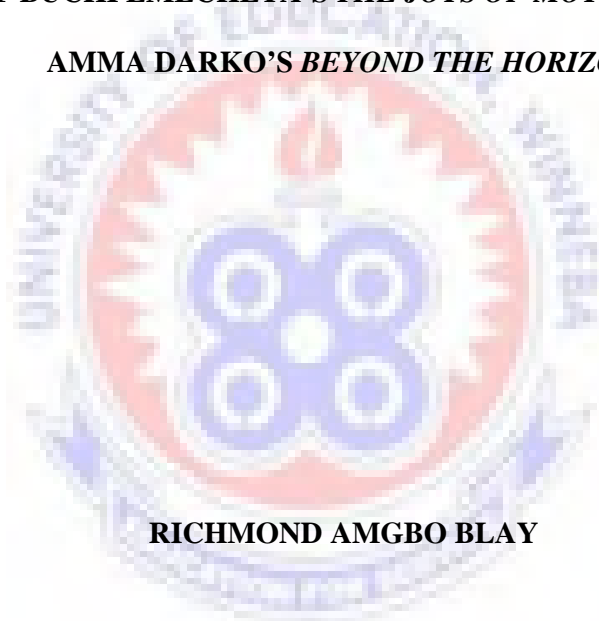


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA

**THE IMAGE OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY: A
STUDY OF BUCHI EMECHETA'S *THE JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD* AND
AMMA DARKO'S *BEYOND THE HORIZON***



RICHMOND AMGBO BLAY

OCTOBER, 2014

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(8120060011)

**A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION, FACULTY
OF LANGUAGES, SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF THE MASTER
OF PHILOSOPHY OF ENGLISH DEGREE.**

OCTOBER, 2014

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Richmond Amgbo Blay, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledge, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: MR ANTHONY KWAMLAH JOHNSON

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very much indebted to Mr Anthony Kwamlah Johnson, my supervisor and a lecturer at the Department of English, University of Education, Winneba for his meritorious efforts in making sure that this study is presented on time. Sir, your wise counselling, direction and sense of purpose are worth the while.

My next appreciation goes to my mother, Ms Sophia Vida Nsiah, who saw the need to give out all she has to make sure that my siblings and I are well educated. Mum, your sacrifices and selflessness are worth emulating.

Mr Justice Akonsah Blay, Mr Enoch Kwame Mensah, Ms Portia Nana Budu, Ms Ekua Atta Panyin and Ms Ekua Atta Kakrah, my siblings, deserve special mentioning for their constant interest in the realisation of this research work.

I am forever grateful to my in-laws, Mr George Ewusi-Mensah, Madam Agnes Asamoah and brother in-law, Mr Frank Ewusi-Mensah for their warm reception and generosity in all my endeavours.

Finally, the Head, Department of Languages of Swedru School of Business, Mr William Narkwah Anderson and my trusted friends and confidants, Ms Afi Enyo Nutakor, Mr Lawrence Ewusi-Mensah, Mr Christian Yeboah-Nyarko and Ms Esther Opoku-Boakye deserve a lot of gratitude for their love, friendship and encouragement. Colleagues, I am glad to have you as friends; God bless you immensely.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my able and supportive wife, Cynthia Ewusi-Mensah and two daughters, Abena Fosuaa Blay and Nana Yaa Amankrah Blay who have to bear the brunt of my desire to complete this work on schedule.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the image of African women in a patriarchal society. The purpose of this research work is to find out how Buchi Emecheta uses this text to present African women, how Amma Darko uses her book to present African women, whether these two novelists present women differently or similarly and also to find out whether Emecheta and Darko present African women different from the way some male authors have presented women. The investigation was done through the use of *Joys of Motherhood* written by Buchi Emecheta and *Beyond the Horizon* authored by Amma Darko. The theoretical frameworks for this study are African feminism and post-colonial African literary theory. The researcher carefully selected one standard novel of each author. In each, the key female characters were identified, their role and relationship with men and other women were analysed. This study reveals that Buchi Emecheta presents African women in a number of ways and notable among them are; they are presented as second-class citizens, very assertive, very hardworking, they can face difficulties in the absence of their husbands, they are appendages of men and capable of fostering peace and tranquillity. Amma Darko, in contrast, presents African women diversely as people who are naïve, who are exploited easily, as people who cannot make their own choices, as sex commodities and as property that must be sold to the highest bidder. Similarly, it is revealed that both Emecheta and Darko presented African women as: people that can be battered, people who should not resist the sexual pleasures of men, means through which their parents get wealth, people who are hardworking, appendages of men, people who are created for the sake of men and people who are incapable of making their own decisions.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

Traditionally, African women have played several roles- from peace-making to peace-building across different pre-colonial African societies (Amadium, 1997; Ngongo-Mbede, 2003; Mohammed, 2003). The existence of African women and their power in the pre-colonial African societies were based on ethic of care that was rooted in their motherhood and their nature, which was tolerance, non- violence and peacefulness. According to Nwoye (no date) women engaged in peace-building through childcare, responsible mothering and nurturing of children in ways that prepared and socialised them towards peaceful co-existence. In most pre-colonial African societies, a culture of peace, tolerance and anti-war traditions were imbedded in and transmitted through folktales, proverbs, poetry, songs and dance. Traditionally, women are often seen as transmitters of these cultural values to their progeny and to future generations through such artistic expressions.

It must be noted that because of the important role women play in our African societies, Mohammed, a Somali poet for example uses Somali stories, poetry, songs and proverbs to depict the importance of African women which is transmitters of knowledge and builders of a stable social fabric. Mohammed (2003:102) thus says:

Mother! Without you
It would have been impossible to utter the alphabet
Mother! Without you
It would have been impossible to learn how to
speak
A child deprived of your care,
Sweet lullaby
And soft touches
Would not grow up.
Mother! You are the source of love
The epitome of kindness.

To buttress the pivotal role that African women play in our society, a popular Somalian proverb says 'before becoming adults, we attend a basic school and that school is mother'. Even in the pre-colonial patriarchal cultures like that of the Zulu, women were traditionally able to stop fights by falling over the person being beaten and according to Rakoczy (2006) Zulu women's ability to stop fighting in this way may be due to respect for women as the persons who bring forth children.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that African women were metaphorically referred to as basic school and as a basic school, they had the arduous task of preparing young children for their adult lives. Again, African women in pre-colonial societies played active roles in conflict mediation. The elderly women were respected by all, and they played a key role in the management of crisis. Among the Tudors of Cameroon for example, the 'Wog Clu' (old women) were responsible for conflict mediation and as a result they were consulted on problems which disturbed communal peace (Ngongo-Mbede, 2003). In effect, according to Amadiume (1997), there are two unique contributions that African women have made to world history and civilisation: matriarchy and dual – sex character of African political systems which is directly related to the matriarchal factor. She is of the opinion that African matriarchy was fundamentally and socially and ideological and it was based on this that Kinship and wider moral systems rest.

However, this fundamental, social and ideological base was opposed by the imposition of rule by rich and powerful nations which rule Africa, and the imposition of patriarchy which is masculine in ideology and therefore celebrates violence, valour, conquest and power in various degrees. On this note, Diop (1989) holds the view that patriarchy denies women their rights, subjugating and making them properties in a strict

hierarchical system of family where the man(husband or father) was supreme and had power of life and death over women. In the face of imperialist patriarchy, traditional African women in post-colonial Africa appear to have lost their image, myth and sacredness that represented their being and social existence. This is because apart from being marginalised socially, economically and politically (Amadiume, 1997; Nzeogwu, 2000; Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002), they have become victims of assorted physical abuse and sexual violence based on a warped understanding of African patriarchies which has produced negative masculinities in the continent (Isike and Okeke- Uzodike, 2008).

The oppression of women is fostered in Africa and globally through patriarchy which is one of the cultural tools in the society. Africa is predominantly a patriarchal society and it is engineered by her traditional culture: “in Africa, female subordination takes intricate forms grounded in traditional culture, particularly in the “corporate” and “dual-sex” patterns that Africans have generated throughout their history” (Mikel, 1997:9). In patriarchal society of Africa, men dominate the socio- economic, political machinery and organisation of the state. Men are regarded as natural leaders who are superior and they are believed to have been born to rule over women. The women are considered weaker vessels and according to the society, they are just the extension of men. As a result, Maseno & Kilonzo (2011) say that many cultures in Africa always view women as not equal to men. Men are generally viewed as overseers and women mostly engaged in menial jobs. This unequal power relation between men and women is highlighted by Coetzee (2001) when she presents the way power is distributed between men and women in South Africa:

...our society is a patriarchy. The fact is evident if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political offices, and finance in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands (p.301).

Under patriarchy, men and women are socialized to view themselves and the world through different lenses. While patriarchy in most instances results in the oppression of women, men have been given a stake in the system. Women in patriarchal societies do not have any choice than to accept patriarchy with its associated problems and as Foucault (1980) puts it aptly: “individuals, who do not comply with the social norms of the dominant discourse in society, are branded as ‘abnormal’ ” (p. 7).

In patriarchal society of Africa, male privilege begins during his mother’s pregnancy when his family expresses the age-long preference for a baby boy, especially if he is the first. In some communities in Africa, it is said that every married woman stands with one leg in her husband’s house until she gives birth to a male child. To show the seriousness with which much premium is placed on a male child in a patriarchal society, Wentworth (2005:4) has this to say:

In many cultures, if a man does not father a son his virility is questioned. The patriarchal system makes a daughter a liability since it requires that she be married, a status that normally affords her no long – term possibility of economically benefiting her family of origin. Male privilege also means that a son stands little chance of having his life snuffed out at birth.

In literature, African women have also been stereotyped, marginalised and projected in bad light. This stereotypical way of presenting women has been echoed by Kolawole (1997) who says “male writers in the early phase of African literature encouraged the marginalisation of African women” (p.9). To buttress the negative imaging of African

women in literature, Fonchingong (2006) states “African literature is replete with writings that project male dominance and inadequately pleads the case of African women” (pp. 135- 146).

