives Virgin’s bridegroom, Serenity, the confidence to pride himself for coming from affluence. He envisages the extent of his dominance over his bride and her family while admiring the glitters of the new roofing



sheets he donates to his in-laws for marrying their daughter “Up would go the new roof, proclaiming the rise of the new Virgin and her new wine.” (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 35)

What is presented above reveals the intention behind the proposal of Serenity’s heterosexual marriage as mainly political. Marriage gives him the avenue through which he can control another human, especially a domination which affirms his sexual prowess on a woman who is a virgin and unconquered. The few flings he has had with women in the past, do not pose any challenge to him since they appear to be his compensation as the obvious heir apparent to his father’s sub county chief position. Unknown to them, Serenity’s only desire is to assert his masculinity after he has been manipulated for long by his close relatives and the numerous women his father keeps while in power. This strengthens his resolve to contradict his father’s choice of a wife after he parts ways with Kasiko. Having been taciturn for long, his cravings for expression of power need to vent itself by conquering a difficult situation which Virgin represents and this reason makes him chase her vehemently. For the first time, his expression of contrary preference to his father’s in women both in seizes and affluence gives “a shrill trumpet blast announcing his first major victory over his father...Serenity has won his freedom” (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 27).

However, to demonstrate his ascension to power, Serenity needs to manifest his domination on an unaltered body which confirms his sexual agility. So, the visualisation of Virgin as untainted rather than exalt the bride’s purity only reinstates the enormity of the reward of his resilience and announces Serenity’s ascension to authority: “Up will go the new roof and the thrust of new life, power and glitters of new dreams” (35). Notably, the description of Virgin’s personality here only revolves around her physical attributes: new roof, rise of new Virgin, her new wine, makes her the sacrificial propitiation for the release of Serenity’s control. Serenity’s conception of Virgin reveals a chasm in their representation. “He thought of himself as a crocodile, ever conserving his energy by waiting and letting the prey come to him” (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 37). Serenity’s monologue exposes the dual politics; it explains binary between the representation of Serenity and his soon-to-be wife, while he is expected to be fierce, overwhelming and assertive. Virgin, on the other hand, is subdued, reticent and incapacitated: “How could she make something of anything when she was not

in control, when the whole world seemed to be milling around on top of her head (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 36).

The notable differences in their traits establishes the dissimilar roles both of them are supposed to adopt. Serenity is expected to dominate, while Virgin is to be dominated. The reflection of stereotype in the adoption of duties at this phase approves the segmentation of roles in corresponding with bodily distinction. Gendered role here exists only in binaries to reiterate as constant the ideology of rigidity. This enforcement in the retention of bodily difference discredits the possible mental perception of all bodies as metamorphosing after exposure to hideous circumstances. The replication of the contemporary human society as dual does not differ from what Virgin is expected to experience since she has been subjected to a life of servitude and alienation.

Apart from her religious piety which gives her a bit of solace, her lack of parental love and connection with siblings makes her feel constantly like the “other” whose presence in the family is unwanted. When her mother is delivered of their first male child, Virgin is abandoned. But after the birth of three subsequent male children, her relevance is reinstated howbeit as the slave within the family; her marginalisation within her home denies her the privileges of acting like a legitimate child within the home. Besides, the choice of her native name, Nakkazi, which translates to strong robust woman, confirms her role of servitude within the home as preempted by her parents. She sleeps late at night and wakes up early in order to fulfil her expected daily roles. Trained to bear all the hardship of the home, she consistently experiences deprivation which detaches her from forming a bond with her siblings especially the female ones who consider her too young to meddle with parenting and too obsolete to be associated with as a sister. This representation affirms her loneliness as depressing. That Virgin is denied the opportunity to establish a rapport with family members validates her alienation as the “other”. She shares the exhibited traits of human trafficked victims whom Olaniyan (2019:144) observes “suffers from absolute “singularisation” which prevents them from getting absorbed as part of the self”.

In other words, Virgin’s maintenance of the position of an outsider despite having the access of an insider foregrounds the limitation of her relevance within the family and confirms her position as inferiorly rated in comparison to those of her siblings. Her dual exposure to

alienation and servitude points to further encounters of humiliations. Whenever she reports her victimisation by school bullies, rather than support their child, Nakkazi's parents' constant reprimand, is reciting the rosary which compels her to forgive her offenders "seven times seventy times" (61). The humiliation of this perversion of justice encourages the continuance of her oppression. Tired of living as the subservient one, who is affixed to hardship, Virgin's vengeful repudiation of her years of servitude on her younger brother does more than set her free from slavery, it explicates the commencement of a determined transmutation:

She had grabbed a stick and hit her younger brother Mbale very hard on the shoulder. She went on hitting him even when he fell down. She would have gone on punishing him if two village men had not intervened, grabbing the stick and pulling her away. That was one of the reasons her parents had welcomed her nunly vocation, because peasant men, from whose ranks her suitor would probably emerge, would either maim or kill her if she ever did that to them. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 63).

Assuming the role of a perpetrator of violence for the first time, she foregrounds consistently her innate ability to retaliate all brutal overtures of pain meted out to her and demonstrates a resolute sense of resilience. This scene validates the act of resilience towards oppression as capable of undoing representational chasm in the visualisation of gendered roles. It also reinstates the expression of resistance towards violence as an assured means of acquiring freedom from slavery. Empowered through her resilience, Virgin transmutes from the place of nothingness to re-assume the position of authority her parents' denial her for being a female child and the eldest. Through this recovery, she is able to authenticate the self beyond polarised chasm of power. When she decides to isolate herself for purgatory purposes and Mbale, afraid she might die threatened to break the door with a hammer, Virgin's reply that, "He would regret it for the rest of his life" (65), makes him consider the option of soliciting help from his aunty. Assuredly, her threat reminds him of his near encounter with death, the day Virgin retaliates her suppression with vengeful response. This scenery ascertains the aftermath of violent treatment as sometimes resulting into determination to vehemently refute further proposition of oppression. Therefore, it negates the perpetual portray of women as mostly dissolvable after violent encounters but affirms the reforming abilities of violence as reconstructive of all bodies without disparities. Essentially, this narrative

subverts the accompanying claims of women's perpetual objectivity as unroused victims of violence.

Although she suffers much annihilation while growing up, Virgin's determination to repudiate refrainment, isolation, and dejection reinvigorates her decision to exercise total mastery over her marital affairs. Contrary to her fiancé's readiness to debilitate her, her well-kept plans to prove the genuineness of her strength is visualised through her conception of the marital space as a furtherance to the exhibition of power. Unnerved by the dancers' sexual indictment at her wedding reception, her only consolation lies in the fact that her wedding paves "path to the new life and the mission she had dreamed of for so long" (41). The loss of her virginity on the night of her wedding to Serenity aids in the exchange of power between the newlyweds. Although subjected to bearing the ridicule of being sexually desecrated, which supposedly cements her inferior existence according to rating of "social hierarchy" (48), this expounds the reason for the general jubilant mood after Serenity successfully underscores his sexual authority. The narrator's recital of the scene underscores:

Serenity was back on his way, rejuvenated, energetic, fiery in the thorax, ticklish in the balls, with wells of licentious power pumping from his stomach. He got cut again, but he hardly felt it or cared... He needed all the energy his stomach provided, for his wife had the hymen of a thousand women...With the walls crackling and rustling, Serenity tore through the barrier, Virgin a rocking wave of muscle. Three rubies, two big ones and a very small one, were created. The bride's aunt, a smile on her face, congratulated them, happy that the bride had not climbed trees, ridden bicycles or played with sharp objects that would have torn her hymen. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 46)

The above excerpt describes the first sexual rites between Serenity and Virgin as a couple. The narration illustrates the sexual exercise as a process of authentication of the power of the self over other in order to assert its dominion the decision of other which Virgin again represents here. Remmy Oriaku (1996: 56) opines that such control is mainly manifest in marriage: "marriage both in real life and fiction, is perhaps, the most circumscribing factor in the life of an African woman". In other words, Virgin's objectification is a unanimous depiction of women's inferiority which commences immediately on their wedding night. The narrator lends credence to the foregoing observation when he notices that: "Changed

into a crownless outfit, with a stiff, pained look on her face the bride returned to the booth” (46). With her recent experience of sublimation, she is expected to commence a life of dehumanisation that foregrounds her subjective existence as the other throughout her life within the marriage. In fact, according to Badua’s words in Ama Ata Aidoo’s; *Anowa* (1970:12), “a good woman has no mouth and brain”. Thus, as a bride who recently joins the group of “good women,” she is expected to be seen but never heard. This explains the almost immediate name change the bride experiences, from Virgin to Padlock.

Yet, Padlock’s commitment towards exercising authority over her space establishes an alternate subject figuration which displaces the ideology of a single subject position, thus, reinstating her autocracy alongside her husband’s. The narrator reflects the implication of Padlock’s decision: “Tiida and Nakatu both marriage veterans...quickly realized that their brother had married a woman to keep them out of his house” (48). This depiction authenticates that Padlock possesses enough audacity to ward off unwanted intrusion from her home without Serenity’s intervention. This foregrounds the firmness of her authority. This erasure in the dual presentation of selves enables the emergence of female characters whose ambition bespeaks a non-adherence to the figuration of binary. Such reflection of a non-adherence explicates a possible optimisation which transits the borderline of body division.

However, the fact that Padlock is in a patriarchal society where the husband’s family ranked higher than the wife makes it difficult to acquire a wholesome transition without encountering strict confrontation. Unfortunately for Padlock, she has to reside within the same vicinity as her father in-law. A former staunch clan chief and the upholder of patriarchal customs, Grandpa’s preference for tall affluent women develops in him a strong animosity for Padlock’s contradictory personality. To forestall the advancement of her wifely influence over his son, Grandpa determinedly overthrows Padlock’s attempt to rise beyond her incarnation to secure his son’s traditionally bestowed position of superiority. His every encounter with her makes him pontificate her degradation; sadistically she realises her dissension: “Lord, Lord, Lord, how low have I sunk! How long have I got to be measured against common women and whores?” (52). Again here Padlock makes distinction between other women and herself because she considers her traumatisation an

upgrade to her personality and this enhances her determination to refuse subjugation. Under the guise of patriarchy, the subject position is reserved for the masculine head of the home which automatically confers the adoption of a second place to the wife since her functionality is affixed to the performance of her husband. Padlock's abrogation for the second place represents the innate cravings in all humans to be more than the inferior one. This explicates her desire to re-access the position of authority denied her at her parents' abode for being a girl child. Thus, instead of fulfilling her role in the linear trajectory of marriage according to cultural norms, she envisions matrimony as a reinvented space where possession of power is contestable. The narrator states that:

It was her show, her day in the sun. All the impotence and hostility she felt against Serenity, against herself, the roofers, Mbale, Sr. John Chrysostom (her erstwhile Mother Superior), and against the world, was a way of coming to terms with her new position in life, her new powers, her new expectation, her new dreams. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 37)

Through a re-featuring of this female character whose resilience emanates from traumatising conditions, the author dispels the consistent representation of women as usually crushed under the weight of trauma. Discrediting the stringent notion that violence usually leads to the subordination of the oppressed, rewrites the history of struggles as it can be influenced through resistance. Chronicling Padlock's undeterred effort to refute oppression within hostile purview of tradition reverses the peddling of women's oppression as devoid of change. Therefore, literature in this wise has the potencies to reveal the core of all human intensifications which history glosses over to provoke transformation of thoughts. To this end, Ngugi wa Thiong' O (2007: 477) aptly describes literature as a dissecting tool through which reappraisal of selves should be done:

Hence, literature has often given us more and sharper insights into the moving spirit of an era than all the historical and political documents treating the same moment. The novel in particular, especially in its critical realist tradition, is important in that respect: it pulls apart and its pulls together, it is both analytic and synthetic.

The writer's projection of trauma in this pre-colonial phase as initiating the exegesis of gendered role shift in the escalated post-independent war therefore, foregrounds as ancient

the effort that confronts marginality, hence, discouraging the continuance of adopting perpetual vulnerable imagination for the explication of “otherness.”

Furthermore, Padlock recognises the need to re-invent herself according to cultural belief in order to sustain the authority she acquires; this reinforces her resolution to establish dominance. Thus, her recognition of the fact that she could convert the situation to her favour consolidates her determination to control: “With a dozen offspring, she knew she would be invincible and in position to manipulate the situation to her advantage (51)”. In order to establish her resoluteness, she re-negotiates her childbearing roles within the tradition to establish her dominance over her reproductive roles. She refuses to be used as just an avenue for breeding, her conversion of the duties of motherhood here extends beyond fulfilling the cultural norms of continuity, rather she imagines motherhood as avenue to authenticate her assertiveness. This way, she becomes an equal partner in procreation since she also has a definite expectation she intends to fill through the act. Her ability to create a consciousness for multiplying outside the requirements of cultural norms establishes for her a place of dominance within the tradition which constantly pronounces her objectification. According to Rich (1986: xviii) submits such reconvening of space enables: “...claims to share justly in the products of our labours, not to be used merely as an instrument...”.

The ability to envision her liberty enhances Padlock’s freedom to assert her humanity and enable her to claim control over her sexuality. Her decision to abstain from sex during her pregnancy is to communicate her equality to her husband and his father whose opinion of her substantiates their conception of her as perpetually relegated. The instigation of her husband’s sexual starvations without considering the penalty it might attract as a result of the prominent practice of patriarchy in the community reveals her astuteness to resisting containment that has long invalidated her. Although she accepts the cultural responsibility of motherhood, her resilient actions attest to her determination to live beyond conventions which makes her appear fearsome, unconquerable, and vengeful. Grandpa’s musings expose his frustrations: “He should never have married that girl. A chief’s son should never be bossed about by a little peasant girl.” (52) Exasperated about his inability to overwhelm Padlock with the deficient histories of her past, he agitates over the continuance of his son’s authority as the patriarchal head of his home. He laments dissatisfaction to his sister: Sere’s

wife is nothing but poison” (53). However, unable to ignore the persistence of Padlock’s resilience, grandpa admires her adamancy to confronting sublimations in her new environment and secretly wished her daughter who was at the verge of leaving her Christian marriage for a Muslim one will learn from his son’s wife. Thus, the narrator captures his reaffirmation of Padlock, he agrees “All my daughters are marital failures”. It was another way of saying that Padlock had been right. It was she who had said that Serenity’s family was full of marital failures.” (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 19).

Padlock’s consistent opposition to violence apart from transposing her status of objectification to being a subject enable her to attain the highest pedestal of authority where she assertively determines the fate of others. The narrator, observing her elevated position of hierarchy, comments: “From the throne of her new reign Padlock reviewed Nakatu with a sick feeling of disdain” (50). Padlock’s insistent rebuff of suppression forcefully rearranges the matrix of domination; disrupting the immanent prototypical figuration of the subject as male. The presentation of this shift implies power as alternating between figural characters, hence undermining biologic essentiality of difference which permits the representation of roles to be dynamic replications of transmutation where the notions and fixations of power becomes unstable. In lieu of the existing confluence portrayed, Butler (1988:526) confirms as an act of political decoy the act of polarising gendered roles base on biologic essentiality, she queries:

In what sense, then, is gender an act? As anthropologist Victor Turner suggests in his studies of ritual social drama, social action requires a performance which is repeated. This repetition is at once a reenactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation. When this conception of social performance is applied to gender, it is becoming stylized into gendered modes, this action is immediately public as well. There are temporal and collective dimensions to these actions, and their public nature is not inconsequential; indeed, the performance is effected with the strategic aim of maintaining gender within binary frame. Understood in pedagogical terms, its renders social laws explicit.