In African literature, women have been presented as ancillary to men thereby making them look like objects in terms of motherhood and wifehood. For instance, Mariama Ba’s widely read novel, *So Long a Letter* written in French in 1981 and translated into English in 1989 also concentrates thematically on the negative effects of polygamy on women in patriarchal Senegalese society. The appropriateness of this text in treating the above mentioned issue has made Harrow write the vision of Ba at the preface to *So Long a Letter* as: “she believed that the ‘sacred mission’ of the writer was to strike out ‘at the archaic practices, traditions and customs that are not real part of our precious cultural heritage’”. *So Long a Letter* thus succeed admirably in its mission of bringing to the fore some of the negative cultural practices that are detrimental to the well-being of an African woman. Ba uses epistolary form of writing to bring out the condition of the African woman in post-colonial Senegal. Through a long letter, Ramatoulaye, the first narrator writes to her girlhood friend, Aissatou and brings out the effects of Islam and tradition on women. In this book, Ramatoulaye writes this letter with the view to coping with the four months seclusion mandated by Islam, for widows.

Ramatoulaye loses her husband eventually through death and she has to contend with series of suitors including her late husband’s brother, Tamsir. In this state of distress she has no choice than to retort “my voice has known thirty years of silence, thirty years of harassment. It bursts out, violent, sometimes sarcastic, sometimes contemptuous” (p.60). Accordingly, Ramatoulaye is fighting the culture of a man marrying more than one wife and wife inheritance in an Islamic society. Therefore, *So Long a Letter* succeeds in painting a vivid picture of the struggle of African woman in

post-colonial Senegal that it affects students and readers alike. On this footnote Williams (1997) advances this:

While *So Long a Letter* is concerned with the lives of two women in post-colonial Senegal, this novel spoke to the needs and struggles of the women in my class. As members of the first generation in each of their families to attend college, these students faced tremendous obstacles to gain an education. Some were single mothers working at demeaning jobs during the day and attending school at night (p.142).

Likewise Mariama Ba, her compatriot, Aminata Sow Fall has written *Beggars' Strike* to give a picture of the power of men in post-colonial Senegalese society. Mour Ndiaye, the central character of this novel, loses his job and decides to get involved in Senegalese politics and when his party eventually takes over the mantle of leadership in his country he is offered the enviable position of Director of Public Health. His fame in consequence grows like wide fire and he accumulates considerable amount of wealth:

Now that he has everything he can wish for: a house, two cars at his disposal, domestic staff paid for by the state sometimes he is worried by his competence especially at official ceremonies when he has to be careful that the buttons of his dinner-jacket don't burst (p.19).

Prior to Ndiaye's rise to prominence and affluence he has lived like a beggar and his wife, Lolli has no choice than to support the family through the sale of almost all her belongings such as best cloths and jewelleryes. She often falls down on her relatives to ensure that Ndiaye and the children do not starve. Now that Ndiaye is famous and rich he takes another wife, Sine who is as young as his daughter, Raabi. Though both Raabi and Lolli oppose Ndiaye's second marriage, characteristic of a patriarchal society, Ndiaye does not stop with the excuse that as "head of the house", he can do what he wants: "Just think that I am the one who feeds you, keeps you, aren't I? And just tell

me what contract I am tied by that prevents me from taking a second wife, if I so desire?" (p.31).

From this it could be deduced that the power relations between Ndiaye and his wife is premised on economic factors. Ndiaye eventually lives home, stays with Sine and neglects his family totally. The behaviour of Ndiaye is in line with how Napikoski (2013) describes patriarchy:

A patriarchal society consists of a male-dominated power structure throughout organised society and in individual relationships. This means that in this society men hold the positions of power: head of the family unit, leaders of social groups, boss in the workplace and heads of government (p.15).

Ironically, unlike Lolli, Sine is more educated and very sophisticated so she rejects the idea of stopping smoking, wearing pants and making up. Thus she rejects any patriarchal control from Ndiaye when she asserts "If you think I am prepared to be stuck here like a piece of furniture... then you're making a mistake! ... I am a person and not a block of wood! ... I am your wife so treat me like a wife" (pp.95-96). In the end Mour Ndiaye becomes so consumed by patriarchal norms that he thinks that everybody must obey him and never challenge his authority. In doing this, he forgets that some traditions are gradually losing grounds in Senegal hence he thinks that by holding on to patriarchal tendencies he will exercise considerable power over men and women.

Similarly, Dagarembga's *Nervous Condition* is replete with patriarchy as a subject. This novel which is written by a Zimbabwean female writer examines the various ways in which patriarchy broadly manifests itself regarding the subordinate position of women.

Nervous Conditions focuses on the colonised African clan (Sigauke clan, part of the Shona people) in the then Rhodesia during the 1960s. The novel explores the exposure of the Sigauke clan to westernisation in various ways. At times this westernisation would be at loggerheads with traditional customs, practices and beliefs, with disastrous consequences. In this novel colonialism is seen as a double-edged sword: on one side, it is the 'carrier' of western modernity which emphasises on education and democracy, that gives the opportunity for challenging African patriarchy. On the other side, a colonial education alienates its African subjects from their culture, with disastrous psychological consequences. The novel examines unequal power relations between men and women in the Sigauke clan which is largely steeped in tradition. Women in *Nervous Condition*, Nyasha, Maiguru, Lucia, Tambu and MaShingayi challenge the practices of male domination in various ways, usually unsuccessfully. Each of these women makes an effort to question some of the decisions that are the prerogative of the patriarch. The women also attempt to break out of the role of domesticity and servility to the surprise of the men. Although, the novel appears to be the story of Tambu and her ambition to educate and develop herself in the face of a myriad of obstacles, it is very much about Nyasha, one of the central characters of the novel, who is alienated from her own clan by virtue of her 'Englishness'. The truthful manner through which Dagarembga depicts patriarchy in *Nervous Condition* has made writers like Rimmon-Kenan (1987) affirms:

The narrator of *Nervous Condition* is an integral participant of the story, and a seemingly reliable one since the reading of the story and its commentary affords the reader the opportunity to accept it as an authoritative account of non-fictional truth (p.87).

Flora Nwapa, the first Nigerian female novelist has projected the control of men in patriarchal society in a number of novels including *Efuru*. It has female empowerment, sisterhood and gender equality as its hallmark. Her seriousness in dealing with the marginalisation of women in a patriarchal society has made people refer to her as been a feminist but she debunks this idea in an interview conducted by Umeh (1993) when she emphatically rejoinders: “I don’t accept that I am a feminist, I accept that I am an ordinary woman who is writing about what she knows. I try to project the image of women positively” (p.27). Nwapa is a novelist who dedicates her energy into discussing and fighting for women to gain independence and success in their native patriarchal Ibo society.

In *Efuru*, Nwapa illustrates women who are accomplished, well behaved and relatively healthy but as accomplished as they are these women have marriages that are faced with problems due to barrenness. These women are brought down by their traditions. Therefore, Nwapa presents to the readers that barrenness is both a curse and a failure on the part of women in a patriarchal society.

Nwapa’s compatriot, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has written *Purple Hibiscus* which also dissects the issue of patriarchy. This novel which is set in post-colonial Nigeria is about Eugene, the head of a family who is very domineering which leads to him constantly abusing and controlling his wife, Beatrice and two children, Kambili and Jaja. This novel addresses some of the important issues that post-colonial critics are seeking to fight against such as violence against women. The violent acts that are perpetuated by Eugene against his family underscore the issue of patriarchal power because in this tale Eugene is very oppressive and violent thereby forcing his family to live in perpetual fear and indifference. However, Beatrice exercises control in the domestic front by poisoning Eugene slowly through putting poison in his meals and tea

every night. Though, Beatrice is docile and typically traditional, in this novel she wields considerable power that makes her fight against the authoritarian rule of a husband in a patriarchal society. To propagate patriarchal rule in Eugene's household, he employs silence as a means to make Beatrice succumb to his dominating nature. It is therefore not surprising that some writers are of the opinion that the greatest weapon that some men use in extending patriarchy is silence. Thus, Nwakweh (1995) agrees that silence is:

All imposed restrictions on women's social being, thinking and expressions that are religious or culturally sanctioned. As a patriarchal weapon of control it is used by the dominant male structure on the subordinate or muted female structure (p.75).

In shedding light on the patriarchal nature of the society created by Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus*, Mabura (2008) avows that Adichie's novels present patriarchy in African society and she likens her novels to that of the Gothic fiction in which female characters are often terrified, oppressed and driven to make psychologically imbalanced by powerful tyrannical male(s). In her recent work, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie again presents how women characters struggle to keep their families in the midst of a popular civil war. Women in this text are grappled with men infidelity and this is symbolised by the way Mrs Ozobia becomes a victim of her husband's unfaithfulness. In the society of *Half a Yellow Sun*, motherhood which is defined in a patriarchal society as the ability of a woman to give birth to a child comes into sharp focus. Arinze, one of the major characters in this novel has her mother-in-law demanding to know how many abortions she has committed before marriage and becoming worried when Arinze does not become pregnant within the three years of marrying the son. These experiences are

oppressive and put women under severe and unnecessary pressure thereby reducing them to the level of slaves.

Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie has chosen to use this book, *Half of a Yellow Sun* to articulate the place of African women in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. This book which is set during and after the Biafran War in Nigeria which started between 1967 and 1970 is a love story. In this book, the British colonisers have left Nigeria and the rulership of this country is in the hands of male politicians and businessmen. Olanna, one of the principal characters in this novel has a father who hosts high-level dignitaries in his home. These businessmen who want to give this man a tender ask of sexual favours from his beautiful daughter, Olanna. Olanna is convinced and pressurised by her father to engage in prostitution.

Chief Okonji, a wealthy cabinet minister wants to contract Olanna's father in exchange for Olanna. This makes Olanna an 'object of sex' to help the father get wealth and contracts. Even though Olanna has a fiancée who is a lecturer, her parents disliked him because according to the family, he had nothing to show except his books and hot-headedness. This an instance of public patriarchy which Walby cited by Kandiyoti (1993) explains has two forms:

Private patriarchy is based on the relative exclusion of women from arenas of social life other than the household and the appropriation of their services by individual patriachs within the confines of the home. Public patriarchy is based on employment and the state; women no longer are excluded from the public arena but subordinated within it. More collective forms of appropriation of their services supersede the individual mode of private patriarchy... the twentieth century has witnessed a major shift from private to public patriarchy (p.377).

Patriarchy is in control in this novel, even though both Olanna and the fiancée have Bachelor and Master's degrees from universities in United Kingdom her father insists on her marrying from a rich family so her father imposes a man on her by going out with her and displaying her for men to see so that they come for her in order to get money and tenders.