Therefore, the binaries being represented in the narratives are mostly to corroborate the ideological nuances of socially agreeable preference for gendered roles and this explains the high reduplication of hierarchies in the fictional presentation of gendered roles. Hence,



to start the gradual erasure of the harmful impact of this dichotomous visualisation, the fastidious input of the writer cannot be overemphasised.

Furthermore, Goretti's *waiting* establishes the synergy of correspondence of transmutation through the exemplification of growth in victimised characters. Through them, she indicates a re-imagination of selves. In literary writings. Mother's defiant attitude to the soldiers' rumoured threat of sudden invasion portrays the development of resilience during expectations of brutality. She instils courage into her daughter when she astutely declares her opinion:

Are we going out alone? I asked alarmed.  
What is there to eat us? The hyenas are sleeping  
at this time of the night  
What about the...?  
The soldiers? For how long shall we keep running  
away from them? I need to pass the stool, and I can't  
do it in the basin. Come. (*waiting*, 21)

Resolved to face the violence and the consequences that emanates from it, Mother ignores every warning signs of danger and reinstates her independent willpower to care for herself irrespective of the absence of a masculine presence. Her display of non-reliance on her husband's masculine prowess despite her obvious pregnant condition indicates her decision to map out her identity outside conceived masculine safe territory. It also reveals her desire to train a daughter who manifests resilience in dangerous circumstance. Thus, Mother's determination to dominate her environment in spite of an awareness of a looming terror authenticates war and other brutish experiences as channels through which resistances develop towards oppressive overtures.

In addition, the construing of female character as the mostly exploited victims of insurgences enhances their personality as fragile, subdued and conquered, aids the social ideation of men as valiant. Apart from the fact that this abstraction alienates women from being a subject according to Haraway's (1991), it empowers continuation of violent masculine show of prowess, while it encourages women through faulty representation of weakness to have an unwholesome perception of themselves which makes them the usual target of most social vices, kidnap, murder and rape.

Similarly, depicting the resilience attitude of women to ferocity reveals the ideology of predictability of women to violence, eliminating the ideation of fragility of women; they manifest counter resistance towards attacks of violence. At this point, alteration of expected reactions from victimised individuals dissembles all polarising attempts. The depiction of Kaka's matriarchal audacity validates to the sporadic bodily materialisation that emanates from volatile traumatic experiences. Unable to give birth to her own children because she intrudes on the love making ritual of reptiles, Kaka gets married to her husband carrying an invisible fetus in her womb. Her inability to conceive makes her the target of her husband's derogatory comments which she endures for years. Tired of being ridiculed, she resorted to physical combats. Hence, she foregrounds her astuteness. When the soldiers attempt to intimidate her, she remains unperturbed about their fearsome statues and discloses that "Do you think you can scare me? Me, who used to beat my husband until he urinated in his trousers? Heeeh," she laughed." (*waiting*, 38)

Kaka in this novel is a round character who grows from being a young naïve woman in love into a staunch matriarch as a result of her traumatic marriage. Although she eventually leaves her marriage to reside with her nephew, she is not browbeating into leaving; she leaves willingly, a fact to which the narrator testifies recalling: "Mother said she just walked into the house one day and declared that she had left her husband for good... "(16). No wonder she expresses repulsion towards Nyinabarongo's weak submission to her husband's abusive overtures; hence, when Alinda's Father makes an attempt to ask Nyinabarongo for assistant during Mother's labour Kaka intercepts his move:

That woman behaves like a child. She wouldn't even know how to cut the cord. Anyway, what can you expect of a woman who let her in-laws chase her away from her own home?" I was surprised by Kaka's unkindness towards Nyina-barongo. I had never heard her talk of our neighbor like that. (*waiting*, 32).

The narrator is shocked by her grand aunt's show of disdain towards the refugee because Kaka is portrayed as an assertive but pleasant woman. However, she has a strong animosity for display of vulnerability. Thus, one cannot say she dislikes Nyinabarongo but for her penchant for immediate submissiveness. Kaka's portrayal affirms the audacious lifestyle of women during the pre-colonial times. With such insistency, the author discredits the continuance of a sadistic imagination of women since it hinders the projection of

transmutations in history and obstructs the possible emergence of fluid presentation of roles in literary productions. The selected works declaim the authenticity of the constant depiction of binary in the response of victims to oppression. Therefore, it weakens the basic polarised tenet on which sexual politics rests. The significance of this mutation is that it destroys all hegemonic construction and permits the evolvement of dynamic presentation of gendered duties. Consequently, the adoption of roles becomes fluid and practicable through resilient. The implication of this is that the divisible line between perpetrators and victims becomes unidentifiable, thus, erasing the dichotomous correctness of body politicking. Victoria's transfiguration in Isegawa's *Snakepit* further elucidates this dispersal of power. Having experienced much dehumanisation from Bazooka's violent schemes and went through the torture of the State Research Bureau training which further reduces her significance: "...Her name was replaced by a number." (30); she finished her first assigned task with the elation of overcoming her former feeble status. The narrator, through the observation of her innate swap, substantiates:

Victoria had a sudden rush of anxiety and joy. She had a memory to her victimization days and had a sense of freedom and being invincible in the face of heavenly and legal systems. Any sense of shame was overpowered by the taste of unreason. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 30-31)

Victoria's envision of her invincibility as elevating her beyond the causality of the past is a reinvention of a personality that depicts a heightened sense of contentment with her new position. The experiences of trauma now enhance her capacity to control. The calmness she exhibits while handling her assignments denotes a strict sense of professionalism that betrays no regrets of any form. Sex, for her, is no longer a means by which she can be victimised, rather she now perpetrates violence on unsuspecting men by victimising them through her sexuality. This empowers and places her on the realm of dominance of others and enables her to determine their livability. Equipped with such authority, she reflects indestructability in her judgement, a fact to which the narrator lends credence: "Victoria had affairs with numerous men who had perished, and she had even given some of them the advice to run for their own lives." (24). Since she is on an assignment to destroy, sex is a game through which her ferocity is established: "Sex had only ever served as a tool, such as a weapon or a blade for her profession" (24). The portrayal of her graduation from a vulnerable sexual prey to a sexual predator is a profound metamorphosis in personality and

this dismantles the preciseness of the construction of linearity in the presentation of sexuality which further erodes the stereotypic affirmation of gendered categorisation.

Through shift violence creates the visible expression of capacities to exert transformation on the perception of selves which unsettles the regularised outcome of gendered roles precision. According to Bridotti (2006:76), these changes become so rampant that it “displaces the vision of consciousness from the phallogocentric premises”. Ultimately, the creation of the multiplicities of consciousness in all characters erases the erected polarities that seal the dichotomy of difference between self and others and culminate into unpredictable transgressions in the adoption of gendered duties. Hence, the colliding of Bat’s intention to use Victoria as a sexual relief from work with her strategic devise to also conceive a child through him wittingly expounds the equality of their sexual politicising without visualised gap in replications of roles. Victoria thoughts confirms:

Yes, I am experiencing it in my cartilage, she told herself. It's encouraging that this wealthy man spent time trying to make me happy rather than just rolling over and snoring, getting fucked, and ejaculating. I wasn't expecting to feel the way I do because I first came here to work and perform a part. I fully engaged in the sexual activity, effortlessly achieving climax. That's a sign at all times. My entire being felt available to him. He was able to get straight through me. My hopes of becoming a parent may finally be about to come true after two years. (*Snakepit*, 24).

The excerpt above shows Victoria’s new role as a perpetrator; now she uses sex to forge the destruction of unsuspecting men. Assuredly, some of these victims would have been killed in their sleep but the ones she favours are let off the hook. With a personality that extrudes the addiction for brutality, she corroborates Bat’s proposal: “He stated, to us, to risk, to pleasure.”...” (*Snakepit*, 21). To establish the evolution of servitude into autocratic transmutations, the writer foregrounds the nexus of similarities between the activities of the self and those of others. Thus, Isegawa is able to depict a ramified dynamic exchange of gendered duties through the adoption of the autonomous stance of poststructuralists. Poststructuralism aims at devastating the notion of static affixations, its main goal is to close the gap between the self and the other by developing a theory of history (Simon Gikandi, 2007). Its erasure of the dialectic between self and other through radical deconstruction of history gives support to the feminist discovery of the existence of dichotomy between the

female (other) and the male (self). The uncovering of the main characters' inner monologue in the texts is done in order to corroborate the narrators' external observations which authenticate the determined efforts of the victims to overcome all dogmatic reduction they are faced with. The representation of these characters' individual yet synonymous decisions to disrupt the certainties of their oppressions are to relate the fluid progression of this rebellious multiplicity as achievable on all levels which empowers the continuance of feminist struggles against sexual objectification of the figuration of the female prototypes. Humm (1995: 93) maintains that "feminists could use poststructuralism to expose the gendered construction of these terms". Therefore, the identification of similar resilient traits in both male and female characters is a conscious effort to close the binaries which enable fluid role presentations.

### **4.3 Summary**

From all indication, the selected Ugandan narratives examined here reveal that the eruption of insurgencies oftentimes bridge the gap of disparities that had long segmented gendered activities. Hence, the writers, contrary to the replications of established imagery of duality, through their inward looking, express implication of trauma as flatten of all dichotomies. They challenge the hegemonic retention of the persistence of binaries in gendered duties. Without pretense, they lucidly depict the aftermath of reducing women to their sexuality as having adverse social consequences since such reduction energises women to be hardened criminals. The perceivable division between victims and perpetrators of violence becomes blur, thus making it difficult to control or eliminate criminal activities on all fronts. The analyses of the selected novels have focused on trait disruptions, sexual oppressions, degenerative implication of violence, and domination and the exchange of virtues between the oppressed and oppressors. Similarly, the writers expound this reformation as capable of producing dynamic figurations of roles in fictional presentations. Readers are, therefore, sensitised to recognise these nuances of shifts as building evolutions in the transformations of sexual politics. The most enabling form of justice is in the ability to be able to control one's sexuality and be able to relate equally with all people.

Furthermore, this chapter has examined the motif of rape during brutal situations as a means through which dichotomy is enforced. However, its rescinds impact is the provocation of

uncontained rage in victims that enhances their freedom to radically dismantle the existing systems of isolations. Following a poststructuralist pattern which exalts deviations from the existing mode as true creativity, the novels thematise the evolvment of determination in volatile circumstances as resulting in fluid bodily transmutations that engender adoptions of duties. Essentially, the discussion in this chapter has been able to achieve some of the objectives of the study, which are to examine how war causes a deconstruction to figuration of gendered stereotypes, thus enabling the re-definitions of the victims' personalities, particularly women using the selected primary texts, and explore other texts germane to the study.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING SHIFTS AND GENDERED ROLE**  
**REFORMATION: ESTABLISHING THE OVERTURNS OF BINARIES IN**  
**UGANDAN LITERARY PRESENTATIONS**

**5.0 Chapter overview**

Having examined the portrayal of war and trauma as capable of evoking transmutations in human response to oppression in the previous chapter, this chapter interrogates revolts and fluidity as evidently unfolding the ontology of intersexuality in Kymuhendo's *Secret No More* and *waiting*, and Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* and *Snakepit* which are selected contemporary Ugandan fictions. The problem of binaries has long persisted to shape the realities of bodily presentations in literary works. Although the enormity of its implication on gendered relationships may differ from one continent to another, it is undoubted that the menace of these hierarchical reflections affect the progression of gendered role presentation in most fictional narratives.

**5.1 Fulfilling the feminists' advocacy for the annulment of difference**

Feminist writers, despite their diversities, have expressed their expectation for literary works whose expression of difference is not dependent on philosophies of sexual distinction. Although the portrayal of such imagery has rarely been attained in the appropriations of roles in fictional narratives, this study establishes that categorisation of differences is gradually moving beyond the matrix of anatomical classification. Gendered roles, after incidences of violence engenders fluid interactions between male and female duties, thus cancelling biological stereotypes of differences in the performances of their roles. As a result of this annulment, performative actions initiate a dynamic interconnection that merges most formerly polarised duties to reveal trajectories of interrelations that are more pronounced than the dichotomy of sexual distinctions.

In this chapter, therefore, effort is made towards uncovering strategies of duplications employed by the selected writers to depict the sequence of similarities that foreground this theorisation of wholeness, which erases the norms of dichotomous gaps in the presentation of gendered characters. Likewise, the chapter explores reinvention, dispossession, ordering and the discontinuation of objectification in imaginative space through enactment of transformations. The symbolic emergence of new cultures among victimised characters is also examined. The chapter accounts for the implication of the foregoing on Ugandan literary space. It also expounds the narrative techniques in these selected novels as foregrounding the writers' mutual depiction of the characters' fluid reaction to violence and how these fluidities invoke holistic transformation in the activities of the oppressed. The study concludes by observing the emergence of language equilibrium in the fictional works of the male and female writers understudied as transgressing the norms of conventionality. This is in line with the third objective of the study which sets out to examine the influence of dynamic engendering on the non-biased interplay of similarities in the figuration of male and female roles in selected texts and describe how synonymous language use creates a genderless literary space.

## **5.2 Invoking shift in gendered role presentation through strategic replications in selected Ugandan narratives**

Polarised classification of gendered roles has left its imprint mainly on literary imaginative expressions. This empowers the indisputableness of the affirmation of sexual politics in fictional portrayal of gendered duties. The most obvious gap in literary representations is to affirm one and discredit the other. Women as a result of their 'nurtural' abilities are automatically recruited by most societies to fulfil the position of otherness. Meanwhile, men usually represent the capable dictatorial selves; thus, fictional works essentially duplicate this dual pattern of visualisation. Promoters of patriarchy capitalise on the popularity of this shallow designations of difference to reinstate the inferior status of women through the defeatist attitude attached to personality of figured female personas. As depicted in the novels selected for the study, some of these traits that foreground the ideology of difference which causes disparities in the description of roles are already becoming neutralised. One



of such perception is the believed ability of all men to perpetrate crimes which is portrayed as lacking in women generally.

Isegawa's *Snakepit* narrates the ferociousness of power seekers and exposes their zeal to achieve invincibility as existing on the same parallel without deference to anatomical distinctions. Victoria summation of herself as a "monster" (*Snakepit*, 24) and General Bazooka's confession to Victoria's possession of a lethal attitude: "When I first met you, I noticed that you had an assassin's intuition" (*Snakepit*, 29), reveals her insatiable flair for perpetrating violence like her initiator, General Bazooka. Victoria relish the invincible appeal the ability to commit violence without being questioned offers. She realises that is the reason for her endearment towards Bazooka which makes her equate: "Perhaps I had simply been in romance by the General's ability to make people live or die" (*Snakepit*, 61). Since she knows that she possesses the same invincibility that has granted the General the splendor his personality extrudes during their initial meeting, Victoria visualises herself as capable of perpetrating violent overtures like the General. Hence, she envisages Bat, as the other, despite his enviable intellectual accomplishment: "Bat does not have that ability, so I am the one with the finger on the trigger: I can very easily destroy him, and this woman, and both their families" (*Snakepit*, 61).