Despite these pressures Olanna eventually marries her fiancée, Odenigbo and for the first time a woman in patriarchal Nigerian society chooses her own partner irrespective of stiff opposition from the parents. Odenigbo and Olanna gets married but Olanna remains childless and because in a patriarchal society a woman is considered worthy when she has a child, her in-law constantly becomes furious and calls her a witch and that she should go back and tell those who sent her that she did not find the son. In this novel the educated woman is seen as spoilt and that education was seen as the preserve of men so the people in this patriarchal society are made to believe that a woman should not be of the same level with men in terms of education.

Comparatively, another Nigerian national, Elechi Amadi has aptly described the image of African women in a patriarchal society in his work, *The Concubine*. Women in this novel are made to live based on the precepts of men in their society. Women in Omokachi, the setting of this novel cannot go contrary to the straight-jacket role that they have been made to play as women. Therefore, any attempt made by a woman to side-step the traditions of this society is seen as a serious aberration. Accordingly, women are not given the freedom of expression and when Ihuoma, a woman for instance, decides to harvest plantains on a disputed land, she is confronted by Madume who rudely orders her to surrender these plantains. The chauvinistic manner in which Madume orders Ihuoma to give out the plantains makes her run away and this is presented to the readers as "Ihuoma puts down the basket quietly, removed the plantain

and began to move away. Only a very foolish woman would try to struggle with a man” (p.68).

Bessie Head, a South African writer cannot be left in the way African writers have exhibited patriarchy in their novels. Bessie Head for instance has highlighted the issue of patriarchy in her novel *A Question of Power*. She exploits the effects of both patriarchy and racism on women in South African society. Patriarchy manifests in this text when Bessie paints male characters in this novel as sexual predators who rape young females in order to satisfy and empower themselves. This act of sexual escapade is made known when the raconteur speaks: “it was the nightmare of the slums she had grown in South Africa, but it never dominated her life. Usually small girls are raped, but the men were known” (p.117).

The male characters in *A Question of Power* use sex as a weapon to oppress their female counterparts and that a man is glorified depending on the number of women he has systematically bedded. Effectively, women do not enjoy sexual intercourse because sex is viewed as beneficial to men only. Dan, one of the male characters restates this scenario as he tells Elizabeth “my whole body is on fire...it’s you. You are not supposed to think of me with any desire or else I shall fall down” (p.26). In the end, in order to eradicate the sexual role and the subjugating role as women, the female characters decide to destroy the source of their problem- the penis.

Therefore, Dikeledi cuts off the manhood of Gareseso. By severing the manhood of this man the women have succeeded in reversing the gender roles of women and are considered liberated which is a representation of the feminists’ ideals of victory over the men. Elizabeth, the central character of the novel brings out the way the women in this fictionalised world have been oppressed in the patriarchal society by

likening one of the male characters, Dan to Adolf Hitler who was a German political and military dictator in the twentieth century by addressing him as “He had not yet told the whole of mankind about his ambitions like Hitler and Napoleon to rule the world” (p. 14).

On the other hand, Ama Ata Aidoo, a Ghanaian novelist and playwright has highlighted patriarchy in a number of novels such as *Changes: a love story* and *The Girl Who Can and Other Stories*. *Changes: a love story*, for example, brings to the fore a situation where Ogyaanowa, the daughter of Esi and Oko listens to the noise that her parents are making due a feud that is between them which results in a fight between them. This fight emanates from the fact that Esi has refused to have another child and that she spends so much time at work. Oko becomes angry, grabs Esi and forcefully have sex with her and instead of apologising for his actions he goes outside the bedroom with the bed sheet.

Being ambitious, this female protagonist, Esi goes contrary to the dictates of her tradition and divorces Oko and later becoming the second wife of another man. Throughout Esi’s tussle for self- respect in a patriarchal society, Aidoo scans pertinent issues like career choices, marital rape, monogamy, polygamy and compromises in marriage. It is therefore not surprising when one looks at the mode of treatment that Esi has received at the hands of Oko and agree with Bohemer (1991) who cries: “Mother Africa may have been declared free, but mothers of Africa remained manifestly oppressed”(p.7).

By the same token, *The Girl Who Can and Other Stories* revolves around a young female protagonist who goes through a lot in her resolve to define herself in a patriarchal African society. Among some of the short stories in this novel such as *She-*

Who- Would- Be- King and *Male-ing Names in the Sun* Aidoo topples the traditional portrayal of adolescent African females and as a result she creates characters who question and challenge the role of the African women in the twenty- first century.

The works of the Nigerian writer, Buchi Emecheta namely *The Bride Price*, *The Joys of Motherhood*, *Destination Biafra*, *Double Yoke*, *Gwendolen*, *The Rape of Shavi*, *Second-Class Citizen* and *Kehinde* present patriarchal issues in Nigerian society. *The Bride Price* and *The Joys of Motherhood* represent the pre- colonial and colonial era whereas *Destination Biafra* and *Double Yoke* portray Emecheta's feminist phase as far as her authorial career is concerned thereby using them to exhort the virtues of the African womanhood.

Gwendolen and *Kehinde* presents a scenario where the African woman struggles to acquire an identity for herself so as to find her feet in a patriarchal society. *The Bride Price* gives a different picture of oppression of people in a patriarchal society. Aku-nna, the central figure of this novel approaches womanhood but her uncle's ambition is to marry her off to a rich man, Okoboshi to get a very high bride price but Aku-nna falls in love with another man that she is forbidden to marry. Aku-nna is kidnaped and about to be married to Okoboshi but she is determined to kill herself if such marriage comes on. She fights so hard to protect her dignity as a woman so that she is treated cruelly by patriarchal conditions in her society. Finally, Aku-nna marries this gentleman and this marriage is seen as the beginning of her rebellion against the entrenched social norms of patriarchy which does not allow any woman to make a choice of a husband.

In *The Rape of Shavi*, Emecheta represents both patriarchy and colonialism as twin forces that collaborate to oppress African women. She shows that both the African culture and colonialism are at fault when it comes to the marginalisation of African

women and that patriarchy is deeply entrenched in the social consciousness that there is nothing that could be done except there is cultural revolution so as to give fair treatment to women.

Destination Biafra on the other hand, talks about the hegemonic nature of men in a patriarchal society. This is captured in the way Debbie is wickedly raped by black soldiers. Though she is one woman, her experience epitomises the way women have been subjected to atrocities because of colonialism and patriarchy. The real condition that women underwent during the Biafra War which is fictionalised by Emecheta in this book provides a horrifying condition that women undergo under war and patriarchy. Therefore, it is not surprising that it is said that war becomes a theatre not for male heroics, but for female endurance. Even though the males in this novel leave their various countries during war Debbie for example stays and fights for her nation and in the end she tells Alan Grey:

I see now that Abosi and his like are still colonised. They need to be decolonised. I am not like him, a black white man; I am a woman and a woman of Africa. I am a daughter of Africa, and if she is in shame, I still stay and mourn her in her shame (p.245).

In similar fashion, *Double Yoke* brings into sharp focus the problems that Nko, a central character faces. She faces the problem of identity in marriage in a patriarchal society which makes her get torn between marrying and becoming a good wife as expected of her traditionally or get a degree and be branded as a feminist, rebellious and a bad woman. She finally becomes victorious in life as compare to her colleague woman, Dr. Madume Edet who tries frantically to pattern her life to suit the patriarchal patterns of her society. Nko is able to extricate herself from patriarchal yoke when she defies all odds and gets education.

In contrast to how Nnaife and Abgadi show their love towards their daughters, in *Gwendolen*, Uncle Johnny decides to abuse her niece, Gwendolen sexually instead of negotiating for her bride price. Winston, another male character in this novel capitalises on his authority over Gwendolen and has sexual intercourse with her. The male characters in this book thus appear to be oppressors who give female characters psychological trauma. This act is done by Winston and Uncle Johnny illustrates fact that in a patriarchal society the image of women is that of a mere objects that can be used by men to satisfy their sexual desires as and when they deem necessary.

The Joys of Motherhood written by *Buchi Emecheta* presents a story line which centres on patriarchy. Nnu Ego who is the daughter of Chief Agbadi decides to live her life by adhering to the strict social convention of marrying, giving birth to male children and enduring the pains that come with it. In this sense, Palmer (1983) extols the novel as the first in African literature to represent the female point of view in registering its displeasure at the male chauvinism and how patriarchy has been unfair and oppressive towards mothers.

This novel presents barrenness as a curse and women who give birth to female children are perceived to be unsuccessful because it is believed that the male children perpetuate the family names. Nnu Ego, the central female character makes several attempts in the line of the above to define her identity through procreation but her dream of motherhood becomes a source of slavery to her. The storyteller in this regard articulates “Her love and duty for her children were like a chain of slavery” (p.186).

Despite Nnu Ego’s tireless efforts at fulfilling her dream of motherhood, all her efforts become a mirage; she becomes bitter ironically. In the end, it comes to light that nurturing children does not necessarily bring joy as Nnu Ego suffers an ignoble death at

the early age of forty-five, becoming lonely and abandoned by the very children she has slaved for in the name meeting patriarchal expectations of a woman giving birth to male children. However, what actually broke her down was that months after months she is expecting to hear from her sons in America, and from Adim too who later went to Canada, and failing to do so. It was from rumours that she heard Oshie had married and that his bride was a white woman. When she dies, her misery and dishonourable death is brought to the limelight as:

After such wandering, on one night, Nnu Ego lay down by the road-side thinking that she had arrived home. She died quietly there, with no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her. She had never really made many friends, so busy had she been building up her joys as a mother (p.253).

Amma Darko, a Ghanaian female writer, who has emerged as a worthy successor to the pioneer Ghanaian women novelists like Efua T. Sutherland and Ama Ata Aidoo has written *Beyond the Horizon*, *The Housemaid* and *Faceless*. Darko presents a story in *Beyond the Horizon* about the way African women have been maltreated in a male-dominated African society. This story presents an uneducated African village girl, Mara who accepts her father's decision to marry Akobi, the son of the village undertaker. Mara experiences neglect, sexual abuse and battery at the hands of Akobi. Akobi sends her to the city of Accra and he has the opportunity of travelling abroad but when he does he sends for her mistress, Comfort who earlier on has rejected him.