The identified equilibrium between Victoria's destructive capacity and the General's brutality establishes the authenticity of power transference during situations of oppression. Victoria's encounter with oppressive and dehumanising experiences from General Bazooka rather than demotivates her to settling into a perpetual fate of the victimised, reforms her decision to become a perpetrator herself. This transformation emphasises the complexity of representing binaries as having existential continuance in the description of gendered duties. On the other hand, the portrayal of the character's attainment of determination towards constant valorisation propels the dissolution of difference; culminating in fluid presentation of all human activities. At this point, the other is the exact replication of the self. Hence, Victoria's vehemence resonates with that of her victimiser. The narrator's description of her swift response to Bat's arrogance attests to Victoria's attainment of the same invincible status as General Bazooka. The extradiegetic narrator's testimony confirms Victoria's expression of venom:

Blind with rage, she slapped him on the temple. It did not hurt very much, his eyes did not water... But Bat saw it as a revelation of Victoria's true colours. A wave of fear coursed through his chest. What did I get myself into? he thought, remembering the toast he made to risk, to adventure, the evening they met. ...Victoria wondered if she had gone too far. But what was going too far when the General had put him at her disposal? Surely a slap was in order. It was better than a hammer, a panga, or firing a gun. Victoria failed to realize that Bat saw her as a vulnerable woman living in his home, dependent on his compassion, rather than a Bureau agent with life-or-death authority (*Snakepit*, 63).

Victoria on many occasion reveals her capacity to unleash violent mishap but Bat neglects the warning signs. His displayed carelessness stems from the ideology of sexual politics which reinstates women as inferior and mostly unfit to perpetrate violence. This observation explains the reason women are still presented as weak, inferior and predictable in most fictional narratives. It confirms such view as popular among men. Despite being warned by his wife to advise that Bat should have a background check on Victoria, Mr Kalanda dismisses her worries as trivial, howbeit with a secret longing for sexual escapade of his own:

How exactly does someone tell Bat anything like that? Kalanda pondered, his thoughts drifting to Victoria's physique. He preferred wild-spirited ladies; he hadn't had any in a while. To occupy the monotony associated without being married and ensured pussy, he hoped he had found one. He prayed Bat had been enjoying himself (*Snakepit*, 39).

However, this narrative faults the accuracy of this myopic description of gendered roles which grants continuance to the ideological stance of difference in imaginative work. It deconstructs the perpetual significance of visage affixed to the figuration of dichotomy, reinforcing the fact that aggression is an inherent feature of all humans and not specifically gendered. Thus, the writer through his revelation of the empowering abilities of dissembling circumstances, rights the habitual erroneous extension of revivifying the strength of sexual politics in literary works. Instead, he reveals that the ability of the victimised to replicate the pattern of their oppressors result in fluid demonstration of powers which discredits the ingrained notion of distinction in the adoption of gendered roles. According to Victor Turner (1982: 57), creates a merging of all experiences. He authenticates that "The self which is normally "the broker" between one person's action and another's simply becomes

irrelevant...All men, even all things are felt to be one". In short, Victoria's attitude reiterates the rupture in conventional depiction of otherness. These expressed realities bridge the gap between self and other, thereby engendering a neutral pattern in the description of roles. The unfortunate experiences of being victims of oppression influence the decision of the oppressed to attain the control of their victimisers turning them to perpetrators in the process. Converting the pain of her sexual abuse into growth, Victoria emerges a victimiser in absolute control of not just her sexuality but in charge of her victims' sexualities and their lives. A notorious dictator, she combines three destructive weapons that denote her versatility and expertise as a perpetrator: "Sex had only ever served as a tool, like to a gun or a knife, for her work. (*Snakepit*, 24). The figuration of this woman who delves deep into crime through her determination to surmount the psychological hurdles of her victimisation, demonstrates that oppression does not automatically result in the expansion of bodily dichotomies. It oftentimes influences disintegrations in behavioural patterns, resulting in fluid presentation of gendered roles.

Victoria's decision to murder Babit, Bat's lover and soon to be wife in the most gruesome manner further portrays the degeneration of sexual hierarchies and the diffusing effect of violence on gendered roles. To surmount the obstruction that stands between her and her marital goal, Victoria's threats to exterminate her rival fall on deaf ears. Babit stubbornly retains her position without giving much attention to Victoria's threats. The narrator observes the strong determination of the latter to remain:

Is that the housegirl speaking?  
It is the lady of the house speaking, Babit replied curtly.  
I am the lady of the house child.  
I am not your child, woman. Stop bothering us. Get yourself  
a man. Bat is my man. You are the intruder...Save yourself the  
humiliation and...Leave before something happens to you.  
Nothing is going to happen to me. You are going to remain  
where you are. (*Snakepit*, 78)

Having hinted Babit about her intention to forcefully regain her position as the first wife and the mother of Bat's daughter, Victoria expects her to comply with the instruction she has given to her. However, she stays and disregards her rival's threats. Her careless rebuff of Victoria's warning evokes in the latter a menacing determination to kill her. The narrator

reveals her determination to resort to violent means of achieving her goals: “The General’s problem didn’t interest her in the least. She had hers and it was called Babit. She had to go (*Snakepit*, 199).

Meanwhile, Babit’s neglect of Victoria’s threats stems from the supposed belief that Victoria is merely being harsh. Although aware of the increase in the record of perpetrated crimes and murder in the country as a result of political agitations, Babit’s personality resonates with that of a good woman. Thus, her main duty resonates with traditional expectations of ensuring men are supported. She confesses her allegiance to Bat when she says: “A trustworthy woman inspects the fasteners” (*Snakepit*, 79). Hence, to fulfil her role as a good woman, she watches out for Bat’s safety always without taking cognisance of her own protection. She understands that her lover works amidst ferocious politicians who get easily paranoid. Therefore, she commits herself to keeping tabs on him and the activities that might affect him. Afraid that he might get caught again in the uncontrolled occurrences of manic car explosions, she states her concern: “Often I wonder if you ought to give up driving that vehicle” (*Snakepit*, 200). A very shielded woman, Babit believe that to be safe from trouble, one has to avoid it and live a very conservative life. This believe makes her accept minor insignificant roles: “Regarding his sibling and the funds, Bat remained silent. Babit was assigned the duty of listening to the radio during the entire day and night” (*Snakepit*, 199).

Her inability to conceptualise performing beyond the mundane chores she executes daily makes her undermine the capacity of women to perpetrate violent. Hence, her ideology that Bat is exposed to danger is grounded on the fact that he works within the wider circle of society while she considers herself safe from turbulence because she lives a conservative life. With that perception she feels comfortable despite Victoria’s threat. However, to underscore the unorthodox of her belief, Victoria decides to carry out her threats. The narrator describes the hideousness of the act as he captures Bat’s neurotic reaction when he returns home:

He exhaled deeply a few times before leaving the sleeping area. He noticed big, blurry, pinkish footprints. As he flung open the restroom door, he yelled out. He came close to crushing her head. The wedding band was sparkling shatteringly in the light, and the torso lay in the

bathtub with its arms falling loosely at its sides. He wasn't sure if he sobbed or just stood there. He wasn't sure if he passed out or puked. He managed to go to the police station somehow. That he didn't kill anyone en route was a miracle. He appeared suddenly from the windy realm of insanity, and at first they believed he was insane (*Snakepit*, 210).

Victoria's determination to exterminate Babit in order to have her way with Bat explicates the evolvement of dangerously deviant attitude in women towards conforming to traditional roles. The vivid description of the scene and Bat's neurotic response to the onslaught shows the fierceness of the attack. Although that Victoria does not appear physically at the scene of the crime makes it seem as though she is incapable of committing the crime by herself, her precision in masterminding the attack and the choice of the ferocious method of dismembering her rival shows her notoriety. For before the events, the men who murder Babit discuss the devilry details of their expertise with Victoria: "with style. They had jokingly said that people were animals, that when you got used to slitting the throats of cows, like they did daily, you could easily do a person. Although she required proof, people asked. A hand or finger or something more intimate.... (*Snakepit* 218). She commits this felony against another human and sanctions the act. This establishes a non-gendered biased boundary in the perpetration and figuration of violence. A fact which Victoria herself confirms earlier in the novel when she equates her inhuman nature with that of General Bazooka, an avid killer. She thinks proudly while taunting Babit that: "Initially just a slip of the tongue, calling her barren had become a potent tool. the bazooka. She cherished its crushing power (*Snakepit*, 137)".

Therefore, the fact that Victoria loves to subject people to suffering makes her capable of overlooking the gravity of the pain her victims might suffer. Notably also, that she refers to herself as a "*bazooka*" with a small letter "b" is not an expression of her minority in perpetrating violence. Rather, it is an expression that authenticates his minor contribution to her overtly vehement notoriety. This independent understanding of her own dominance explains the mostly rebellious attitude she displays towards Bazooka's orders: "She understood that in order for that to occur, she was going to defy Commander Bazooka" (*Snakepit*, 24). Constantly expressing the superiority of her own will and independence she suppresses the significance of Bazooka's personality: "She was left with two choices: either to fabricate information or to let the General fuck himself" (40).

Essentially, the reflection of these twenty-first century Ugandan writers of the shift in gendered roles reveals an exposure of strategic closures to the persistent challenge of duality. The depiction of the monstrous killing of Babit as masterminded by Victoria is the writer's conscientious forewarning of the main implications of the shift in gendered roles.

The writer's volatile eradication of Babit, the idyllic good woman in this novel, again depicts the speed at which the domesticated position of women is diminishing. The creation of the awareness in the occurrences of shift in gendered roles in the narrative, specifically in the perpetrations of violence poses a main challenge to the security of the continent in general, and Uganda in specific. Since both male and female characters now demonstrate the capacity to initiate volatilities, it is difficult to apportion judgement of crimes based on gender differences. It also increases the incidence of crime rate within the community.

However, the effort of all the writers in depicting these evolving nuances is not only to create the awareness of the dissolution of definite gendered culture and roles but also to redress the imbalanced visualisation of the victimised in literary representations. This redress in the imagination of adopted roles aligns with the description of the complimented strength African male and female sexes exhibit before the infiltration of the adverse marginalisation of women during the colonial era. Zulu Sofola in Ojo Ade Femi (1990: 723) maintains that: "In the traditional African system women have roles to play in every endeavours because they were very strong and active". Therefore, the reduction of women to merely domesticated beings in representations is falsification that belies the complimentary adoptions of gendered roles. However, the portrayal of Victoria's indiscriminate expression of a violent life reinforces the fluidity of power. Thus, these victimised characters are involved in demonstrating their intensive ability to switch positions. In other words, visualisation of duties, goes beyond what has been by envisioning the "becoming" of what would be. This makes it a didactic African literature that not only reinstates the reflection of the society, but also refracts it.

In the same manner, Padlock's continuance of vehement assertion of authority culminates in decline of duality in presentations of gendered duties. She again exemplifies the budding determination in visualised subjugated characters that not only explicates their

confrontational resilient towards oppressors but adopts the instincts of the oppressors to perpetrate more severe barbarous acts on their victims.

Having established the dominance of her presence within her home and surroundings, Padlock demonstrates the similitude of how power operates. She reenacts her childhood traumatic experiences but reinterprets her role in it as the dictatorial authority. The testimony of the narrator's rebirth as Padlock's first son affirms the re-incarnation of her severity as the re-hashing of her parents' oppressiveness. She treats her sons especially her first son with so much disdain that resonates with her parents' descent attitude towards her while growing up for being a girl. The arrival of Mugezi on a fiercely stormy day makes the birth process more complicated for Padlock. This forces Padlock to depend on the mascot delivery expertise of her aunty-in-law who is reputable for her apt prediction of destinies. Her eventual prediction of Mugezi's future carrier as an assistant mascot aggravates Padlock's hatred towards a child who chooses to arrive on an unfortunate day. In order to avenge the pain of a denied expectation, she withdraws emotional affection from her first son and victimises him consistently to show her disapproval of him. Departing to the city with her husband in a bid to start a new life, she violently registers her disdain with humiliations. Mugezi narrates:

...It dawned on me that we were leaving. The house now echoed when one called. But why was I not dressed for the journey?... It was then that I was told I was staying. Serenity climbed into the cab. Padlock turned to follow him in. I touched her, smudging her dress. She cringed and, with blind speed, drove her palm full into my face. I fell back in the mud and, in protest, rolled once or twice. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 68)

Abandoned in the village with his mascot grand aunt, Mugezi feels the same detachment his mother feels while growing up. Although a legitimate part of the family, his dehumanisation and alienation makes him a victim of abandonment. The fact that the narrator suffers traumatic violation perpetrated by his parents' just like his mother confirms the flexible replications of the tyranny and shift in the imagination of gendered roles. Similarly, the foregoing reiterates these duplications as influencing the initiation of shifts that dismantle stringent politicisation of duties into dichotomous linearity of victims/perpetrators. Hence, this presentation affirms the possible shift in the position of a

victim to that of a perpetrator as exemplified by Padlock. Establishing the convertibility of servitude experiences into autocrat models, the author deconstructs the habitual figuration of dehumanisation as reducing the totality of the victims to nothingness. Annihilation in its representation here fortifies victims to be perpetrators of violence in the future. Compelled to join his parents in the city after the death of his grand aunt, Mugezi servitude gets harnessed: “My coming was a blessing for her, and she made no secret of it. In one stroke, I had become the family shitman” (93). It is, therefore, clear that Mugezi is a victim of retributive exploitation and oppression. As a matter of fact, from his ruinations, Padlock restores the autonomy of power denied her for being a girl child during her formative years. Unable to totally recoup her distorted worth mainly through assertion of her significance over her husband and other male archetypes of her depreciation, Padlock reconstitutes the precedence of the pain she experiences by altering the sexual object of her oppression in the presence to truly explore the sovereignty of the dominant dictator. The narrator’s reflection lends credibility to the assertion as observed in the following:

My stay in this city had, so far, been a calculated attempt to reduce my stature, to prune my idea of myself and to crush my personality in the mortar of conventionality. I was being ordered to do things without being told the reasons or the purpose. I was being beaten and lathered in contempt. I was only good for washing nappies, cooking, fetching water---for doing all the things that Padlock did not want to do. In other words, the torture rack was grinding and spinning, slowly doing its jobs of breaking body and will. (*Abyssinians Chronicles*, 114).

This skilful retaliation of suppression grants her the access to recast the past, thus enabling her to function in the capacity of the autocrats’ selves of the past. Recognising this synergy, her son states “In a dictatorship, the past and the present were Siamese twins, I learned, better left unseparated for good of public order and family harmony” (106). Thus, Padlock’s determination to regenerate as a dictator is foregrounded on her previous encounter with savagery. This implies that ferocious experiences produce counter-intuitive responses from sufferers. Therefore, it neutralises the elongated static dualism in the presentations of gendered duties especially in fictional narratives. It also engenders dynamic exchanges of selves which further influence transformational shifts in literary works. The family conflict the narrator describes gradually evolves into a bloody battle for superiority. After listening to his mother’s summation of his character, he visualises the eruption of a vast conflict:



My leg buckled, and I almost fell against the door...Robber! Killer! Torturer! Who was robbing, torturing and killing my spirit every day? Who tortured me with terrible words, with the smell of shit and the fire of guava switches? Who corroded my spiritual goods in a bid to file me down to the conventionality of a cog in a wheel? A war had just been declared. I had no illusions of winning this trench warfare, but I was determined to become a very costly, very destructive victim. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 113).

This portrays Padlock's involvement into a staunch dictator whose annihilating tactics victimise not only physically but also psychologically. This makes the experience of dehumanisation too burdensome for Mugezi. Hence, he perceives the violent attack of his mother to be elevated beyond the level of conflict, "a trench warfare" (113). It means that unmanaged family crisis can culminate to a full-fledged war because of its destructive aftermath. Nevertheless, Padlock always wins despite the preparedness of her victims, in this case her son. This expounds her formidability as a dictator. It again clearly deregulates the persistent claims of difference between the activities of perpetrator/victim through its demonstration of Padlock's role shift, from that of the victimised to the victimiser. This shift, therefore, permits an androgynous representation of violence which reflects its non-polarised implication on gendered duties. The activities of most perpetrators are refracted as a parallel continuum that evokes synonymous presentations. The homodiegetic narrator observes a resonating pattern in most dictatorship. His identification of this reoccurring strategic sameness in most volatile executions enables him to ignore the threats of his superior:

...Finally, Fr. Mindi told us officially. He dressed his anger in curse-laden threats, ultimately announcing that if the culprit did not give himself up within three days, something was going to happen to him. I was in familiar territory, hardly able to believe how similar dictatorial thought patterns were. I had heard all this in my former life, it left me cold (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 216-217).

Observing consistencies in the dictatorial modes of oppression, the narrator expounds the fluidness of all violent overtures. Erasures of dichotomies in the representation of hostilities disassembles foregrounded politics that ascribes the valour of the superiority in actualising dictatorial obligations to men. Through their imaginations of dynamic shifts in gendered duties as aftermaths of violence and war, the narratives expose emerging trends of homogenisation in literary imaginations of gendered roles. Tamale (2011: 94) submission

reiterates this assertion when she says that “identifying perpetrators solely by their gender is an inadequate route to a full explanation of the myriad behaviours that can be called gender”. In recognising the decrypting influence of insurgencies, Marshal Amin prescribes an encapsulating revolt that is void of polarities. According to the narrator:

He called upon everyone to knock down the obstacles in their way, no matter what, to emerge victorious and remain on top. He reminded us that the axis of power was always shifting, drifting in opposite direction, and that nothing would remain the same, especially for those who were ready to work hard and realize their ambitions...He asked everyone to get involved. He asked pupils to depose bad teachers, workers to overthrow tyrannical bosses, wives to divorce bad husbands, children to reject bad parents, victims to rise up and take power and the poor to take chances, make money and enjoy the fruits of this country (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 138).

Marshal’s admonition uncovers some wholesome truth about eruption of violence and its ability to cause a generic integration. This erasure of difference culminates in mostly all the characters’ featured desires to either perpetrate violence or avenge former injustices as a result of their encounter with traumatic situations. Padlock’s ability to foreground her personality and significance through perpetration of violence on her son is a lucid example of the reclamation of the dominance denied her for being a girl child while growing up.

Furthermore, the transformation of Milkjar from a fearful timid girl to a fearless staunch perpetrator indicates the consequences of violence as provoking slips that shift the consistence in the adoption of gendered roles. Initially fearful about Mugezi’s prediction of a blank future without hope, she refrains from accepting the justice the headmaster provides; “Milkjar was pathetic: she could not stop crying. The headmaster thrusts a stick in her hand and ordered her to beat me. She dropped the stick as though it were a hairy caterpillar” (82). However, after their leave from primary school, Milkjar metamorphosis into an affirmative autocrat who subjugates. The narrator identifies: “What I saw next made my lower lip fall: I thought I recognised the large girl as one from Ndere Primary School whom I had told that she would birth a limbless creature...” (362). To reinforce her now powerful position, Milkjar decides to sexually assault Mugezi alongside her colleagues. This act communicates experience to the narrator which makes him conclude thus: “I kept thinking that these

women had raped other men before. I was sure the men had kept quiet about it. I was also going to keep my mouth shut” (363).

This portrayal of characters’ decentralised reaction to violence and debunks the depiction of differentials as compulsory authentication of the dynamics of gendered roles classification. Rather, the loss of stereotypes in characters’ vehement responses to oppressive overtures shows the dynamic reversal of symbolic order. Victims of callousness in these narratives are reformed through the oppressions to be expressive instead of being reclusive. According to Mamdani (2001: 7), the reoccurring eruption of violence can result in “the production of not only individual criminals but populations of criminals”. Through this re-figuration of human capacities to overcome suppressions, it can be deduced not only that the adoptions of roles are becoming fluid and ungendered, but further that the notion of difference used to earmark features which distinguish the activities of the self from the other are gradually being erased. For instance, the fact that Kasawo the narrator’s aunty is gang raped by male soldiers’ shortly before Mugezi is also gang raped by female soldiers reveals a non-dichotomous order in the operation of power. The foregoing implies that the trauma of sexual abuse is an unfavourable condition which happens to both sexes; however, this is not aptly represented in fictional narratives. The reason, according to the narrator, is because most males tend to keep quiet about it (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 363). Hence, Milkjar’s resort to rape Mugezi alongside other women is a revolutionary reaction against sexual political categorisation of women as mainly the receptor of violence and never the initiators.

Assuredly, the lethal effect of trauma is an ontological challenge which reverses the dichotomous mode in the imagination of gendered duties. It construes gendered roles from a dynamic intersexual perspective where adoption of roles or the happenstance of pain constantly oscillates between characters mutually without establishing physiological dualities. This enables occurrences of dynamic interchange in the description of roles where sexual opposition is not considered a factor to oppress or tolerate incessant victimisations. The unfolding of events in these narratives buttresses the fact that “each of us has a “peace” face and a “war” face, we are programmed for co-operation, but prepared for conflict (Turner, 1982:19).

Inferably, the figuration of male oppressors in literary imaginations as mostly ferocious without obvious forms of vulnerabilities mainly reiterates the severity of the promotion of sexual politics in fictional narratives. However, the depiction of power seekers as assuming the basest form of beggary to upscale their formidability reveals as falsely the illusion of their exemption from dehumanisation.

### **5.3 Dissolving the stereotypic representation of power**

Scholars have foregrounded the transgressing experiences of gendered relationships in literature as capable of evoking intertextual slips in the evolving presentation of roles, the reflection of trauma in humans as dismantling stereotypic allotment of roles iterates scholarly theorised affirmations of rupture in the classifications of duties. “What we invoke as the naturalized knowledge of gender is, in fact, a changeable and revisable reality” (Butler, 1999: xxiii). Hence, the notion of gendered roles as unstable and subject to constant shift had long been theoretically discovered, still many literary works are yet to portray the dynamic shift this change propels in representation of gendered duties. “The end of history is the crossing over to the place of the Other, the return to the place of signifying productivity...Man will disappear into the space of the Other, explore it, and ultimately *become it*-that is her” (Goux, Jean 1987). These theoretical assertions depict the recurring fluidness of gendered roles. They also buttress poststructuralist contrastive reactions to rigid conventional practices. Despite the initial portrayal of General Bazooka in *Snakepit* as a vociferous terrorist who oppresses with a sense of brutal finality, the latter portrayal of his vulnerability establishes the gendered role interjections.

Bazooka’s elevation to an enviable realm of authority within the military and his uncommon rapport with Marshal Amin which the narrator describes as a case of: “love at first sight” (15), makes it possible for him to commit atrocities without remonstrance. To this effect, his decision “to roll Victoria in the gutters” has a ring of certainty to it (27). The resonation of the General’s autonomy adds echoes of superfluous arrogance to his words and decision. This further enables him to dehumanise others while he parades himself as invincible. Victoria herself has earlier confessed to falling in love with his status of invincibility. Bazooka is undoubtedly fearsome.

Nevertheless, the irrational behaviour of Marshall Amin threatens the sustainability of the General's invincible position. Although he is engrossed in his plans to annihilate his next victim Bat, the Marshal's discontentment makes him an oppressed victim. The narrator envisions his lament:

Other concerns plagued General Bazooka as well. He was totally focused on maintaining Marshal Amin's favor and working his way up the power structure. It had been quite simple to ascertain what the Marshal felt and desired both before and after the coup. But as international pressure and local unrest grew over time, the Marshal changed over time—becoming erratic, paranoid, and unpredictable. It was now much tougher to schedule an appointment to see him or to get him on the hot line because he had expanded the authority of the Eunuchs, the presidential guards who constantly surrounded him. The General was pacing up and down his office and stated aloud to himself, "I shouldn't be one of those compelled to wait. (*Snakepit*, 42).

The above attests to the generic shared feeling of helplessness and insignificance between the oppressor and the oppressed. The extension of the feeling of vulnerability to the victimisers for the first time in *Snakepit* signifies that the portrayal of otherness is not gendered but circumstantial. This suggests the erasure of the grid that separates the experience of self from that of others. For both the male and female sexes, power does degenerate into weaknesses which explains the reason it is retrogressing to persistently depict gendered relationships and roles in a binary of strength versus weakness. Shattered further with Amin's decision to swap his position with a newly found ally, Robert Ashes, Bazooka becomes fully tormented with feeling of insecurities. This amplifies his objectification and demonstrates his incapability to regain authority. He pulsates nostalgically to relive the past: "Those people are sick I can assure you", the General said, thinking about his days as king of the lake..." (*Snakepit*, 105).

The effect of the aforementioned disillusionment is that it elicits the same anguish of objectification from perpetrator and victims alike. This depicts interaction of oppression in most humans as interchangeable, thus, capable of reflecting shifts in the portrayal of gendered roles. Bonnie Burstow (2003: 1303) succinctly submits that oppression is the primary traumatising condition, one to which all are subject. As a matter of fact, Bazooka's earlier described attempt to retain power denotes his long existence as marginalised, inferior and *othered*. Although he enjoys humiliating his female victims by assigning

derogatory roles to them to ensure they understand his superiority and the significance of his power, “There were times when General Bazooka drank and pissed and spat his pants. He would command his date to disrobe him and clean the mess...he would watch while the woman struggle not to show disgust” (98-99). Meanwhile, the General is reduced to Marshal Amin’s child minder in order to sustain his favour. One of his aids reminds him thus “Things change General...How long has it been since he invited you to his home to play hide-and-seek with his children?” (*Snakepit*, 149). The colonel’s speech reveals the obnoxious roles most oppressors’ play to retain their relevance in the corridors of power. But these revelations of the dictators own personal encounters with oppressions have been hidden under the cover of sexual politics is the main reason the dichotomous categorisation of roles continues to substantiate women’s existence. However, through the unearthing of the dynamic realities of gendered roles such as shown in these narratives, discrimination of “otherness” is becoming exterminated gradually. Siessel Lie (2005: 49) reiterates the symbiotic nature of gendered duties, when she posits that:

If everyone can play all roles, if we recognize the complexity of sexual difference, gender cannot be a reason to oppress”. Haven’t you been the father of your sister? haven’t you as a wife been the husband of your spouse, and perhaps the brother of your brother or hasn’t your brother been your big sister?”

Within the context of humanity, gendered role specifications do not pungently align with the stereotypes of anatomical norms. The use of dual contrast in narrative fictions to reinforce the conditions of subjugated female characters as permanently subdued are infiltrations of sexual politics that ensures gendered duties retain a crystallised static position. Meanwhile, the dismantling effect of violence on gendered relationships as portrayed in *Snakepit* shows the dynamic tendencies of all humans to combine both the potential of the oppressed and the oppressors. Apparently, that no character is depicted as immune to pain deconstructs the consistent attribution of importance to certain roles as against others. One of the most adamant dictators in Amin’s regime, Robert Ashes, humbly admits their state of enslavement to Bazooka: “If his commands were disregarded, Marshal Amin would not be pleased. Are you his messenger boy now?... It is what we all are or try to be; some more capable than others.” (*Snakepit*, 156). The foregoing validates that the

adoption of inferior roles is not women's problem but the challenge faced by all humanity. It is observed that both men and women are victims of dehumanisation.

The event of his incarceration makes Bat, the intellectual Bureaucrat who has earlier felt himself irreplaceable very reasonable and humble, he realised that in the struggle for significance, nobody is indispensable: "The realization that the authorities was conducting business only a few floors above him left him feeling hopelessly redundant and unimportant. Without his vain attempts to maintain a certain thing, those in power could carry out their destructive mission" (104). His deep understanding about his disposability makes him assume his duties with the hope of surviving the experience of brutalisation. Under the severe surveillance of the soldiers' gazes Bat alongside his fellow inmates are compelled to exhibit otherness. The heterodiegetic narrator observes their absolute submission to authorities as marginalised others. He says: "The two soldiers barked orders at once... More commands: Wash blanket. Wash lorry. Wash self. They washed the blankets, glad that they were thin. They battled mosquitoes along with other biting and stinging bugs while they scrubbed the truck's floor, sides, and tailgate. (*Snakepit* 143).

The quiet submission of these male prisoners to the soldiers' oppression, reveals the challenge of submitting to brutality as not gendered but generically human. One of the soldiers at the verge of his impatient outburst draws a parallelism which reinforces further the existence of confluence in gendered duties: "Cleaning woman's job. You are still long way off, you pussies, one soldier said (144). The inability of the inmates to complete the tasks at hand with quick precision causes an immediate transformation of their sexual organs which changes their gender; this transition explicates the strong influence of violence as capable of reconstructing the physiological stability of all humans. This suggests the exposure of human anatomy to the treats of alteration under violence circumstances since it erodes the victimised capability to act in accordance with their biological appearance. The renaming of their sexual organ denotes their state of otherness and inferiority, which makes it possible for the soldiers to control them without stress. What this implies is that the ideology of "otherness" which replicates the notion of duality is not gender specific. Bat's experience of "otherness" buttresses the fact that the challenge of being "othered" is a societal issue that can occur in intra-gender relationships. The portrayal of otherness with a

broad view causes a significant shift that initiates the erasure of the stereotypic depiction of otherness as affirming only the dichotomy in gender interactions. Bat's distraught significantly validates the tendencies of all oppressed to suffer the aftermath of the hegemonic activities of their oppressors. To his friend's enquire about the psychological impact of his sudden release, Bat affirms: "Feels like fuck..." (161). His admittance of invalidity espouses that encounters of subjugations are forcefully expanding beyond the oppositional markers of gender distinctions.

The figuration of Marina in *Secret No More* also foregrounds the trope of dissolution of the stereotypic representation of power. As a former witness of sexual violation and an eventual victim of rape, Marina's rebound further reveals the re-adaptations of characters in situations of violence. Maturing from the horror of genocide, homelessness, rape, teenage pregnancy and a violent marriage, Marina forges a strong resilience through which she reverses her silence and sexual objectification. Although her husband's sexual brutishness constantly reminds her, of her past marginalisation: "Their sex life was an instant disaster. She could never have sex with him. Every time he was on top of her, the picture of Matayo and the colonel who had raped her mother would flash through her mind" (*Secret No More*, 139); to dominate the resurging pain from the trauma of her past sexual experience, she establishes an amoral relationship with Dee that aligns with her expectation of pleasure and respectability. However, in spite of her mutual consent to Dee's advances, her voiceless response still depicts her objectification:

Her eyes began to mist over and her legs weaken. Dee gently pushed the towel from her shoulders and it fell down with a soft thud. He drew her naked body close to his chest and held her there. Then without warning, his mouth closed over hers, parting her lips with his tongue. Marina opened her lips wider, responding to Dee's kiss uncontrollably. Marina could not control herself anymore... (*Secret No More*, 137).