Later, Akobi sends his friend and crony, Osey to bring Mara abroad but she is later blackmailed into prostitution when Akobi laces her drink, allows several men to sleep with her and films the act. The last straw that brings the back of a camel is that the lion share of the proceeds from Mara's prostitution goes to Akobi who spends it

lavishly on Comfort, his Mistress. In the end, Mara becomes so devastated that she forgets the idea of going back to Ghana.

In her *Faceless*, Darko portrays the manner in which women and children are abused sexually and physically. The perpetrators of this abuse are men embodied by Onko, Kwei, Kpakpo, Macho and Poison who brutalise women and children. Onko for instance defiles Maa Tsuru's daughter, Baby T. who is just about twelve years old; Kpakpo on the other hand rapes the same girl. Kwei on the other hand subjects Mama Tsuru to severe beatings every now and then and one of such scenes is highlighted as he "pounced on her like a cat on an unsuspecting mouse and began a vicious pounding spree... landing blows anywhere and everywhere and on every part of her pregnant body" (p.153). At the end of it the attitudes of these men in the patriarchal society shown in this text is comment on by Anyidoho: " Men with devilish intentions towards vulnerable children, such as wily rapist Onko pretending to be every child's uncle, the bully Macho, or "the no-nonsense street lord" appropriately named Poison"(p.17).

On the basis of how these women writers discussed above have presented African women in their novels, the research seeks to find out how Buchi Emecheta and Amma Darko present African women in their novels, *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* respectively. This investigation will be done by the researcher using African feminism and post- colonial African literary theory as theoretical framework.

The research design for the thesis is qualitative research and the data that will be used for the research is the content analysis of Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* and Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. To analyse the data, the researcher will look at how Amma Darko and Buchi Emecheta have presented African

women in their novels and whether these authors have presented Africa women similarly or differently. The sample technique for the work will be purposive sampling and these texts have been selected purposely because they contain more information about how African women have been presented in novels.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Women have been presented in various ways in literary texts. Most literary writers have presented them negatively in texts and to buttress this Ruth (1998: 104) says “women have long been portrayed in negative and derogatory terms over the years in many African literary texts especially those written by men”. Women have been presented as docile, unintelligent and illiterate folks whose voices must not be heard in the assembly of men.

Consequently, in contemporary African literature, many female feminist writers have used their novels to praise women characters by given them prominent roles to play with the view to portraying how chauvinistic some men writers have been. However, there has not been much study about how female writers have presented women in their novels. The researcher, therefore, seeks to find out how these two female writers, Buchi Emecheta and Amma Darko present African women in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* respectively.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research work is to find out how Buchi Emecheta presents African women in her novel, *The Joys of Motherhood*.

Also, this work probes into how Amma Darko presents African women in her novel, *Beyond the Horizon*.

Again, it seeks to find out whether there are similarities and difference between the presentations of women in these novels, *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* by Emecheta and Darko respectively.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions that the researcher finds answers to are:

- How does Buchi Emecheta present African women in *The Joys of Motherhood*?
- How does Amma Darko present African women in her novel *Beyond the Horizon*?
- Have Emecheta and Darko presented African women similarly or differently in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* respectively?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in terms of pedagogy and literary criticism. As regards pedagogy, it will contribute significantly to the teaching and learning of Literature especially in analysing how traditional African women have been presented in literary works.

In terms of research, the study will contribute to the unending debates as far as feminism and literary analysis are concerned since it will serve as a resource material from which a range of knowledge can be tapped for further research.

1.5 Limitations

Even though Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* has attracted a lot of critical attention, most of which concentrating on her considerable skills in presenting the difficulties of African women and young girls in a male dominated society, information

about her work is not enough as compared to her counterpart, Buchi Emecheta. Hence, the researcher had a lot of challenges getting more information about her. As a result, the research had to rely mostly on unreliable internet connectivity to get the little information.

1.6 Delimitation

The choice of *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* over several texts written by these authoresses stems from the fact that these books are pregnant with instances of how African women have been presented in patriarchal societies. This choice is justified because in reviewing Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, Umezurike (2015) avers: "Amma Darko's fiction essentially tackles the (tragic) experiences and the fate of African women caught in the stranglehold of patriarchal structures and how these women strive to achieve agency in such debilitating conditions" (p.155). Elleke Boemer from Oxford University on the other hand, attests to how *The Joys of Motherhood* aptly presents African women when he posits at the prelude of the book that : "Emecheta's work established a name for its women-centred perspectives and determined focus on the leading female characters' spirited struggle for survival, often against the pressures of patriarchal and colonial tradition".

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the background to the study. The researcher looked at how patriarchy and its manifestation in the facets of our society. It again, looked at how various female authors have generally presented African women in our patriarchal society, the purpose of this study was enumerated, the problem to be researched was stated, research questions that the researcher will find answers to was spelt out, the

significance of the study was captured, the limitation and delimitation of this study were also discussed.

The researcher also gave a brief introduction to the research method that he will adopt during the chapter three of this work, the theoretical frameworks for the work which are African feminism and post-colonial African literary theory were also mentioned.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

As already stated at the background to the study, this thesis has African feminism and post-colonial African literary theory as its theoretical frameworks. Accordingly, this chapter explores the theory of feminism and post-colonial literary theory. In this exploration, the theory of Feminism is discussed under the following thematic areas: the historical perspective of feminism, the theory of feminism and types of feminism. Under types of feminism, liberal feminism, Marxist feminism/social feminism and African feminism are treated.

Post-colonial literary theory is analysed based on historical background of post-colonial literary theory the method of post- colonialism, post-colonial African literary theory and development of post- colonial feminists' literary theory in African which encompasses the development of post-colonial feminists' writings in Nigeria and Ghana where Buchi Emecheta and Amma Darko hail respectively.

2.1 The Theoretical Framework- historical perspective of feminism

Hebertine Auclert from France is credited as being the first person to use the term “feminism” in 1882 to name the fight of women for political right (Clifford, 2001:11). According to feminist criticism, the root of prejudice against women has long been embedded in western culture. Such gender discrimination may have begun with the Biblical narrative on Eve not Adam. In giving the historical background of feminism, Azasu & Geraldo (2005) posit:

Feminist beliefs have existed throughout history, but feminism became widespread in Europe and the United States in 1880. At that time, Euro Christian tradition

considered women to be inferior to men. People believed that a woman's proper place was in the home. The oppression of women were also supported by law for example, women were prevented by law from voting in elections. Most institutions of higher learning were also closed to women (pp.50-51).

However, in 1919, the British scholar and teacher, Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) laid the foundation for present day feminism in her work, *A room of one's own*. In this text, Woolf declares that men have and continue to treat women as inferior. It is the male who defines what it means to be female and who controls the political, social and literary structure.

With the publication of *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), feminist interest resurfaced. de Beauvoir's text declares that French society and western societies in general are patriarchal, controlled by males. She insists that women see themselves as autonomous beings. Women, she maintains must reject the societal construct that men are subject or absolute and that women are the other. The advent of political activism and social concerns in the 1960's made women find their voices and prominent among them is Kate Millett who published *Sexual politics* in 1969. Other feminist writers such Elaine Showalter, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot and George Sand wrote books under pseudonyms and by so doing female authors dramatized the image of women in their societies and this led to the spread of feminism (Bressle, 2003:144-150). Feminism has evolved throughout ages and people have looked at it with different lenses. The theory of feminism is founded on three main principles:

Women have something valuable to contribute to every aspect of the world. As an oppressed group, women have been unable to achieve their potentials, received rewards, or gain full participation in society. Feminist research should do more than critique, but should work toward societal transformation (Ropers-Huilman, 2002).

The history of feminism is often described in three temporal waves- first wave, second wave and third wave. This concept originated with the Irish activist, Frances Power Cobbe in 1884 who likened the movement to the tides of the ocean, where each wave obeys one more uniform impetus, and carries the waters onward and upward along the shore (Hewitt, 2010).

The first wave occurred during the nineteenth and early twentieth century with people such as Buch Elizabeth, Candy Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage. The second wave occurred during the 1960's and 1990's. This wave grew in the midst of protest against war and growing self-consciousness of the marginalisation in our society. This wave as Rampton (2008:8) puts it “drew in women of colour and developing nations, seeking sisterhood and solidarity and claiming women struggle as class struggle”. The third wave is believed to have started from the 1990's to date and it is informed by post-colonialism and postmodernism.

2.2 The Theory of Feminism

Feminism is a difficult theory to define because it has several meanings and connotations for people who have lived several generations, people who come from varying ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations.

Sotunsa (2008:3) asserts “feminism is a historically diverse and culturally varied international movement probing the ‘question of women’ ”. Cuddon (1999:338) on the other hand says “feminism is an attempt to describe and interpret women's experience as depicted in various kinds of literature”. In addition to the definitions above, Humm (1992:1) explains feminism by saying “the word feminism is “a label for a commitment or movement to achieve equality for women”.

Feminism is the “legitimate demand that women should have economic, political and social equality with men. The term also refers to political movement that works to gain such equality” (Azasu & Geraldo, 2005:51). Hooks (2002) says “feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (p.8).

The Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary also defines feminism as “the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim”.

On the other hand, Chukwuma (1990) states “feminism means...a rejection of inferiority and striving for recognition. It seeks to give women a sense of self as worthy, effectual and contributing human being” (p.9).

Comparatively, Frank (1987), in analysing the usefulness of feminism argues “Feminism...is a profoundly individualistic philosophy: it values personal growth and individual fulfilment over any communal needs or goods” (p.45).

Eichler (1980:9) brings out the motive of feminism as the abolition of all the roles that are giving to people and captures this as “feminists’ efforts are geared towards the abolition of sex roles and dysfunction”. She intimates that feminism these days has become double standard and this is seen in the roles that are given to the sexes and that to reverse these roles is going to be a herculean task because according to her “to abolish sex roles... coerce women and men to do jobs which neither of them wanted”(p.14).

Similarly, in her bid to unearth the reasons for feminism, Gubar (1985) asserts that “our culture is steeped in myths as make primacy in theological, artistic and scientific and creative endeavours” (p.293). She therefore thinks that feminism was

precipitated by the situation whereby theologians are of the view that power is based on God, the Father and earlier writers who used terms or make titles such as priest, prophet, legislature and emperor To add to Gubar's assertion, Humm (1985:4) has this to say: "the growth of feminists' movement itself is inseparable from feminist criticism. Women become feminists by becoming conscious of, and criticising the power of symbols and the ideology of culture." Fiorenza (1998) is of the view that:

Although, there are many divergent form and even contradictory articulations of feminism today that it is appropriate to speak of feminism in the plural, most agree that contemporary feminism is not only a political movement akin to other emancipator movements but also an intellectual methodology for investigating and theorizing the experience and structure of women's oppression...feminism is the radical notion that women are people (p.3).

Fiorenza, therefore, likens feminism to any movement that aims at emancipating women from oppression and stating clearly that women are also human beings and must be treated equally with men.

From the foregoing definitions, feminism as a theory could be seen as a social theory and movement which aims at bridging the gap between men and women thereby reacting to the stereotypical depiction of women as indeterminate, vulnerable, dependent, gullible, voiceless, meant to bear children only and incapable of living their own lives unless they depend on men. There are several types of feminism but for the purpose of this research liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist/socialised feminism and African feminism will be discussed due the fact that the space in this thesis will not be enough to discuss all of them.

2.3 Liberal Feminism

This type argues that “society has a false belief that women are by nature less intellectually and physically capable than men” (Tong, 2009:2).

Sotunsa (2008) argues that “liberal feminism aims at achieving equal, legal and social rights for women” (p.10). Liberal feminists seek to level the playing ground so that the same opportunities will be given to women to excel. These feminists are of the view that patriarchal society puts sex and gender together and by so doing jobs that are perceived to be feminine in nature are given to women to pursue. This means that liberal feminists would want to see equal pay for men and women and more representation of women in politics and business, just like other forms of feminism. However, liberal feminists court decisions about child custody that favour women, for example, or be willing to pay for dates, acknowledging that it's not fair for men to pay all the time. Liberal feminists simply want people to be rewarded for their individual talents and efforts in a completely equal and fair manner.

Liberal feminism thus focuses on making some institutional and governmental changes as far as women issues are concerned. The aim is to thoroughly integrate women into power structure and to give women the chance to gain equal access to positions held by men.

2.4 Radical feminism

Echols (1998) posits “radical feminism considers the male-controlled capitalist hierarchy as the defining feature of women’s oppression and the total uprooting and reconstruction of society as necessary” (p.416).

The radical feminist speaks against the subservient role women play in the society and it seeks to develop a society which is non-hierarchical. Radical feminism is

a movement that believes sexism is so deeply rooted in society that the only cure is to eliminate the concept of gender completely and due this, radical feminists suggest changes, such as finding technology that will allow babies to be grown outside of a woman's body, to promote more equality between men and women. This will allow women not to stop going to because of maternity leave, which radical feminists argue is one reason women are not promoted as quickly as men. In fact, radical feminists argue that the entire traditional family system is sexist. Men are expected to work outside the home while women are expected to care for children and clean the house.

Radical feminists note that this traditional dichotomy maintains men as economically more powerful than women, and therefore, the traditional family structure should be rejected. It must be again said that this type of feminism seeks to buttress the point that if higher value is placed on women there will be a reversal of the oppression against them.

2.5 Marxist/socialist feminism

Socialist feminism is slightly less extreme but still calls for major social change. Socialist feminism is a movement that calls for an end to capitalism through a socialist reformation of our economy. Basically, socialist feminism argues that capitalism strengthens and supports the sexist status quo because men are the ones who currently have power and money. Those men are more willing to share their power and money with other men, which means that women are continually given fewer opportunities and resources. This keeps women under the control of men. In effect, feminists under this category purport that women can only achieve freedom when they work towards the end of both economic and cultural oppression.

2.6 African feminism or post- independence feminism: historical perspective

As an awareness group, African feminism set off in the early twentieth century with women like Adelaide Casely-Hayford, the Sierra Leonean women's rights activist referred to as the "African Victorian Feminist" who contributed widely to both pan-African and feminist goals, Charlotte Maxeke who in 1918 founded the Bantu Women's League in South Africa and Huda Sharaawi who in 1923 established the Egyptian Feminist Union. African feminism as a movement stems also from the liberation struggles especially those in Algeria, Mozambique, Guinea, Angola and Kenya where women fighters fought alongside their male counterparts for state autonomy and women's rights. African feminist icons from this period are women like the Mau-Mau Rebel, Wambui Otieno, the freedom-fighters such as Lillian Ngoyi, Albertina Sisulu, Margaret Ekpo and Funmilayo Anikulapo-Kuti who fought against colonialism as well as patriarchy (often through protest). Modern African feminism was solidified during the landmark UN decade for women 1975-1985 which resulted in feminist activism and scholarship spreading widely across the continent and diaspora. Since then the African feminist movement has expanded in policy, legislation, scholarship and also in the cultural realm. It has to do with grassroots activism as well as intellectual activism, 'bread and butter' issues such as poverty reduction, violence prevention and reproductive rights as well as with lifestyle, popular culture, media, art and culture. It's about confronting patriarchal mythmaking on one hand, and with the other we are equally challenged with tackling racist stereotypes. It has to do with these seven key issues in African feminist thought.

African feminism has historically provided arguments which validate the experience of women of Africa and African origin. It aims basically to raise a global awareness which brings about sympathy for the African women's histories, present

situation and future expectations. Principally, it seeks to raise concerns about the rights of women from Africa and those living in the diaspora since many of the contributors of literature on Africa feminism are staying overseas. Nevertheless, the advocacy, debates and the struggle are mostly pursued on the African continent. This type of feminism recognises the fact that men are partners in the struggle for equality. Aidoo (1998), a Ghanaian authoress supports this view when she advances that:

I should go on to insist that every man and woman should be a feminist- especially if they believe that Africans should take charge of African land, African wealth, African lives and the burden of African development. It is not possible to advocate independence of African development without also believing that African women must have the best that the environment can offer. For some of us this is the crucial element of feminism (p. 10).

In Africa, there is an argument about what feminism is all about due to the fact that it originates from Europe and Americas thereby having European and American definitions. This debate has become possible because the West has provided and assisted itself with the strategies that this movement has espoused. For African women, feminism is dependent on political eras being the pre-colonial and post-colonial Africa. There is no commonality between these eras because the history of such liberation movement differs from one country to the other.

Historically, African women have been in the position of power and have been treated equally in terms of having access to wealth and resources which indicate that African women have not been oppressed by African culture. For example, the deeds done by Black African women in South Africa could safely be seen as feminist act. These Black women had occupied leadership positions and they wielded considerable influence:

In Zulu, royal women demonstrated such leadership before, during and after King Shaka's reign and this took place in a variety of forms...sometimes military, but more often economic and religious...including rain making, administering ritual medicine and custodianship of sacred objects (Weitz, 2003:405-424).

Interestingly, some scholars have argued that feminism is not new to the African continent. They believe it has always existed but because there was no word to describe it linguistically that is why African women have copied it blindly. To make this proclamation sound, Kolawole (1997) affirms:

Although, many African languages have no synonyms for feminism as it is defined by the west, the concept of group action by women, based on economic welfare in social, cultural, economic, religious and political matters is indigenous and familiar to a majority of these women (p.31).

It must be noted that not all group actions constituted feminism; due to the nature of African feminism as compared to western feminism, African feminists have duality of thought as far as labelling themselves as feminists. Buchi Emecheta for example presents her view about feminism when she intimates:

I have never called myself a feminist. Now if you choose to call me a feminist, that is your business; but I don't subscribe to the feminist idea that all men are brutal and repressive and we must reject them. Some of these men are my brothers and fathers and sons. Am I to reject them too (Ogunyemi, 1985: 64- 80).

It could be deduced from this speech that Emecheta herself a feminist Nonetheless, she is not perturbed when others describe her so but what she does not ascribe to is the idea that men are brutal (violent and cruel) and that we must reject them. In the cause of struggling for equality

between men and women, some women have been at the receiving end of men which is evident when Mikel (1997) says:

African women know that they have borne the brunt of the crises of their states over the past decades. The evidence is apparent in the lower educational levels for women across the continent, the continuing presence of women in agricultural and other rural activities (rather than in the professional to describe the men (p.5).

African feminism has evolved over the years and it started when women began the struggle against patriarchal rule and how women were generally excluded from social and political aspects of the society. To trace the beginning of African feminism, McFadden (2002) claims:

I find that a useful entry point into my discussion of feminism in Africa is to define it as being fundamentally the struggle by women against patriarchal control and exclusion. Most importantly, it is a struggle which African women have engaged in, as individuals and now as collectivises of women, for millennia. It is, for me, the oldest expression of resistance against injustices in the human narrative, albeit least known or recognised.

It is deduced from McFadden that African feminism emanated from the unfavourable conditions that Africa women found themselves in because of patriarchy which makes men dominate the social, political and economic activities in the society.

For a long time most African women who publicly declared their stance as being feminist were looked upon as disloyal by even their fellow women and feminism was seen as “un-African” and that anybody seen advancing the course of feminism was tagged “un-African”. Despite this unfortunate labelling, feminism in African continent has chalked a considerable success. On this note McFadden (2002) remarks that:

The African women's movement though it emerges out of the shadow of the deeply masculinity nationalistic movement and remains largely hampered and constrained by the persistence of nationalism as the dominant ideology of most women within it, has nonetheless changed the world of Africans in ways which were barely imaginable half a century ago. Of critical importance to feminist engagement is the fact that the women movement, wherever it has arisen, has facilitated the entry of African women into the public arena. This for one is one of the most significant achievements of women's movement on the continent.

To reiterate the success story of the African feminism, Tripp (2013) asserts that the African women went to the 1980 conference well prepared: "when they came to the 1980 World Conference on Women in Copenhagen, for example, African women representatives were prepared with draft proposals regarding development" (p.8).

In a nutshell, African feminism has brought in its wake a situation whereby women on the continent are given representations in various aspects of human endeavour which hitherto was not common. In African countries such as Rwanda women hold fifty sixth per cent of the country's legislative seat; in Senegal, Seychelles and South Africa, forty per cent of the parliamentary seats are held by women, while in Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania and Uganda more than thirty five per cent of the seats are occupied by women (ibid, 2002). It is worth noting that African feminism is different from the western feminism and in this vein the difference is presented in this statement:

African feminism...differs radically from the western forms of feminism with which we have become familiar since the 1960's. African feminists are not, by and large, concerned with issues such as female control over reproduction or variation and choice within human sexuality, nor with debates about essentialism, the female body, or the discourse of patriarchy. The feminism that is slowly emerging in Africa is distinctly heterosexual prenatal and concerns with bread, butter, and power issues (ibid, 2002).