Marina voiceless response to all Dee's sexual overtures without making any effort to influence the sexual activities in the above excerpt presents the female characters as subordinated to the domination of male. The inability to take initiative to control especially sexual activity is the reason the image of women remains subjugated in contemporary literary works. Dee's initiation of every move suggests a permanence to the polarised visualisation of roles: "Every time he was on top of her..." (*Secret No More*, 19). The



narrative of her objectification ensures she retains the role of a passive receptor: “He drew her naked body close to his chest and held her there” (139). This depiction typifies the dual presentations of gendered roles, where men are usually the capable captor, and women still retained the position of a weak captive (Miller, 1975: 24). To this effect, Marilyn Manners (2005:173) notices that “everything that acts on us-is all ordered around hierarchal opposition that comes back to man/woman opposition”. Nevertheless, Marina takes her destiny in her own hand. She steps out from her conventionally expected role of the submissive one to create her own liberation by refusing to remain motionless. She pursues the sexual experience she desires: “Marina looked through the windows at the grey sky and wet ground, but she was not deterred by it: she was determined to go out (*Secret No More*, 142). That the house feels suddenly too restraining makes her realise the need to step out of its confines, this represents the heroine’s journey towards resilience, maturity and healing. That she refuses to be dictated to henceforth culminates in a reclamation of a definite identity. The omniscient narrator captures the rebellious display of resistance:

...Ah, well I’m afraid I’m going out now, maybe... Perfect, Dee interrupted her. Then we can meet at Sabina club on Bamboo Road. You know where it is don’t you? No Marina said almost shouting, I can’t meet you there. Why not? Dee asked matter of factly. Well, well because I just can’t, you must understand. No I don’t, you tell me, Dee shot back. Well I just can’t, Marina said a note of annoyance creeping into her voice. What do you want to talk to me about anyway? If you have anything to say, you know where I live. With that she slammed down the receiver. She was angry at the way Dee was trying to assert himself. Just because I let him kiss me does not give him a licence to call me any time he wants and expect me to jump, she thought angrily. She opened the door and let herself out. (*Secret*, 142-143)

This shift destabilises the generic figuration of women as likely to exhibit subservient attitude towards masculine domination. It equally imagines a female character whose choice to affirm her voice demonstrates the gradual dissipation in the categorisation of gendered roles. Foucault cited in Butler (1999: 25) opines that this discovery of transgression in the presentation of binary opposition culminates in the disappearance of sex categories. In other words, the erasure of categorisation in sexuality creates an autonomy of equality that represents the emanation of fluid exchange of power in sexual activities. Reiterating the observation of equal autonomy, Judith Still (2005: 78) avers that “where there is a voice,

sex becomes undecided.” The implication of this indecision on gendered roles is that it constantly shifts the imagination of gendered duties from predictable to unpredictable, thus exposing as equal the desire in both sexes to control. The narrator’s description of the eventual initiation of sexual relationship between Marina and Dee reveals the elimination of duality in the imagination of erotic affairs:

All this while, Marina did not try to stop him and she briefly wondered why. But this time, the kiss was not as gentle as the first time he had kissed her; he was demanding, more passionate...Her nipple began to harden. Dee noticed them and slowly bent down and took one hardened nipple in his mouth, then the other. Marina tried to push him away afraid she would not be able to take all the pleasure she was experiencing...She arched herself towards the arousing tongue, urging Dee to move even faster. He plunges deeper inside her and began moving faster, establishing a rhythm which Marina found herself joining in...Marina pulled him back and once again guided his manhood inside her. (*Secret No More*, 145-146)

The excerpt above demonstrates Marina’s liberation from the pain of her past violation and also signifies her willingness to regain the control of her amorous feelings. Her active participation in this activity re-orders the sexual experience, granting equal dominance to both sexes. At this point, both characters exhibit similar desires to control, thus, erasing ontological discrimination that comes with anatomical differences in sexual relations. The ability to reinstate authority alongside her male counterpart destroys the correctness of the apt polarisation of bodies in fictional attempt to maintain the politicised order of sexuality. Instead, it produces a symbiotic exchangeability which Turner (2005: 189) observes “reverses the dematerialization of woman’s body and erases the notion of lack and absence which represses a woman’s transforming personality”. Having annulled bodily disparities through her performance, Marina’s capability resonates same prowess as her partner’s reinforcing their equivalence. Recognising the similitude in their display of control, the narrator reveals their symbiotic exchange of power:

This time, Dee clutched her bare buttocks and began riding her, in out, sideways, forth and backwards. Marina wrapped her legs around his heaving torso, imprisoning him there, not wanting him to move away this time...Then with one more thrust, they both exploded into a thousand shudders, heaving and lurching their bodies from one side to the other. (*Secret No More*, 146)

From the foregoing, the truncation of the individual's effort to control the sequence of power in this narrative results in a synergic response of each individual to sexual politics. The depiction of this coherence in sexual interaction reveals the symmetrical attributes in human relations as transcending of limiting binaries. The implication of this decontextualising of margins is that it destroys the barriers of differentiations in the allotment of gendered roles it evokes a synonymous presentation of bodies which initiates the engendering of roles in imaginative works. The univocal depiction of energy unifies the ambition to adopt parallel gendered roles, thus causing further fluid replications in the representation of gendered duties:

As days went by, they continued making love at least three times a week. Their lovemaking was not as wild as that first time but it was always terrific and Marina never wanted it to end. (*Secret No More*, 147)

The continuance of the love affair between Dee and her is a retaliation of her husband's marital unfaithfulness. This revolutionary act is a communication of her equal significance and also a demonstration of her willingness to evolve beyond the limit of binary. With consistent decision to gain control, Marina's performance influences the shift in the presentation of gendered duties. According to Rubin (1975: 200), "a thorough going feminist revolution liberates more than women, it frees forms of sexual expression and liberates human personality from the straightjacket of gender". Holistically, the depiction of Marina's transformative growth, and her preference for dominant roles typifies the possibility of achieving the feminist goal of filming an androgynous genderless exchange of roles where limitations are not based on the binaries of sexual divisions. Nevertheless, the implication of this enabled interchange of roles is that it causes a shift to the adoption of gendered duties, making it difficult to identify gendered specific violence and crimes. At this point, her determination illustrates the ruination of predictability in the assessments of gendered duties. The homodiegetic narrator in *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000:382) affirms the correlation war has with sex when he notes that both are violent and thus, have the capacity to destroy normalcy:

Lovemaking itself was an act of war, an expression of the tension ripping the country apart. By trying to create something new and beautiful, we were firing our weapons, opposing forces of evil and

destruction, throwing a lifeline to something on the other side that had to be redeemed. (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 382).

The narrator's statement in the above excerpt authenticates the parallel relationship of violence between war and lovemaking. Both events as depicted metamorphoses to a reorder that creates new possibilities, especially in the portrayal of gendered roles. George's reprimand of his friend's show of superiority consolidates further the fluid evolving in the interpretation of gendered roles. He interferes: "Quit your nonsense, you two," George came in authoritatively. "Who among you has never been 'detoothed' by these smart girls of Makerere?" (132).

Furthermore, *Abyssinian Chronicles*' explication of Mugezi's sexual experience with Lusanani, a teenage girl married to an elderly man, old enough to be her father, foregrounds the superiority of her amorous knowledge. This reduces the narrator to a victim in their intimate relationship. He confesses:

Lusanani gobbled my virginity within the walls of the derelict house where we had made our bobbin, transaction. We explored our eager bodies and squeezed whatever delight we could out of them. I was finally clearing the last hurdle to adulthood. In the process, I was touched by twinges of regrets: I should have asked her earlier, I kept thinking... (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 193)

Having been forcefully exposed to fulfilling sexual responsibilities through early marriage, Lusanani becomes an ardent oppressor who violently exerts her control over the erotic capacity of her prey, in this case Mugezi: "Lusanani gobbled my virginity". However, since her aim is also to enlighten her victim about sexual activities she allows him demonstrate a considerable level of freedom: "We explored our eager bodies and squeezed whatever delight we could out of them (139)". These vast description of shift in the assumptions of sexual politics reveals the deconstruction of stratification in gendered roles as yielding a dynamic presentation of gendered duties, where dominance is based on performance instead of the difference in physiology. These representations establish decontextualised state of gendered roles. The main impact of the deconstruction on gendered roles, according to Tamale (2011: 94) is that it discredits the validity of identifying perpetrators solely by their gender. She expounds:

On the one hand it is true that the perpetrators gender does, with overwhelming regularity, differs critically from the gender of their victims. On the other hand, identifying perpetrators solely by their gender is an inadequate route to a full explanation of the myriad behaviors that can be called gender based violence, and cannot explain the fact that women are differently vulnerable to gender-based violence and men are in diverse relationships to its perpetrations. Furthermore, in many countries men experience sexual assault in various context; in sexually abusive home, in gang warfare, in prisons and at the hand of abusive male authorities.

The writers through these figurations, are therefore, able to conscientiously depict experiences of shift in gendered duties. This awareness is created to unlock the imagination of both sexes from a stereotypic linear position and empower both to adopt liberal roles within society. This alteration of superiority in the rating of sexuality encourages the possible democratisation of power. Hence, female characters in these narratives deploy this power to illustrate their equilibriums; for instances, Marina's decision to have an affair with George's close ally (*Secret*, 145-148), Padlock's steadfast declaration of sexual drought on Serenity her husband (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 51), Lusanani's erotic initiation of young boys into adulthood and Milkjar's retaliating rape of Mugezi (*Chronicles*, 363), and the corroboration of Victoria's erotic dominance by the heterodiegetic narrator, when he espouses that:

Victoria had been sleeping with a lot of men who had suffered poor outcomes during the previous two years; some of them she had even recommended to run for their safety. Sex had only ever been a tool, like a pistol or a tool for her job, an extension of her work (*Snakepit*, 24).

These illustrations exemplify the change in the representation of sexuality because it exposes the unlocking of difference in gendered adoption of roles. This portrayal of the transgression of boundaries in sexual dominance further dismantles the polarities in the categorisation of gendered duties which culminates in some inextricable dynamics in the presentation of duties where most allotment of roles shares symbiotic influence.

#### **5.4 Enabling the fluid imagination of shift through the parallel stance of performance**

Fictional narratives have since time immemorial recreated human activities to reiterate pattern of performance in all endeavours. The diversity of these roles and happenings enhances the performing capacity to represent realities. The term ‘performance’ means an illusion of an illusion that might be considered “truthful”, since it reenacts ordinary experience in a more unstable manner; it, has the ability to expose what is normally concealed and hidden from everyday observation and reasoning, (Richard Schechner 1977: xi) and (Victor Turner 1982:14).

The notion of performance as re-adaptations of experiences has been a recurring motif in literary scholarship. This suggestion revolutionises the ideal representation of roles on the basis of sexual difference through its exposure of an alternative mode of figuration in performance. Performance focuses its action mainly on the actions of the performer and their eventual achievements rather than on gendered roles disconnection based on sexual differentiations. Turner (2005: 88), however, affirms the importance of creatively depicting the process of the re-organisation of gendered role through the neutral lenses of performance. This suggestion revolutionises the ideal representation of roles on the basis of sexual difference through its exposure of an alternative mode of figuration in performance. Performance focuses its action mainly on the actions of the performer and their eventual achievements rather on physiology difference. It shifts the precedence of bodily significance from the biases of sexual ontologies onto the non-polarising arena of accomplishments. Hence, the repeated affirmation of women’s vulnerabilities in these novels are enactments which foreground the actualities of their appearing more as a result of their experiential encounters with traumas. This notion is contrastive in nature to the expectations of duality man-woman. They also accentuate feminist radical response to the elimination of obligatory sexualities and sex roles Rubin, (1975: 402). Therefore, the outcome of pain is mostly depicted as encouraging the emergence of fluidness in the appropriations of roles.

Essentially, the reflection of these twenty-first century Ugandan writers of the shift in gendered roles reveals an exposure of strategic closures to the persistent challenge of duality. While Victoria and Padlock establish their dominance through physical assertion

of their enormity, Milkjar, Lusanani and Marina express their sexual dominance when they dictate the erotic tunes in their sexual relationships. Apart from the fact that these representations of gendered roles illustrate the changeability of the stereotypic presentation of gendered duties, they also explicate the enormous extent to which sexual politics is rapidly becoming obsolescent in its application to gendered roles allotment. In other words, its roles and allotment should never be static because gender has the capacity to shift positions. Gorretti's *waiting* also thematises the circumstance of shift in the portrayal of gendered duties. After the death of her mother, Alinda becomes the main authority others submit to, including her patriarchal father. This enables her to affirm more autonomy as the most knowledgeable female in the house. She authoritatively assigns roles to others, including her father, who oblige without resistance. Alinda herself narrates:

Father came into the yard and walked over to us... How is he? he asked, looking at me. Has he drunk any milk? I shook my head as I picked up the piece of cloth that I had used to cover the baby and handed it to Father. Cover him, he will get cold. But this is wet! Father said, holding the cloth near his nostrils and it smells of urine. It's not urine. It's the saliva coming from his mouth. Cover him, I said again...  
(*waiting*, 48)

Having realised her indispensability after the death of her mother, the narrator becomes very dictatorial in relationship with others. Although she respects her father's personality as the head of the home; however, the performance of her role as the coordinator of the home enhances her capacity to assume the role of a dictator who controls others. Father's submission to Alinda's authority signifies a shift in the portrayal of gendered roles. Jungu's decision not to return to Bahati her lover after it is discovered that the latter stays back so they could get married shows that she eventually pursues her dream of becoming the first female soldiers among the liberators. She describes her intention to her friend about Bahati and reveals that "I want to live with him in Tanzania, and I can also become a soldier!". Are there women soldiers among them? I've not seen any...But I can be the first!" (*waiting*, 86). Therefore, that she never returns to her lover until the end of the narrative but choose to continue her journey despite his absence amidst the lots shows that, she finds greater satisfaction in the military career than in her intended marital relationship. Again, the imagination of the Lendu woman's capability to perform a dissecting surgery on the leg of

the old man along other women while the men look too shock to participate underscores the shift in the adoption of roles. Alinda narrates:

Tendo snapped to attention when he heard his name. He had backed off when the Lendu woman has started talking about amputating the old man's leg... We have to do this, the Lendo woman said urgently... can somebody bring the saw! You have to hold him down, the Lendu woman said addressing Nyinbarongo and Jungu. The numbness will have worn off by now. Maya stepped forward. I can also help, she said bravely. Tendo had retreated and was standing on anthill. Father was holding Nyinabarongo's child, shaking his head in disbelief. Jungu, you will hold down his good leg, and Nyinabarong's will take care of the arms, the Lendu woman said, examining the small saw in her hands. She seemed satisfied... (waiting, 68)

The excerpt above shows that women now assume violent roles, while men sometimes shy away from adopting them. This depicts an emerging instability in the portrayal of gendered duties that transforms the stereotypic portrayal of duality into a fluid presentation of gender discourse. It also buttresses the ramified implication of the change of gendered characters. To this effect, the experiences of war as represented in these novels depict women as transcending the limits of their essentiality, a transcending which Alice Jardine (1985:38) observes causes "a valorization of the feminine that is intrinsic to new and necessary modes of thinking, writing or speaking". She expounds further that:

The object produced by this process is neither a person nor a thing, but a horizon towards which the process is tending: a gynema. This gynema is a reading effect, a woman-in-effect that is never stable and has no identity... Woman as a new rhetorical space, is inseparable from the most radical moments of most contemporary discourse...

Jardine's observation clearly elucidates the continuance in the formation of gendered roles and its dynamic transforming impact on women's personality. Therefore, these novels exemplify not just the bridging of dichotomies in gendered roles but also attest to the emergence of confluences in the assessment of gendered configurations especially in Ugandan literature.