In addition to the above, in distinguishing African feminism from western feminism, Steady (1981) concludes that African feminism emphasises female autonomy and co-operation; nature over culture; the centrality of children, multiple mothering and kinship. Therefore, African feminist literature concerns itself primarily with how Africans could be liberated irrespective of sex. From the foregoing, it could be deduced that even though the seminal point of African feminism is global feminism, African feminism seeks to detach itself from the concerns of globalised feminist movement and concentrate on advocating for the removal of all barriers that prevent African women from realising their potentials.

Again, it questions features of traditional African cultures without relegating them to the background. In this vein, the involvement of men in African feminism is its feature because scholars like Steady are of the opinion that if African feminism is to succeed it cannot accept separatism from the males. Consequently, unlike the western feminism which separates men from the women to promote equality, African feminism abhors it.

In the light of the aforesaid, Davies and Graves (1986) assert “African feminism recognises a common struggle with African men for the removal of the yokes of foreign domination and European/American exploitation” (p.8). Hence, African feminism does not antagonise men; it makes them aware of some aspects of women subordination which is different from the generality of the oppression of African people. In adding her voice to the difference between African feminism and western feminism, in an interview conducted by Nfah-Abbenying (1989), Emecheta declares:

I will not be called feminist here because it is European. It is simple as that. I just resent that...I don't like being defined by them...it is just that it comes from outside and I don't like

people dictating to me. I do believe in the African type of feminism. They call it womanism, because you see, you Europeans don't worry about water, you don't worry about schooling, you are so well off. Now, I buy land and I say okay, I can't build on it; I have no money, so I give it to some women to start planting. That is my brand of feminism (p.7).

Therefore, it is a truism from Emecheta's assertion above that the conditions under which these two types of feminism, African and Western feminism operate are unequal and for that matter they are not the same. Comparatively, a renowned Ghanaian female author, Ama Atta Aidoo sheds light on the distinctive nature of the African feminism aptly:

When people ask me rather bluntly every now and then whether I am a feminist, I not only answer yes, but I go on to insist that every woman and every man should be a feminist- especially if they believe that Africans should take charge of African land, African wealth, African lives and the burden of African development(1990:47).

By this statement, Aidoo has communalised the African feminism in that she believes unlike the western feminism which sees women's problems as the preserve of women only, African feminism believes that the problems confronting women affect everybody therefore, it requires concerted efforts irrespective of gender. In this regard Ogund- Leslie (1989) articulates that African women should be mindful of the context in which they operate and that in bringing to the fore the flaws of African culture they should not denigrate their own culture through western feminism.

2.7 The goals of African feminism

African feminists have primary goals that they intend to achieve. On this score, Salami (2012) have enumerated some of the goals. According to her, the African

feminists have the goal of looking at the ways that patriarchy- a psychological and political system that values the male higher than the female through the use of force, law, tradition, ritual, customs, education, language and labour to make men dominate women in both private and public life. The African feminists therefore strive to drum home the idea that both men and women could have mutually fruitful, transformative and progressive relationships both in the private and public life to create better conditions for women.

Again, the African feminists have the aim of undoing the conditions that made the Africans dependent on their colonial masters thereby rewriting the burden that the imperialists have imposed on the Africans which has affected both men and women greatly.

Also, African feminists seek to espouse the idea of the African tradition adapting to the changing needs of the time. Effectively, The African feminists fight against the culture and traditions that are detrimental to the welfare and image of women. African feminists fight against underdevelopment. Consequently, they are of the opinion that military interventions, exploitation of Africa's resources, unjustifiable debt and trade practices have made Africa underdeveloped and in all these African women have been affected by them. Therefore, African feminists believe African continent can develop when it resists social conditions and institutions that do not create inclusivity and discriminate against women.

Another goal that African feminists aspire to achieve is to help females in Africa to gain control over their sexuality in a patriarchal society and to realise this they have sought to speak against the psychological and physical suffering that African women suffer in the hands of their spouses.

Last but not least, African feminists are of the view that love and justice are very important in our society and as a result they focus on healing, reconciliation, and on an insistence that the language of African womanhood, from its global position, is the language that can transform society into one where sexual, racial, spiritual, psychological and social equality are afforded. This means that African feminists promote love and reconciliation; they have the belief that when the voices of the African women are adhered to the African society would be transformed.

In conclusion, western feminism is different from African feminism basically because the context within which they operate are not the same; African feminism advocates for equality of all Africans including men and it bothers on bread and butter issues.

In the light of the unequal treatment of women in Africa, African writers have adopted feminists' ideals in their literature with the aim of sensitising the Africans about the need to treat women equally. This has led to the writing of novels such as *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta, and *Beyond the Horizon* by Amma Darko. In these novels we learn of the oppression of women by men in Ghana and Nigeria due to patriarchy.

2.8 Post-colonialism literary theory: historical background

Post-colonialism is a term that has been referred to as “third world literature” by Marxist critics and it investigates the effects of two different cultures clashing with one of them seemingly powerful overpowering the weaker one. Post-colonialism is heavily rooted in colonial power and its prejudicial nature and its spans from a long period of edgy cultural relationship that existed between the colonies of Africa and Asia on one hand and their colonisers from West world on the other hand.

During the nineteenth century, Great Britain became the largest coloniser because it had gained hegemony over many states that people had the opinion that they had the fate to rule the world which brought in its wake the erroneous impression that: “Western Europeans, and, in particular, the British people, were biologically superior to any other “race”, a term for class of people based on physical and /or cultural distinctions that was unquestioned at that time” (Bressle, 2003: 200).

Therefore, the colonisers began mistreating the colonised through the use of their political and economic powers. Great Britain who was the most powerful imperialist used her politico- economic muscle to loot the resources of the colonies in exchange for a few of the European goods that they deemed good for the colonised countries. Another lethal weapon which the British colonialist used to overpower their colonised states was force labour and this precipitated commercial slavery trade which flourished on the back of religious reasons that they ascribed to it.

The reason the British assigned for engaging in slavery was that they perceived the Africans and the Asians as “heathens” and therefore they must be Christianised. However, England’s control over her colonies around the world began to wane by the early nineteenth century and many scholars consider the period to be the beginning of the study of “third world studies” or post-colonialism.

The starting point of post-colonialism as a theory and social concerns can be traced to the 1950s and during this period, France ended its control over Indochina, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus have gone their separate ways and Fidel Castro had delivered his famous speech entitled *History Shall Absolve Me*. On this note Alfred Sauvy invented this term *third world* to encapsulate those countries which were not defined by the West and for the duration of 1960s Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi,

George Lamming and other scholars initiated the publishing of texts which became the keystone of post-colonial writing. In tracing the historical background of post-colonialism Bressle (2003) says:

The terms post-colonial and post-colonialism first appeared in the scholarly journals in the late 1980s and as a subtitle in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin's text, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989) and again, in Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin's *Past the Last Post: In Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism*(p.201).

By the early and mid-1990s the terms had become firmly established in scholarly writing, and now, more frequently the word post-colonialism refers to literature of the colonised cultures which were under the colony of British Empire. Post-colonial literary theory looks at issues of power, economics, politics, religion and culture and how they work in connection with the colonial control. Broadly speaking, post-colonial literature refers to writing which has been "affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day" (Ashcroft et al, 1989: 2).

The post-colonial critics state strongly that European colonialism did take place and the British Empire took the centre stage and that these conquerors dominated the physical land and the ideology of those who were colonized because the effects of colonialism are still been felt today. Post-colonial theory has several concerns and among them is that it has the primary aim of reclaiming spaces and places. On this score, the post-colonialist critic seeks to point out that the exploitation of the resources, people enslavement and migration forced many people to move from the places that they originally called their "homes". Post-colonial literature attempts to counteract the alienation of the native people from their surroundings by restoring a connection between indigenous people and places through description, narration and dramatization.

Also, post-colonial literary theory has the objective of asserting cultural integrity. During the period of colonisation, the indigenous cultures of those countries subjected to foreign rule were often sidestepped, suppressed, and openly denigrated in favour of elevating the social and cultural preferences and conventions of the colonizers. In response, much of the post-colonial literature seeks to assert the richness and the validity of indigenous cultures in an effort to restore pride in practices and traditions that were systematically looked down upon under colonialism.

Moreover, post-colonialist theory stresses the need to revive the history of the colonized. The colonizers often depicted their colonised subjects as existing “outside history” in timeless societies, unable to progress or develop without their intervention and assistance. In this way, they justified their actions, including violence against those who resisted colonial rule. Revising history to tell things from the perspective of those colonised is thus a major preoccupation of post-colonial writing.

Therefore, post-colonial literature encompasses all writings which reflect in great variety of ways, the effects of colonialism. They include the category of writing produced by authors born in countries which were formerly colonized and which in most cases, gained their independence in the post-world war II era. The study of post-colonial literature emanated from Edward Said’s critical work, *Orientalism* in 1978. He was an Egyptian writer and critic and the first writer of non-European descent living in a former colonial nation. His work sparked off an interest in literary criticism on how colonialism has impacted on the colonized states. The majority of the post-colonial writers come from British Commonwealth Writers who hail from India, Africa, Australia, Canada and West Indies.

Thematic concerns of the post-colonial writers are many and varied. Notable are the struggles of the indigenous people in the face of poverty, social and financial instability and cultural upheavals. Prominent post-colonial African authors are Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje, J.M. Coetzee, Isabelle Allende, Derek Walcott, Mariama Ba and Buchi Emecheta (Bressle, 2003: 204).

2.9 The approach of post-colonialism

Similar to many schools of criticism, post-colonialism uses a lot of methodologies in its analysis of texts. Among these approaches are deconstruction, feminism, Marxism, reader-response, and African American cultural studies. It is crucial for the one who is doing the criticism to find out whether he has been a victim of colonialism or not and those who have lived under colonialism must ask themselves a lot of questions that are distinct from who have not.