### **5.5 Ugandan writers and the portrayal of the continuum in the influences of shift: an amalgamations of purpose**

The expression of fluid roles in Ugandan war narratives remains one of its potent source of portraying the emerging confluences in the representation of duties. In their narration of the motif of relationship between war and its implications on gendered roles, the selected Ugandan male and female writers' foregrounds war, conflict and violence generally as enhancing fluidity in the classifications of gendered roles. There seems to be convergence rather than divergence in their representations of diverse forms of violence that propel the factors which create the shift that engenders categorisations of roles in Ugandan literature. From the delineation of shift presented in the selected twenty-first century Ugandan novels, it is observed that war or circumstantial violence plays a major role in the erasure of dual visualisation of the allotment of roles to male and female characters in fictional narratives. This erasure further reflects authors' unified expression as evoking a genderless literary space. The writers' fluid use of language creates a continuum in the influences of shift that lend credence to its transgressive implication on literary space, which further foregrounds the emergence of a non-biased representational style in fictional narratives.

The authors' similar description of characters' sexuality and audacity dissolves the presentational dichotomies that create hierarchies of opposition between female and male authors. Gorretti's explicit expression of sexual interactions in *Secret No More* parallels Isegawa's sensual detailing of characters' transformational experiences. Gorretti's apt description of her female characters' bodily response to sexual violation and Marina's eventual expression of her sexuality represents the determination of the twenty-first century Ugandan female writers to reverse the absence of the female bodies in African fictional narratives. Describing Mukundane's sexual assault, the author uses visual images that makes her experience of trauma, a symbolic occurrence which materialises her: "Mukundane screamed out as the Colonel seemed to tear at her insides (*Secret*, p 17)". This evocative illustration depicts the anguish of the traumatised to the brutality, it also rebels against a tradition which subjugates the right of the women to express sensual feelings. Gorretti (2013) corroborates this fact when she said:

Then *Secrets No More*, maybe because of the subject matter-there are a lot of graphic sex scenes in it-the reception was quite mixed. When it came out there was a group of people who were concerned that I was talking too much about sex and in a very open way. Women are not supposed to do that and so there was a lot of debate revolving around it.

Furthermore, Gorretti exceptionally links her female characters' victimisations and their valorisation with their demonstrative capacity to regain mastery over their traumatised past sexual violation: "She also wanted them to have a repeat of what had taken place on that delightful morning. As days went by, they continued making love at least three times a week... (*Secret No More*, 147). Mostly, this writer's unbashful representation of amoral activities and the nudity of a female character's body violates the usual presentation of women as sexually objectified. This violation neutralises the patriarchal authoritative imaginations of sexuality in fictional narrative, but synchronises the representational style of both male and female Ugandan writers to depict the continuum of shift in the visualisation of gendered duties. This enablement of a fluid interchange in the language expressions of both male and female authors creates a unification of purpose which homogenises most activities in Ugandan literary space. Hence, the distinctive divergence in authors' works are not the restrictive normative gendered feature but is more of technical stylistic difference. Therefore, the enormity of Isegawa's use of words to capture events in both *Abyssinian Chronicles* and *Snakepit* parallels Gorretti's vivid descriptive use of language. His apt revelation of gender equality is mostly exemplifying through the deconstruction of rigid sexual stereotypes. The writer's basic elucidation of the sexuality of the mayor of Masaka deconstructs the hierarchal importance attached to patriarchal representation of bodily difference. His illustration attaches an ordinariness to masculinity which parallels Gorretti's evocation of the debasement of Mukundane during her experience of sexual violation: "The mayor of Masaka... was made to smoke his own penis before his body was dragged through the streets of the town (*Snakepit*, 15). This notably affirms a heightened sense of masculine victimisation during violence and reflects some essential distortions in the ideology of sexual politics that enables a fluid continuum in the writers' representation of gendered duties.

Also, Isegawa's depiction of Victoria and Bat's intentions to sexually use each other is a juxtaposition that foregrounds the authors collective challenge to monolithic presentation of roles in fictional narratives. This combinatorial effort to dissolve polarised imaginations of duties lucidly enables the transgressions of gendered roles on Ugandan literary space; thus, empowering the continuum of fluid interpretations of duties. To this end, Asante Lucy Mtenje's (2016: 17) observation of the fact that Isegawa's, narrator and main character in *Abyssinian Chronicles* Mugezi's achievement of dominance is "modelled on analogous forms of dominance" is typically applicable to the author's own accomplishment of fluid relatable description of sexual identity politics since his narrative evocations and that of Gorreti's synchronises perfectly. It elicits a slip that transgresses the dual representation of selves and imagination of gendered duties. These writers' representations indubitably reflect the smooth valorisation that occurs beyond distinctions of sexual hierarchal oppositions. Yvonne (2007: 558) opines that "there is no essential truth about being female writer, the best writing comes from the boundaries, the ungendered spaces between male and female". This establishes the authentic neutralisation that occurs to the polarising attempt of the literary space.

#### **5.6 Rehashing the themes of bodily deconstruction through narrative aesthetics in selected works**

The commitment of literature has always been towards improving the milieus of social standards. In order to expunge deplorable nuances within human communities, writers are saddled with the responsibility of creating refracted societies that satirises the ills of the existing ones with the aim of achieving a redress. Hence, to fulfill this vital role, contemporary fictional writers declare their staunch opposition to such demeaning practices by exhibiting vehement reactions that help them to criticise these ills objectively. The registration of their political indiscreetness in these works are projected through the combination of different literary techniques. Importantly, these techniques foreground their message and evoke a unanimous protest that propels the people to rebel against marginalities of all sort. Thus, writers condemn social maladies and also stir the oppressed to action.

Essentially, writers, through their voice, exert generic powers over social matters. Trinh. T. Minh-ha (1989) maintains that silence on the part of the writers gives actual voice to menace, but when writers speak menace succumbs to their authority. However, to continue to actively change societies, they must create realistic atmospheres where their reprimand and indictment can be rightly interpreted by their readers. To achieve this punctilious functions, the writers in these narratives employ symbolic spatial setting that typifies actual realistic world spheres. The use of multiple settings to capture the stories of the main characters is to establish their traumatic experience as transcontinental. The fact that most of these characters have to either flee or move from one location to another in search of succour depicts the severity of their situation and also significantly points to a journey towards self-realisation. Characters incessant movement reveals the authors' intention to ensure victimised characters' experiences growth. The motif of movement in these narratives give account of both internal and external movement of figured characters. *In Secret No More*, Rwanda and Uganda serve as the spatial setting of transformation for the main characters. In *Waiting*, the scenic spatial setting includes Uganda Hoima and Tanzania. But the narrative covers different strategic locations within Uganda and Hoima community. Although *Abyssinian Chronicles* mainly covers Ugandan spatial landscape, its concentration solely on Uganda is to foreground a historical nexus among the transitional phases of the novel which enables readers to understand power as expending in crescendos. Howbeit, the narratives explore different parts of Uganda. *Snakepit* spatially focuses on the terrains of the Uganda but movements are made around different parts of the world, including South Africa, Saudi Arabia, London Britain and Zaire. All these external movements are to confirm the nodes of connection among power structures, the desire to dominate is intrinsically human not gendered. Movement becomes essential to exhibit the transference of power between the self and the other. This aligns with Ngugi (1993: 46-47) observation that:

It is important to remember that social and intellectual processes, even academic disciplines, act and react on each other not against a spatial and temporal ground of stillness but of constant struggle, of movement, and change which brings about more struggles, more movement, and change, even in human thought.

The harmonisation of movements in these narratives causes tensions that pervade the generic atmosphere of the settings, thus encouraging the counterintuitive response of victims to violent overtures and influencing the gradual erasure of the existence of dichotomised perception of gendered roles in human thoughts. The determination to reject violence infiltrates most main characters with the zeal to devise strategic moves to overthrow marginality. Therefore, movement encompasses the psychological workings that inform the reality of the physical spatial movement which ends marginality, granting possibility to bodily transformation of the characters. In *Abyssinian Chronicles*, the author through stream of consciousness deploys psychological movement which aids the preparation of the readers' minds to absorb the possible enactment of resistances. The lethal attitude of the sows against oppression further corroborates this fact:

In the village, when you bought a piglet and did not want it to escape, you put it in a gunnysack, which you tied up and carried home. Even then, some piglets did escape...They escaped not so much to return to their original homes as to retaliate for boredom of captivity. The escapees took revenge by eating the neighbors' crops. Some pigs waited longer: at mating time, sows carried to pedigree pigs escaped and had to be chased around the village. When they were caught and delivered to the males, they twitched out of position, wasted prime sperm and sabotaged the birth of pedigree animals (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 115)

The pig's enactment of retaliation in the above is connected to their psychological strategic movement which corroborates the extended velocity of the female victims' readiness to start their new lives of freedom. Through the revelation of psychological movements, readers are subtly persuaded to observe the initiation of movement from its stage of abstraction to its physical materialisation and infer such knowledge into their own resistance reality. Isegawa's employment of movement in *Snakepit* reinstates the gradual instalment in bodily conversion. Victoria's disgruntled condition lures her into Bazooka's home. After discovering her inability to conceive, he moves her into a training camp. Graduated with a sealed conscience, she moves into the State Research Bureau as a perpetrating agent for the state; she transits into her independent dominant field of perpetration. Mobility explains character's change of attitude as vital to the deconstruction of figural distinctions in gendered role representation. Hence, *Abyssinian Chronicles* combines both the psychological and the physical motion techniques to expiate the processes of the eventual

shift in gendered duties. The use of journey motif in these novels accentuates the importance of mobility to realisation of power.

*In Secret No More*, the writer depends mainly on physical spatial movement to portray the restriction of the main characters towards self-conceptualisation. Mukundane's horrific nervousness as a result of the experience of chaos during her childhood preempts the eventual tragic occurrence which claims her life, her husband's and those of her children except that of her first daughter Marina. The reoccurrence of this tragedy in her life is premised on accumulation of her restless movement. For instance, she moves from her parents' home after the Hutu warlords exterminate them in a political unrest to the home of a loving Hutu family who shelters her before they are killed by their Hutu relatives for not emerging from Hutu South. Then she meets Bizimana, gets married and moves into his home. Shortly after settling into motherhood despite having waited for years, the Hutu and the Tutsi clash resurfaces and totally destroys her entire family except for Marina who survives the gloom. Constructing this cyclic tragic movement, the narrator is able to create transgenerational conflict which provokes violent combative resilience from the marginalised. Although *Secret No More* agrees with the fact that women are the most vulnerable to rape during violent circumstances, some women leverage these humiliating move to build strong bodily repose which dismantles the consistency of stereotypic figuration of dual selves.

Furthermore, spatial movement as depicted in *waiting* foregrounds main characters' journey towards affirmation. Nyinabarogo's journey from her husband's home to Hoima is an attempt to reinvent her towards independent reasoning, while Mother's movement from the confines of the home to Alinda's school instils into her a personalised identity which enables her to step out courageously towards brutal threats. Mobility here calculates the developmental growth of each character towards resilience so the implication of the oppression they suffer is not to rehash their vulnerable subjugation but to portray the emergence of wholesome translation after oppressive situations of violence. This indicates that movement as a strategic resistance tool does enhance the dismembering of the static visualisation of the marginalised as totally submerged by violence. It also reassures readers

that oppression and resistance have always existed in a symbiotic relationship of struggle, thus, blurring the glorified attachment of authority to personality of the oppressor alone.

Language marks the exponential growth of the oppressed. The writers use of precise words to portray the developmental progress of the characters reveals a parallel synergy in the ambition of both the characters and the writers to invent a new fluid reality that replicates the level of their accomplished shift. Hence, the use of monologue and verbal expressions fulfils more than just the need to establish flow of linguistic understanding of meaning. According to Ngugi (2009: 62) submission: “it discloses a deeper understanding of a people’s life from which their meaning is ultimately derived”.

Although writing in the English Language has long been deliberated as too foreign to capture the uniqueness of the African culture and experience. But the inputs of African literary writers have erased to a large extent the suspicions it arouses towards the authenticity of the African experience conveyed through formerly considered foreignness of the English language such that Goretti Kymuhendo (2011:2) considers the debate on “Language and African writing to be such a tired topic” because the peculiarities of the English language within the African continent have been overtly reiterated. In spite of his firm agitations for adopting the African indigenous languages to relate the African experience, Ngugi (2009:39) opines that initiating the process of conveying the African experience with her diverse indigenous language is a very tedious proposition that might experience regular obstructions. However, to enhance its peculiarities within each culture, African writers draw from the particularities of their rich oral background to project the uniqueness of their African experience of struggle. Since these narratives mostly refract the phases of gender transition from oppression, their language uses vivid images to capture the particularities of bodily reaction to oppressive gestures. Language is rated beyond the letters scribbled on the written text; language is a connotation that is expressed mainly on human bodies to elicit reactions that defile their subjugating situations. Armstrong (2009:259) notes that *Secret No More* foregrounds the female body as abject and marked-a thing to be violently written on. Therefore, rape is a formidable language of domination, oppression and brutality forcefully written on the female body which is expected to evoke stern retorts

of disapproval from the marginalised. Language as used in the novels is mostly provocative in order to decry retaliating reactions from the subjected.

In Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* and Kymuhendo's *Secrets*, provocative dictions are used extensively to ensure characters' continuous progression towards resistance. For instance, Grandpa's demeaning question to Padlock: "Are you fine, girl?" is more of a reproachful statement that reinstates perpetually the wretchedness of Padlock and her family members. This psychological reconditioning of the mind is to weaken the resilient efforts of the suppressed: "Lord, Lord, Lord, how low have I sunk!" (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 51). The conversation reveals the dichotomy of inequality in the relationship of both characters. While the clan chief language is firm, reactive and insinuating, Padlock's is humble, responsive and predictable which further exhibit her inferior status. Since language represents a channel that transports the standards fashioned by a people over a period of time, the gulf in the presentation of speeches as used in these narratives affirms the long existence of women in a perpetual reduction to otherness as mainly contributive to the disfiguration of women in sexual politics. Mugezi's blackmail of his female class mate exemplifies this further:

One morning six girls surrounded me. I spat in my palms and addressed their ringleader, a large girl with breasts the size of my head. "You have a man," I bluffed. "You will give birth to a limbless creature, and your breasts will turn to pus." Contrary to expectation, I was not mobbed or booed. Milkjar just crumbled like a lump of clay under a millstone. she started crying. I panicked. I ran towards the blind side of the church, but I was caught by the headmaster. Held by the wrist I was thrust amidst Milkjar's cronies. I pleaded self-defense, and explained that I had not meant any harm. Milkjar was pathetic: she could not stop crying. The headmaster thrust a stick into her hand to beat me. She dropped the stick as though it were a hairy caterpillar. The headmaster dismissed me with stiff warning never to make penis or breast threats again... (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 81-82)

Vivid description constitutes a great part of the African culture. Although African imaginative writers through the means of other oral channels particularises their works to show its uniqueness, it is the skilful use of imagery that enhances their accuracy in the delivery of other oral expressions. Proverbs, idioms, praise chants, panegyrics and other oral materials employed act mainly as embellishments to help enliven the apt descriptions



of events to establish the morals of their messages. To this end, Trinh. T. Minh-ha (1989: 124) recommends vivid imagery as a vital pre-requisite for a thoroughly delivered story: “But for the story to be well-told information, must be related in as fascinating a form as [in] the old myths and fables.” Thus, the use of imagery in these narratives gives the content lucid clarity that aids the uniformity of its constant flow. The narrator’s description of Mukundane’s dress pattern in *Secret No More* alludes to the occurrence of her bodily violation:

The Colonel was watching her in amusement. The gown which she wore had a long slit in front. A lump of shiny black pubic hair was visible as was a soft thigh. An amuse glitter appeared in the Colonel’s eyes. (*Secret No More*, 16)

This prepares the reader’s mind towards the horrible events and elicits from them vast sense of empathy for this character. Since her brutality occurs within a similar ambience of everyday life, that the readers can easily identify with her pain becomes transposable beyond its immediate setting and creates a symbiotic flow of bond between the reader and the characters. Hence, the speech can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted and touched by all its audience, Minh-ha, (1989:121). The deployment of vivid imagery in *waiting* accentuates the connection of bonding among female as validating their capacity to initiate and sustain transgenerational acts of repudiations against violence. The reflection of abrasiveness in Alinda’s countenance after she witnesses her mother’s agony testifies to the reshaping effect of trauma as enabling bodily transmutations to occur in all humans: “... I shouted losing my patients. My nerves were frayed, and I was feeling nervous about the blood I have seen on Mother’s clothes”. (*waiting*, 29) Visualising the transference of her aggression to everyone in her environment confirms trauma as capable of triggering a reshaping of the intentions of characters to cross from being victims of abuse to perpetrators themselves. It is in line with the foregoing that, Rupi Kaur (2015:105), submits that: “The abused and the abuser...I have been both”. The writer through the evocation of these transitional imagery raises fictional realistic character models whose response to struggles debunks the consistent reflection of gendered relationships and roles in affixation of duality. The preponderant use of vivid imagery in this novel establishes a unification of passions, struggles, language, emotions and intentions to illuminate the provocations of characters towards achieving the essential motive of resistance.

Furthermore, this accurate relation of characters' flaws and the despicable influence they have on their eventual fall in *Snakepit* is to foreground the erasure of the inessentiality of differences in the presentation of gendered personalities. Characters' ambitions are replicated to reveal a confluence of actions that annul the binary of sexual distinctions. This descriptive use of diction evokes resonance in characterisation that depicts the glaring disaffirmation of differences. For instances, vengeful expression and vulgar words are broadly used to demonstrate the encircling fluid evolutions of most characters to initiate violence. Victoria's decision to let General Bazooka "fuck himself" and Bat's summation of his prison experience as "fuck" shows that trauma significantly dismantles the lexicon variation which creates disparities in the speech of characters. It adopts strong expletives to corroborate the implication of violence as extracting nuances of change on bodily presentation that reflects overt interactions in gendered relationships; thus, enabling the fluid portrayal of the exegesis of transmutations in gendered roles.

The diverse presentation of characters' experiences and the writers' attempt to map the similarities in their circumstance in *Abyssinian Chronicles*, *Secret No More* and *Snakepit* make their plot structure complex. The characters' journey towards self-realisation are fraught with many obstacles. Therefore, in order to overcome their advent circumstances, the characters' personality and ambitions keep changing to reach the apex of their designated power. Padlock, Mugezi, Milkjar, Nakatu (*Abyssinian Chronicles*) are consistently transited to overcome their most recent former objectification. The re-inscription of Mukundane's sexual violation in Marina's journey towards self-confidence introduces into her life many other characters' whose impact further compounds the structure of the plot in *Secret No More*. The unchecked strive of General Amin, Bat, Bazooka, Victoria (*Snakepit*) for invincibility culminates into the creation of unrestricted chaos that sustains the oscillating movements of characters in time. The narrative techniques contribute immensely to the credibility of the story. Although the writers' adopt the omniscient narrative point of view, the occasional intrusion of characters' own voice diffuses the subjective influence of the style through the direct corroborative interjection of speech. This combination gives cohesion to complex divergent structure of the stories and helps deepen the knowledge of readers by supplying sufficient details to enable them to interpret the sceneries and tone of the story as it evolves. The narrative is also captured in

polyphonic voices in order to maintain the multidimensional pivots of the novels. Bakhtin (1981: 12) identifies two type of voices in narratives. These are the monologist and the dialogist voices. The monologist voice in its creation is a single voice that shares same semblance and affinity with the voice of other characters. This shared similarity permits the endorsement of a lone ideology. Dialogism, on the other hand, requires the use of diversified narratorial and persona voices to tell a story. This vocal distinction, create disagreeable tensions in the views of the narrators. This type of narration gives the story a realistic inconclusiveness that stretches readers' imagination beyond the restricted setting of the novel, which expands still its diversity. The contention of dialogic speech style against unified expressions, according to Neil Lazarus (2007), is in its goal to reveal the necessary knowledge of actual reality so that identified lapses can be significantly dealt with. The adoption of this multi-dimensional approaches in the tone and setting of the novel is in consonance with the continual metamorphosis of most characters especially the female ones which foregrounds the possible transformations of shift in presentation of gendered duties.

Although Serenity and Grandpa consider Padlock's sexual experience as a lesson in humility; to her it is a phase she has to pass through to establish her empire of dictatorial authority. Padlock's humiliation results in her dominant raise. While Serenity continues to lose his position, Padlock becomes more affirmative:

The pressure of adjusting to the city had played into her hands, and before he realized it, he had lost both the contraception battle and war. The result was his trademark wrinkled forehead, which lent him a scowling, comical look- a look fit for a tormented despot. Padlock was a changed woman. She had become more confident and assertive....  
(*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 91)

This portrayal of reversal of power significantly reflects the occurrence of instability in the perception of characters dismantling their affixed notions about gendered roles which further enhances the engendering process. The depiction of the capacity of violence, conflict and traumas as strengthening the victims resolves to leverage their trials for self-revalidations. It diverts their attention from the negative influence of their trials and refocuses their attention on the positive opportunities that can emerge from those experiences. Through these works, violence also provokes transformation which facilitate the happenstances of dynamic response to the adoption of gendered roles. Gradually, it

erodes the binaries of sexual politics and introduces an era of reordering in the visualisation of roles that ridicule into oblivion the attempt of being perpetually fixated on anatomical differences. The insistence on reforming the fading dual system of role in literary writing, howbeit gradual, to stir the re-enslavement of the “other” who now realise the significance of their difference as complementary is to purposely continue a neurotic malignant error that exposes “the lunacy behind such permanent fixation on sameness”. Chinua Achebe, (2007:112). Gendered roles over the ages have witnessed diverse changes as a result of their collides with harsh circumstances. Hence, mirroring the implications of these encounters beyond the repetition of the affirmation of polarised living is a major significant growth these writers initiate.

Unlike the other narratives whose plot structures are complex, *waiting* has simple plot structure which makes it devoid of digression. Although the narrator gives occasional synopsis of characters’ background or their past action, it is told in a simple manner which makes it align with the current happening in the novel. In other words, the narrative follows an order of linear sequence that makes it easy to identify the beginning, the middle and the end of the narration. The story begins by exposing the frightful condition people live in. In a simple plot structure, there is a close correspondence between episodes because they retain good cause and effect relationship (Olutoyin Bimpe Jegede, 2003). In other words, events are structured in a coherent and cohesive form such that it moves intrinsically in a straight credible manner. Since the narrator participates in the action of the story she narrates, she is an *intradiegetic* narrator. Gerard Genette (1980: 238) defines a narrator who participates in the novel as an *intradiegetic* narrator because she identifies herself with the events of the novel. This gives her access to combine a communal story with her own story as she reports her activities within the narrative to readers from her homebase. The fact that she tells this degesis (story) from an angle of resresidual participator makes the narrative homodiegetic, while the narrator is an *intradiegetic* narrator (to tell from within the matrix): “When I first started school, I never talked. I was shy and timid... (*waiting*, 18). The generic advantage of being an *intradiegetic* character is that adopting this technique enables the narrative persona to cover more scope, allows freedom of movement and relates the story from the place of accurate knowledge (Henry Hudson 1991: 143). In other words, the participation of this narrator-protagonist in the narrative places her in a central advantageous position

where she can decipher other characters' actions and be privileged to gather information about their past. The reconciliation of the characters' past with their present situation in a tact way adds to the simplicity of the narrative style and also ensures unity of action is achieved since the source of the characters' action is revealed to explain the effects of their current actions. To calm her daughter's worry mother asks: "The soldiers? For how long shall we keep running away from them? (*waiting*, 21), the submissive Nyinabarongo disagrees with masculine opinion of authority "If only your father would allow us to make a small fire! But he insists that it will attract them here, which is nonsense! If they want to find us, they will find us (8)."

These illustrations portray the incessant occurrences of violence, war or conflict as capable of increasing the determination of the victims to be resolute. This decision to resolutely await violence unsettles polarities in gendered duties, thus, revealing overt reduplications of response in the adoption of gendered roles. The narrative reaches its climax after the deaths of Mother and Kaka in the pandemonium. Thereafter, most of the characters' exhibit resilience that bespeaks their demonstration of dynamism in all endeavours. The challenges of stereotypes are dissolved in plans of the next generations towards the realisation of their dreams. The characters' eventual attainment of significance after they successfully surmount the diverse difficulties they encounter gives genuine realistic impressions to the writers' creativity. The portrayal of trauma as strengthening the characters' decisions to destroy every chain of oppression extends the implication of the dichotomy usually visualised in gendered roles as not automatically reproducing other dualities but might reverse into a repudiation that erases this visual continuity of polarised presentation of selves in literary works. The uniqueness of their message reveals its sharp intellectual critical edge as meant not just for satirising the ills of their societies but meant as a perpetual instigation of the people to resist oppression. The fact that women are mostly the ones reneging oppressions and changing positions in these works is an indication of the writers' intentions to creating awareness of the negotiability of gendered space. The initiation of the possibility of this new growth according to Nadine Gordimer (1999: 118), lies within the aesthetic appropriateness of the writers' imaginative power:

There is also the case of the writer whose imaginative powers are genuinely roused by and involved with the spirit of politics as he or she

personally experiences it. And it may not be the free choice of a Baron. It can be virtually inescapably in times and places of socially seismic upheaval. Society shakes, the walls of entities fall; the writer has known the evil, indifference, cupidity of the old order, and the spirit of creativity naturally pushes towards new growth. The writer is moved to fashion an expression of a new order, accepted on trust as an advance in human freedom that therefore also will be the release of a greater creativity.

To achieve the aim, the new orders are fashioned, writers devise expertise at handling relevant techniques that give lucid stances to their narrative expressions. The use of *intradiegetic* narrator in *waiting*, is one of such attempts. An *intradiegetic* narrator is a narrator who participates in the story as a character but whose main responsibility is to delineate the story's content. In order to illustrate clearly the reinvigorating impact of violence on the determination of victims who astutely refuse subjugations, the narrator is involved in the cause of the action. Her strategic placement allows her get accumulative information about other characters and also helps the narrator draw relevant analogy between each character's past and its influence on their evolving nature. The explication of characters' past struggles gives readers clarity about their present audacious demeanor. It foregrounds the thematic relationship that exists between violence and transfiguration of characters through the enunciations of the narrating persona. First-person is characterised by the use of first person personal pronoun "I". Gorreti's adoption of the first person narrative point of view in *waiting* gives validation to the nature of the rendition. Howbeit, the characters' collective use of the personal pronoun "I" to describe their opinion of the situation only allows them to demonstrate their generic inclusion in the traumatic experiences. Hence, their views only give the story focalised aptness that enables other characters to contribute their bits to the progression of the story, while the first-person narrator is saddled with the responsibility of observing and telling the trend of events. For instance, the statement the character Mother makes about Kaka's inability to get to the plantation for the night foregrounds their encounters of stress as a result of the unrest:

... She's tired of packing up her blankets every day and night sleeping here in the cold. Mother replied... I don't blame the old woman, Mother went on, shrugging her shoulders. I don't see much use in my coming either. I can't run. They would still kill me if they found us here. (*waiting*, 6)

Her statement further reinstates the narrator's description of their experience with terror but pointedly explicates the strenuous insidious impact it has on their qualities of lives. The implication of each characters' focalisation is that it attaches peculiar insights to the issues of unrest. Through its specific revelation of the characters' resistance to oppression, the author reinforces the innate desire of these female victims to transit all marginalities. Although its delineation corroborates the fact that circumstances of war have more hideous implication on women than men, it, however reinforces the experience of this insurgence as a catalyst which enable these female characters' to confront and transgress all oppressive stances. Through the visualisation of the exponential effect, this war has on the female characters' determination to combat subjugation based on stereotypic body differentials. The author's representation of emerging radical pattern of change women experience after encounters with violence, as capable of dismantling the stereotypic interpretations of gendered roles is an intellectual historical deviation from the logical portrayal of women's restraint as consistent. Mark Poster (1975: 13) in his delineation of history considers a balanced figuration of struggles that births the freedom of all oppressed:

In any relationship involving domination the humanity of both the ruler and the ruled has been mutilated and distorted...The slave is not satisfied with his position either, being oppressed and exploited by the master. Unlike the master, however, the slave receives no prestige from his lot and is ready for "change" for freedom from oppression is the ground of man's becoming more human. If idle Mastery is an impasse, laborious Slavery, in contrast, is the source of all human, social, historical progress. History is the history of the working Slave.

The exposition of the symbiotic relationship in the struggles of the oppressed slaves against oppressions enunciates their effort towards achieving freedom. The recognition of this effort culminates into the attainment of their desired freedom. Thus, through their imagination of the radical reformation of these female characters and its dynamic influence on gendered roles, Ugandan novelists present a constructive history of struggles that causes main distortions to the logical consistency behind the disastrous alienation of bodies. It is through this effort of ascertaining women's defiant gestures during volatile historical situations in fictional narratives, that the initiation of the gradual erasure of the static replications of gendered duties can be achieved. To reinforce this observation Paulin Hountondji (2007: 269) considers as vital the writers' realisation of the disastrous impact of polarisation on all

attempt of rebirth, thus its destruction must be the first considered condition for growth. In other words, to dissolve the harmful effect of the reproduced absurd pictures of gendered roles that has long asserted the correctness of visualising dichotomy in gendered relations, writers must infer abilities from verified historical truth. It is at this point that the awakening of consciousness about the implication of their domination can jolt the oppressed to revert their subjugations. Such acts of reversions culminate into change in the intellectual patterns of presentation.

Thus, the transforming experiences of characters in the selected Ugandan narratives during moments of brutality can be understood as a refraction of Uganda, and indeed African narratology of progression in spite of turbulence. The authors figuration of these female characters regain of their assertive independence in the midst of the horrific chaos is a historical re-inclusion that bridges the gap which enhances dichotomous description of characters. This way, the prejudiced political ideology behind the proclamations of the veracity of male essentiality perched against female inessentiality is becoming severely contestable. Therefore, the issues of polarised figurations can no longer be 'ignored': it should rather be espoused to publicise the enormous negative influence it has on the portrayal of gendered representations in literary narratives. The foregoing indicates that these writers use their narratives to bring to fore the occurrence of possible reversions in characters' traits during situations of violence as capable of dismantling the hierarchy of dichotomy in gendered relations.

*waiting* is narrated through the main character's point of view, while *Abyssinian Chronicles*, *Secret No More*, and *Snakepit* deploy the third person narrative technique. Stories which make use of the third-person narrative styles are recounted through the disembodied narrative voice. Although an abstract voice, this narrator has a vast knowledge of events, introduces the characters, exposes dialogue and thoughts with details. The narrative technique permits the author's occasional remark, inputs or criticism where necessary. This is known as authorial intrusion. The third-person narrative can also be referred to as heterodiegetic narrative. *Secret No More* is a heterodiegetic narrative because the narrator is outside the confines of the incidence that is being narrated. The strategic use of the heterodiegetic technique in this novel bridges the spatial gap of distinctions between the



narrator and the reader. Readers are likely to experience catharsis where characters' pitiable thoughts lead to a tragic external outcome. For instance, Mukundane's internal suspicion about Bizimana's safety leads to Mukundane's violation and the brutal extermination of the whole family except Marina. Isegawa's *Snakepit* is also recounted via the heterodiegetic style. The revelation of the characters' decision to overturn their oppressions creates a tension induced climatic atmosphere which might excite the expectation of the reader and generate associative bond between readers and specific characters. However, *Abyssinian Chronicles* combines both the heterodiegetic and the homodiegetic narrative. For instance, the narrator starts as a covert narrator, but as the narrative progresses, he emerges as the protagonist-narrator: "Then I was born. It rained so much that week, and so intensely that day... (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 54). The covert narrator eventually gets a definite personality in the novel; he gets christened Mugezi after his birth. Through their ability to combine effectually incidences, characterisation and literary techniques, these authors are able to sustain a deep and lasting consistency that gives depth to the ideologies espoused.