The person who has experienced colonialism must ask pertinent questions like: Who am I? How did I develop into the person that am I? And to what country or countries or to what cultures am I forever linked? In asking the first question, the colonised author is connecting himself or herself to his historical roots. By asking the second question, the author is admitting a tension between these historical roots and the new culture or hegemony imposed by the conquerors (ibid, 2003). By asking the third question, the writer confronts the fact that he or she is both an individual and a social construct created and shaped primarily by the dominant culture. The written works penned by these authors will necessarily be personal and always political and ideological. Furthermore, both the creation of the text and its reading may be painful and disturbing, but also enlightening. Whatever the result, the story will certainly be a message sent back to the Empire, telling the imperialists what they did wrong and how

their Western hegemony damaged and suppressed the ideologies of those who were conquered.

In conclusion, the post-colonialists ask their readers and critics to investigate the standards by which they are making value judgements about their works. In this regard, Said admonishes readers that it is not necessary to regard every reading or interpretation of a text as the moral equivalent of war, but whatever else they are, works of literature are not merely texts.

Therefore, in reading a text we should be mindful of the language of the text, the mind-set of the West and be interested in how the author has presented truth in the text in the sense that the writer's own attitude and biases may dominate the text.

2.10 Post- colonial African literary theory

Post-colonialism in Africa spans from the 1960 and 1970 when many African nations gained independence from their colonizers. Writers during this period saw themselves as artists and political activists and as result their works mostly reflected the social and political conditions prevailing in that era.

Characteristically, post-colonial African literary theory challenges the status quo western points of view through the use of narrators who represent previously silenced or oppressed people. Since much literature from the colonised countries was written from the colonisers' male point of view, it is not surprising that much post-colonial African literature employs narrators who themselves are doubly oppressed, being both colonised by "outsiders" and being women. Thus, post-colonial African writers express the difficulties women from colonised countries face as they battle patriarchal attitudes and institutions of their oppressors as well as from their own people.

2.11 The development of post-colonial feminists writing in Africa

The development of creative writing in Africa has been dominated by men as it has been dominated by men world-wide. This is captured by Forte (1996) who relates this development to the patriarchal ideology of the African society. However, the efforts by African feminist writers in the sixties and seventies have resulted in the emergence of female writers. Ojo-Ade (1983:150-9) describes the situation thus:

African literature is a male-created, male orientated, chauvinistic art. An honour roll of our literary giants clearly proves the point... Men constitute the majority and women the minority... Minority should be contemplated (not in the sense of numbers) but in the sense of dominated, disadvantaged, exploited, excluded. As far as literature is concerned, the connotation becomes symbolic, social and numerical.

In line with Ojo-Ade's assertion above, Schipper (1987) describes the male-dominated nature of African literature as "the male heritage in African literature and criticism".

2.12 Nigeria's post-colonial feminists writing

A cursory look at the development of literary works in Nigeria reveals that from pre-colonial to post-colonial era, its literary scene has been dominated by men. Male writers like Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Amos Tutuola and Wole Soyinka have written and propagated the interest of men thereby making the women look helpless.

However the face of the Nigeria's literary development changed in 1966 when Nwapa wrote her book, *Efuru* which attempted to correct the negative image that the male writers have carved for African women in their writings. From that time onwards issues about women became paramount in Nigeria's literary discourse (Ogunyemi, 1988). Following the footsteps of Nwapa are female writers such as Buchi Emecheta,

Adaora Ulasi, Zulu Sofola and Tess Onwuema. The late development of female writing in Nigeria is attributed to the late education of Nigerian women which did not give them a good start as far as literary development is concerned (Okereke, 1995).

That notwithstanding, some writers are of the view that patriarchy which was at the heart of Nigerian society is given prominence in Nigerian literature. Male writers consequently concentrated on elevating the men while women were portrayed as helpless in the hands of men (ibid, 1998). To make this claim credible Gilbert and Gubar (1979:6) write:

In patriarchal western culture... the text's author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis. Moreover, his pen's power, like his penises, is not just the ability to generate life but the power to create posterity, to which he lays claim.

From this analogy, women were thus left out of the creative writing since literary writing is viewed as paternal. It has been like this in African/Nigerian literature. Moreover, the late development of the female creative writing in Nigeria is also blamed on gender roles as daughters, wives and mothers which do not create the conducive environment (ibid, 1995). Emecheta, cited in Taiwo (1984:1) supports this argument and goes ahead to include men by positing that:

To be a good novelist the writer must operate within a conducive atmosphere. She must have time and space to reflect and indulge in introspective thinking. For many potential writers in this country neither the time nor space is available. In addition to family drawbacks, the government seems not to appreciate the value of home produced works. It seems to be doing very little to encourage writers financially.

Also, the voicelessness of women on Nigeria's literary scene was due to the problem of the women combining the duty of running the home effectively and working and also the difficulty of getting their works published. This scenario is precipitated by patriarchy and gender inequality (in Kolawole, 1998).

James (1990) on the other hand buttresses the difficulty of the Nigerian women to get a publisher for her work by claiming that a publisher kept her manuscript for four years and never published it while another publisher also misplaced the only copy of her manuscript. Despite these impediments, Nigerian women were motivated to write. One of the motivations was the way women were stereotyped by male writers as witches, prostitutes, goddesses and helpless victims.

The African female writers from this period had no excuse for not writing because they have been encouraged enough by the prevailing unfavourable conditions of women. Mariama Ba quoted by Schipper (1987) presents the prevailing condition that propelled the African women to write as:

The female writer in Africa has a special task. She has to present the position of women in Africa in all its aspects. There is still so much injustice... women continue to be discriminated. In the family, in institutions, in society, in the street, in political organisations, discrimination reigns supreme... As women we must work for our own future, we must overthrow the status quo which harms us and no longer submit to it... We no longer accept the nostalgic praise to the African mother, who in his anxiety, man confuses with mother Africa. Within African literature, room must be made for women... room we will fight for with all our might (pp.46-47).

On this note, Buchi Emecheta decided to fictionalise her experience about racial oppression when she travelled with her husband to Great Britain in the sixties. It is against this background that she brings to the limelight the way women have been

oppressed and rejected by their husbands and some of the coping strategies that they can adopt to survive. Emecheta has been regarded as the most prolific of all the Nigerian female writers because she has written eight novels and four children's books since she started writing in 1972. Some of her works are *The Bride Price*, *Second-Class Citizen*, *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The New Tribe*. These works are pregnant with how women have been marginalised by using her experience as a springboard and in her bid to redefine the African woman she presents men as indolent, oppressive and callous. Emecheta casts women so well that the men in her novels cannot be very effective without the help of the women.

In a nutshell, the Nigerian women have paid their dues as far literary development in their country is concerned because they have been fruitful in writing about the family, children and womenfolk which has made the issue of women very topical.

2.13 Ghana's post-colonial feminists writing

Like that of the Nigerians, Ghana's literary discourse has been dominated by men. It is worthy of note that despite this dominance, female writers like Amma Ata Aidoo, Efua T. Sutherland and recently Amma Darko have been vociferous in bringing out the plight of Ghanaian women. Ghana's post-colonial feminists writing begun with Efua T. Sutherland, pioneer of contemporary African theatre who has written novels and dramas to depict the image of the Ghanaian women. In her book, *The Marriage of Anansewa* she brings out the cunningness and dishonesty of Ananse, the spider or trickster figure in Akan orator. In this drama, Ananse uses the picture of her daughter, Anansewa to collect money and other material things from four chiefs. In this vein

Sutherland projects the image of the women in post-colonial Africa to the extent that four chiefs are lured into committing so much into wooing Anansewa.

Another Ghanaian post-colonial feminist whose works have contributed effectively in correcting the image of Ghanaian women is Ama Ata Aidoo. Aidoo on the other hand has presented the role of African women in modern society in her acclaimed works such as *No Sweetness Here*, *Changes: a love story*, *The Girl Who Can and other Stories*. Her central issues are the legacy of the slave trade, the impact of neo-colonialism and the notion of exile and African identity. The role of women in the process of change is also presented in this novel together with her believe in the distinctive African identity which she sees from the perspective of a female. In *The Girl Who Can and other Stories*, Aidoo analyses African women's struggle to find their rightful place in the society. On this note, the stories in this novel bother on choice and conflict.

Changes: a love story on the other, hand addresses the issues that contemporary African women face; love, career, betrayal and family. In her first work, *No Sweetness Here*, she talks about the fragile joy of maternity and honestly presents life of the African women in post-colonial Africa. She reiterates this by stating at the back cover of this novel that "there is no use screaming about how independent you are by driving away the colonialists if you do not make independence meaningful". Following the heels of these two renowned feminists is Amma Darko who published in German initially. Her works, *Beyond the Horizon* and *Faceless* though published not too long ago, have given the African as well as the Ghanaian society food for thought. The lessons that are drawn from these novels are enormous and it is therefore not surprising when Professor Kofi Anyidoho summarises the issues in these novels in the preface of *Faceless* this way:

The first two novels have already attracted enthusiastic critical attention, most of it focusing on Amma Darko's considerable skill in portraying the plight of women and young girls in a merciless world dominated by greedy, irresponsible and often cruel men in their lives. I wish particularly to draw attention to the fact that taken together, these novels by Amma Darko tell one long and disturbing tale. Sadly, it is a tale of a diseased society that seems to have lost its hold on the lives of its children. It is a provocative tale of a society that has developed a tragic ability of guiding its young ones, especially the girl child, into a life dedicated to prostituting every conceivable virtue for the sake of flimsy material possessions.

Darko has also used her latest book, *Not Without Flowers* to bring out the image of African woman in a patriarchal society. In this novel even though polygamy is traditionally an acceptable practice in many African cultures, Darko presents it in a way that suggests that it is only few women who agree to become second wives when infertility of the first wife is not the reason. In *Not Without Flowers*, Darko presents polygamy as a spectacle of the greed and egoistic control of men over women when. She depicts that polygamy negatively affects women even though this form of marriage has come to stay. However, in addition to this negative presentation, she gives women to use polygamy to their advantage. To her, polygamy is not entirely disadvantageous to women; it is within the powers of women to make it beneficial to themselves: for emotional support, financial support and motherhood. For instance, in *Not Without Flowers*, the fifth wife agrees to a polygamous marriage because she needs to be attached, have emotional support and not be bothered with having children: "I mentioned emotional security as being one of my reasons for marrying my late husband. That was it. It alleviated the misery of unfulfilled expectancy with a younger man looking forward to having children." (p.95).

This novel also presents how elderly women have been stereotyped in our traditional African context and this manifested when Idan's grandmother has a gift of premonition.