Another narrative technique employed by writers in depicting radical shift in bodily transfiguration is the generational reflection of intense ambivalence around sexualised activities in their characterisation. The replication of same volatile experience in kinship relationship is a radical feminist provocation which severs the body from its biological ties to project the body as a field of inscription, where socio symbolic situations forces transformational growth to occur beyond anatomical division. Hence, exposure to bodily insurrection is used to visualise the disruption that empowers political finitudes of autocracy over the right of "otherness". Although characters in the novels are figured to have either male or female anatomy, their unconventional reactions to confrontations and violence blur all distinguishing effort that makes shift constant. Therefore, it is difficult to segment characters into two broad binaries of good versus evil or oppressor versus oppressed because the matrix of actions is always changing.

Cognitively, the novels reflect the poststructuralists non-adherence to the beliefs of permanence in structuring. Thus, all systems especially, power systems are fluid and translatable. This notion of instability flattens all significations of independence, resulting into an unsettled interchange of symbiotic relationships: "whatever affects the pole of others

is strong enough to dislocate the position and prerogative of the same and the former center” Braidotti (2002: 14). The implication of this neutralisation is the enhancement of the projection of fluidity in the presentations of gendered roles. The depiction of fissures and inconsistencies revealed in literary representations through these texts illustrates the unpredictability of the systems of power and contests the persistent picture of women as subordinated.

The language of the novels is simple and precise. It is devoid of most suggested discrepancies that mark gender disparities in linguistic conversations. Women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways, the way they are taught to use language and in the way general language use treats them. This explains the reason women perform mostly objectified roles Lakoff (2004). She identifies following differences: Lexical distinction, syntactic, question tag formation. The differences in the structuring of language of both male and female, according to her, is basically the implication of socialisation. Lexical distinction differentiates between the contextual use of particles between male and females. Resultantly, these discovered dissimilarities allow men stronger means of expression than are open to women thus, reinstating the reason women assume mostly trivial roles within society Lakoff (2004).

Contrary, to Lakoff’s established variance in language use of both men and women, characters in the selected novels use mostly same lexical expletive to express their opinion without consideration of anatomical contrast. Therefore, the use of violent and vulgar words is not gender restrictive. Bat’s vulgar description of the soldiers who takes him hostage as “*dog-fuckers*” matches well with Mrs. Kalanda’s description of Bat as “*a bastard*” (*Snakepit*, 160,163). Victoria’s use of the same boorish expression to depict her sexual satisfaction: “The fact that this rich man has taken the time to please me, instead of just aiming to *fuck and ejaculate* matches Bat’s sexual expectations: “Let us *fuck* all afternoon, his greed said somewhere (*Snakepit*, 23,166). The synonymous use of diction depicts the absence of distinctness in their use of expression and signifies a confluence in reasoning that creates fluid bodily interchange which destroys the dichotomous segmentation of gender significance. The author accentuates the influence of war or violence as deconstructive of language binaries; enacting further the possibility of fluid gendered role

representations. Thus, both male and female genders express themselves in either strong or weak lexical expletive. Characters' conversation in *waiting* also replicates this uninhabited flow. Alinda's violent outburst to Tendo's refusal to participate in the house chores establishes this observation:

I am tired, he snapped.  
Shut up! I shouted at him.  
Mother wants to bathe. And  
I am going to cook lunch... (*waiting*, 27).

Alinda's violent response to her brother's forceful expression of willpower erases traces of speech disparities in their socialisation. The capability to challenge oppression is revealed as equally reinforced in the verbal exchanges. After she witnesses her Mother's violation and vehement retorts to the soldiers, Marina courageously satirises Chantal's wickedness without an iota of distinction: "You...mean...all these... years...you...only pretended!" Marina said petrified. "You ought to feel guilty" (*Secret No More*, 23). These instances illustrate the fluid use of lexical dictions uttered without the void of speech differentials.

Essentially, violence is capable of eliciting forceful actions and words from victims, especially female ones that destroy the pattern of dichotomous use of language. The staunch responses of women to their oppressors in *Abyssinian Chronicles* foregrounds these illustrations. Padlock's vulgar reply to her husband's accusations of her involvement in an extra-marital affair reveals this: "But I tell you this: breed your *bastards* as you like, as long as you know that they will never be allowed a place in this house." (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 111). The use of language in the novels mostly resonates with the observation of Eckert, Penelope, and McConnell-Ginet (2003) that during conversations generally, humans tend to assume different subject positions. This constant shift empowers the fluid use of lexical or syntactic expletives in the narratives. Therefore, the authors' dialectics represents the mutual exchange of shift which symbolises parallel status of both male and female genders. Thus, the characters' fluid exploration of language significantly illustrates a total divergence from the dominant norms of speech polarities which represent the poststructuralist feminists' demonstration of "antagonism against universal values" that establishes distinctions in both male and female language use (Humm 1995: 101). The exemplification of deconstruction in expressions of thoughts gives an overall aesthetics to the portrayal of

the notion of the intertextual exchange between self and other; bridging the gap of dualities in all spheres. Here language becomes untamed, “a missile of voice; erupting from the ungagged mouths, it becomes outgoing, aggressive” and destructive of all divisiveness to project new openings of transformations Pamela A. Turner (2005: 197).

### **5.7 Summary of findings**

This study reveals the connection between war and gendered role shifts in selected Ugandan novels that dwells on insurgencies. Based on the poststructuralists ideology of undoing conventionalities in reading of literary texts and materials, the analysis has discovered different salient issues, re-representation of concepts, strategic narrative deviations and systemic replications as propelling the reconceptualisation of shifts in textual narratives. Summary of findings is done using title substantiations to reveal the correlations and variations between scholarly assertions and progressions of engendering in the study.

### **5.8 Re-scaling the aptness in presentations of bodily differences: towards a consensus for the prefiguration of rupture**

The issues of binaries identified in the study as responsible for the preservation of dual representations of roles in the study are biological limitations, cultural subjugation, marital discrimination and sexual objectifications. Overtly, the representation of women reveals they are largely marginalised in the novels. This corroborates the finding on gendered studies such as Abasi (2008), Armstrong (2009), Carr (2011), Barass (2017), in which women’s reflection typifies their physiologically defined inferior roles which births the ideas of male superiority versus female inferiority, this in turns legitimises their oppressions. Women who remain passive in the face of volatile confrontations suffer the most humiliating tragic fate among their peers. This position reinstates the observations of Mackinnon (1987), Minha-ha (1989), Lorde (2005) and Ngcobo (2007). However, the display of passivity, docility and resignations in these victimised female characters reveals the need to transit the illusions of fixations and project consistent dynamic flow in the representations of gendered role shifts after encounters with war. Although, most suggestions about war reflect the destructive dimension of violence on human existence, the study in its analytical demonstrations reveals that war sometimes provokes not just the

human determination to survive unpleasant situations but stir up the desire to assume positions of authorities.

In other words, the study visualises trauma, pain, rape and other negative vices encountered in war as adaptable experiences which can enhance self development instead of foregrounding the correctness of dichotomous representation of bodies and roles. This is consistent with the position of Foucault (1978), Minh-ha (1989), Shoshana and Doris (1992), Cathy Caruth (1996). Through its analytical stance the study further reveals that the victimised demonstrations of prowess leads to replications of activities which makes it difficult to differentiate the tasks of the oppressors from those of the oppressed. However, this study agrees with Femi Ojo-Ade (1990), Butler (2009), Hook (2015) that the African women's demonstrations of prowess has always been part of the African history. The revelations of female victimised willingness to perpetuate oppression exposes the equal vulnerabilities of all bodies during situations of war, bridging display of emotional chasms which foreground the constructions of distinctions in adoptions of gendered duties, this discovery agrees with James (1983), Braidotti (2002), Herman (2002) submission that the categorisation of pain, horror and emotions during turbulent circumstances is nearly impossible. Interestingly, this observation validates the writers' creative depiction of the re-organisation gendered role through the neutral lenses of performance.

The actions of characters and the eventual outcome determine the values ascribed to the performers of activities. Performance enables parallel representation of selves which result in portrayals of unhindered expressions of gendered duties. Also, the praxis of performance empowers writers to give fluid interpretations of duties without the interruptions of their biological differences, creating an analogous continuum of equality between both male and female Ugandan writers. This study agrees with Yvonne (2007), Asante (2016) that creativity thrives in an unbiased environment. While the study agrees with the fact that rape, marginalisation, displacement, humiliation is mostly experienced by women during situations of war, it disagrees with the notion that these vices perpetually subjugates. However, it decodes that these vices can be the basis for the valorisation of the victimised female characters.

The study discovers that factors of poverty, displacement, oppression, sexual assault and disillusionment trigger firm determination in victimised characters to confront violent overtures. The observation of changes in female victimised characters to oppression which results in resilient dismantling of stereotypic adoption of roles happen in five specific domains, psychological, verbal, physiological interactions, movement and re-figuration. This dismantling asserts the fact that fluidity of roles is mostly foregrounded under war situations. The selected Ugandan writers through their representations reinstate the possible erasure in the depiction of gendered role allocation. Oftentimes, female characters are mostly represented as the victimised, however, this study unveils instances of masculine dehumanisations and vulnerability which gives a balanced figuration of oppression during situations of war. Also, these writers, through their use of symbiotic language demonstrate the possibility of evoking a genderless literary space where both male and female authors relate as equals. This subsection proffers answers to earlier raised research questions:

- (a) What impacts does war create on gendered roles as portrayed in the selected Ugandan texts?
- (b) How does the deconstruction of gendered stereotypes in selected Ugandan novels result in personality changes for the characters?
- (c) How does the fluidity of gender roles indicate unbiased adoption of roles by characters in the chosen texts?
- (d) How do the selected writers' stylistic representations foreground verbal and graphic confluence in their narratology?

## **5.9 Summary**

This chapter interrogates the nuances responsible for reformations of gendered duties and how this overturns the portrayal of gendered role binaries using the selected primary texts and other texts relevant to the study. In all, the investigation in this chapter achieves some of the objectives of the study, which are to examine the influence of fluid engendering of roles on the non-biased figurations of character as illustrated by the victimised characters identify factors of strategic replications responsible for the continuous evocation of shift in characters' responses to adoptions of roles, and explore how the narrative aesthetics'

employed by the selected writers form a violent amalgamation of their experiences, thus, dissolving the hierarchal features in the imaginative writings of both male and female authors. Through the lens of poststructuralism, the study affirms the possible dismantle of a closed system of power through struggles; revealing the innate capacity of all humans to achieve control that erases the perpetuity of difference in portrayal of gendered relationships and roles. The chapter also presents a discussion of findings, situating how the study aligns with previous studies and how it is different from them, while it concludes with the of findings of the study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Summary

This study has investigated the relationship between war and gendered role shifts, in selected twenty-first century Ugandan novels with a view to examining the motif of rupture in poststructural discourse of stringent categorisation of duties as experienced by subjugated female victims using the selected primary texts and other texts pertinent to the study, identifying the implication on visualised representation of selves as represented in selected texts; examining the narrative styles employed by the selected writers in the narration of women's marginalisation and their eventual valorising experiences; and comparing the transversal effect this rupture has on both male and female writers' fluid interpretation of gender duties. The researcher discovers that demonstrations of volatile victimisations in war further enhance the determination of the victimised to become perpetrators of oppression themselves. These replications of desires and activities between the oppressor and the oppressed causes instability in the representation of crimes, which is difficult to evaluate incidences of crimes using gender distinction as yardstick. Also, the research reveals that all vulnerable traits are innate human traits and not women's. The study discloses the innate capacity of all humans to achieve control that erases the perpetuity of difference in portrayal of gendered relationships and roles.

#### 6.2 Conclusion

This research has shown that brutalities of war often times elicit provocations of retaliations from both genders. Private and public traumatic situations of violence fuel the expression of resilience that disintegrates the gaps subject/object, male/female, strength/ weakness, oppressor/oppressed by collapsing the most menacing circumstances to reveal the transgressive possibilities in the adoption of gendered roles. Through the lenses of poststructuralist and feminist theories, the study reinstates determination of most victimised



female characters' in the selected texts as reaffirming their desire to decrypt the universal representation of their marginalised and subservient personality.

The discovery of replications between the activities of the oppressor and the oppressed results into a convergence that contest the linearity associated with representation of gendered roles in foremost literary writings. Also, it asserts fluidity in the expressions of roles as mostly foregrounded under war circumstances through its visualisation of trauma, rape, pain and other negative vices as adaptable experiences which enhance self development instead of accentuating the factuality of dichotomous representation of bodies and roles. The revelation of the oppressors' marginalities punctuate their sustainability of retaining invincibility, thus power is discovered to be a non perpetual phenomenon which constantly oscillate between male and female characters. However, the study admits to the continued victimisation of unreactive women, but noted the terse percentage of such women in this fictional narrative, which perhaps underscore their rarity in the actual world.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

- Fictional writers should reflect more the dynamic implication war has on gendered role distribution. This will encourage female readers to take up non-stereotypic roles within their societies.
- Based on the changes identified in the adoption of roles in the study, investigation of crimes should not be done with a preconceived polarised notion of masculine strength versus feminine weakness.
- Literary scholars should endeavour to investigate other aspects of sexuality and gender in order to have varied knowledge of the development of emerging trends in this fields.
- Fictional writers should ensure they portray dynamic roles which reflect progression of gender discussion.

### **6.4 Contributions to Knowledge**

This study has, therefore, contributed significantly to the analytical and interpretive exploration of Ugandan literature. As one of the few pioneering research done on the nexus between war and gendered role shift, the study reveals how negative vices of war are converted to indices of positive self development by victimised female characters. Also, it validates the deconstructive implication trauma has on the fluid re-interpretation of

gendered roles. Similarly, the study provided samples of literary analysis using feminist poststructuralism which demonstrates the vast influence this theory exerts on the imaginations of characters in recent fictional representations. Most importantly, the study is a worthy contribution to the comparative fields of literature and gender which is still not resourcefully buoyant enough to foreground the relational ties between both fields owing to paucity of research in the fields on similar topicalities.

### **6.5 Suggestions for further studies**

The just concluded study focuses on war as a main contributing factor to the possible expressions of shifts in gendered roles. In a bid to establish the synergy between both concepts, the researcher reviewed scholarly articles from related fields of studies which foregrounds the relevance, depth and the intellectual expectation of the study. However, the limitation of the study makes it impossible for the researcher to delve deeply into some aspects that further expand the frontiers of the field in general. This limitation necessitates the need to offer suggestions on related fields that need further studies:

- Similarities in the displayed traits of vulnerability between male and female gender in war.
- Interpersonal oppression in masculinity and the reconstruction of physiological stability.
- The development of gender identity, empirical comparisons of men and women, gender stereotypes and their perpetuation.

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