It is by this gift that she senses a bad omen concerning her grandson's marriage. This is not the first experience of premonition she or a family member has had about something. But this time, she asks to be allowed to perform a rite to avert the misfortune. This old woman is not fortunate. Her premonition is dismissed and her own nephew instigates the family to brand her a witch. In effect, she is not only prevented from performing her rites, she is banned from coming near the marriage ceremony or the couple. Eventually, the inevitable happens; the couple knocks down and kill a boy on their wedding day. Years later, after the marriage, tragedy hits the couple; they are unable to have a child and in the end, the marriage of the couple is destroyed by childlessness and subsequently, the deadly HIV/AIDS. Darko as a result, admonishes the society to give some credit to the voice of elderly women who are embodiments of African traditions. She believes allowing Abrewa to perform the rite could have prevented the misfortune that befalls the couple.

Another issue that Darko uses this novel to address about African women is that the traditional cultural practice frowns on married women resorting to entertainment and leisure outside the home after a stressful day as their male counterparts do. As a result there is virtually no avenue for the married woman to bring out her frustrations. Darko implies that an accumulation of all the stress experienced in the daily lives of women results in hallucination. When this occurs they are branded witches or insane. This is the situation in which Ma finds herself in *Not without Flowers*. In her circumstance, "it was as if a volcanic heat was slowly building up inside her head. Pa's frantic pretentiousness and his clumsiness began leaving Ma feeling debased and degraded" (p. 339). It can be deduced from this submission that "the issue of the misconception about mental illness as possession by evil spirits" (p.33) is of great importance to the feminist.

Not Without Flowers therefore redefines the feminist situation of women in Ghana by raising consciousness of women's issues. It is a voice with the prime aim of achieving a paradigm shift in how women themselves and society as a whole perceive the place of women in the contemporary Ghanaian society.

In the light of the above, Darko and Emecheta as post-colonial African feminists' writers have succeeded in unearthing the problems that women face in contemporary Nigeria and Ghana as a result of patriarchal rule and its entrenched negative cultural practices.

2.14 Conclusion

This chapter has closely looked at the theoretical frameworks for the study, theory of feminism and post-colonial African literary theory. The chapter has looked at the views of authors about them under the following captions- historical perspective of feminism, the theory of feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist/socialist feminism, African Feminism, the goals of feminism, post-colonial African literary theory, the development of post-colonial feminists writing in Africa, Nigeria's post-colonial feminists writing and Ghana's post-colonial feminists writing.

At the end of this chapter, it came to light that the African feminism is different from the global feminism because African feminism does not antagonise men but it espouses the idea that African tradition should adapt to the changing needs of the time and in during so it advocates for the elimination of all cultural practices that are detrimental to the development of African women.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS OF TEXTS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on content analysis of *The Joys of Motherhood* written by Buchi Emecheta and *Beyond the Horizon* by Amma Darko respectively. In discussing the issues in these books, the fulcrum is on the contexts of Buchi Emecheta and Amma Darko, the plot overviews of *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* and the image of African women as it has been presented in these novels. The image that these writers have created for the African women is analysed using African feminism as well as post-colonial African literary theory.

3.1 The context of Buchi Emecheta

Buchi Emecheta is a writer, lecturer, college teacher and a sociologist. She was born Florence Onye Emecheta on 21st July, 1944 in Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria. Her parents are Jeremy Nwabudike (a railway worker and moulder) and Alice Ogbanje (Okwuekwu) Emecheta. She got married to Sylvester Onwordi in 1960 and they separated in 1966. She has five children namely Florence, Sylvester, Jake Christy and Alice.

Emecheta has a rich career spanning from 1965 to date. She started working as a library officer at British Museum, London between 1965 to 1969; Youth worker and sociologist at inner London Education Authority, London from 1969 to 1976; Community writer, Camden, NJ, 1976 to 1978; writer and lecturer, 1972; visiting professor at several universities abroad including Pennsylvania State University, University of California/Los Angeles, and university of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign,

1979; senior resident fellow and visiting professor of English, University of Calabar, Nigeria, 1980 to 1981. She was also a lecturer at Yale University, 1982 and a Research Fellow at London University. She is an Anglican and holds a Bachelor of Science honours degree from London University.

Her novels epitomise the beliefs and post-colonial culture of the people of Nigeria. These novels often bring to the fore the clash between modernism and traditional African values. Most of her works are autobiographical in nature and feminist in spirit. She is comparable to African women writers like Tsitsi Dangaremba, Mariam Ba, Bessie Head, Amma Ata Aidoo, Lauretta Ngcobo and Linsey Collen. Her works are not Strict feminist in Western sense and she rightly puts it this way: “if I am now a feminist; I am African feminist with a small f” (Wisker, 2000: 148). Among her works are *Slave Girl*, *Double York*, *Second –Class Citizen*, *The Joys of Motherhood*, *Adah’s Story*, *The Moonlight Bride*, *The Family*, *In the Ditch* and *The Rape of Shavi*. Emecheta’s dexterity in writing has earned her accolades from literary scholars. For example *New York Times Book Review* critic, Reginald McKnight says:

Emecheta is no ideologue, her characters do not utter or think works that would come from them, and they are not mere representatives of larger social movements but real, complex human beings, shaped by the vicissitudes of class, culture and sexual politics. She raises the right questions, but never harangues. She writes with subtlety, power and abundant compassion.

She has won Jock Campbell Award for literature in 1978, selected as the Best Black British Writer during this same year and Best British Young Writer in 1983. By 1966, Emecheta’s marriage fell on rocks and she decided to devote much of a time for writing so that she could get a stable income to support herself and the family. It is on this note that she began writing a column about African / London experience for the *New*

Statesman in 1972. Among the issues she wrote in this column was the culture shock she experienced on arrival in London, her marriage that had fallen on rocks, racism in London and her struggles as a mother of five children. She later collected these issues and published them in her first novel titled *In the Ditch*.

The Joys of Motherhood was written during the time when colonialism seriously undermined the relative independence of men and women in Nigeria. This story is set up in Igbo society of Nigeria which gained independence from Britain in 1960. From 1983 to 1999, Nigeria had been ruled by military dictatorship. Nigeria is a populous country with different climate and terrain. It ranges from the Equatorial climate of the Southern lowlands, through the tropical central hills and plateau, to the arid northern plains which mark the southernmost extent of the Sahara desert. It has over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups with English language together with Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa as languages that are widely spoken in that country. The Nigerians consist of fifty per cent Muslims, forty per cent Christians and ten per cent being devoted traditionalists.

Some scholars are of the opinion that patriarchy came to Africa as a result of westernization or colonialism. Others also trace the advent of patriarchy to the existence of African culture but patriarchy came to Nigeria as a result of her association with the British who colonised her. Prior to the emergence of colonialism in Federal Republic of Nigeria, Nigerian women were treated differently depending on the ethnic group, the roles the women played and the kind of kinship that ethnic group practiced. However, with the coming of the British the position of women in Nigerian communities changed drastically hence “the imposition of colonial rule reversed gains in political and social power for women in Nigeria” (Dennis, 1987:14).

Before colonialism, Igbo women and most women in Nigeria played pivotal roles in Nigeria's agricultural production and they were responsible for the provision of material resources for the survival of their families. In addition many tribes in Nigeria held their women in high esteem and they complimented their male counterparts in developing their various societies. In the pre-colonial period, women played a major role in social and economic activities. Division of labour was along gender lines, and women controlled such occupations as food processing, mat weaving, and pottery making, and cooking. Moreover, land was communally owned, and women had access to it through their husbands or parents. Although a man was the head of the household in a patrilineal system, older women had control of the labour of younger family members. Women were also central to trade. Among the Yoruba, they were the major figures in long-distance trade, with enormous opportunities for accumulating wealth and acquiring titles. The most successful among them rose to the prestigious chieftaincy title of *iyalode*, a position of great privilege and power.

In politics, women were not as docile or powerless as contemporary literature tends to portray them. The basic unit of political organization was the family, this common arrangement, allowed a woman to gain considerable authority over her children. A woman and her offspring could form a major bloc in the household. Power and privileges in a household were also based on age and gender, thereby allowing senior women to have a voice on many issues. Because the private and public arenas were intertwined, a woman's ability to control resources and people in a household was at the same time an exercise in public power. She could use food production to gain respect. She could control her children and influence men through this power. She could evoke the power of the spirit or gods in her favour. She could simply withdraw

and use the kitchen as her own personal domicile for interaction with her colleagues, friends, and children.

Beyond the household level, power was generally dominated by men, but in many areas specific titles were given to women. The queen mother, a powerful title among the Edo and Yoruba, could be bestowed upon the king's mother or a free woman of considerable stature. In her own palace, the queen mother presided over meetings, with subordinate titleholders in her support. Yoruba and Hausa legends describe periods when women were either the actual kings or heroines. Such women as Moremi of Ile-Ife and Amina of Zaria are notable legendary figures, as are the powerful queens in the Ondo and Daura histories. It is on this note that according to Dennis (1987:15):

The religions of many Nigerian societies recognised the social importance of women by emphasizing the place of female gods of fertility and social peace but women were also associated with witchcraft which appeared to symbolise the potential social danger of women exercising power uncontrolled by men.

These assumptions contributed largely in propelling men to find ways of controlling women especially in conjugal relationships. From the aforesaid, it could be deduced that in the pre-colonial era Nigerian women for that matter that of the Igbos were seen as people who complimented their men counterparts in development of the society and this was done by becoming agents of peace and providing food and other material resources for the continuous survival of the society.

Colonialism changed the cordial gender relationships in Nigerian society. It brought in its wake different perceptions about women which were consolidated by governance, labour and the presence of missionaries. With colonialism, the power that the women had as providers of material resources for their households shifted into the

hands of the men. Consequently, agricultural production and marketing systems were controlled by men and this provided fertile grounds for domination of men. This became possible when men took over the production of palm oil and kernel from women who had monopoly over these crops and as a result these women were confined to their households engaging in subsistence farming. Nigerian women were relegated to the background when it came to the running of the affairs of the state. Women were not encouraged to hold administrative positions. To presents a vivid picture of this situation Chuku (2005) strongly puts it this way:

Women were not encouraged to hold administrative positions of authority in formal colonial tasks. Women were not encouraged to hold administrative positions in colonial government because of the prevailing perception that the domain of women were in the domestic spheres (p.115).

This stereotypical idea of women perpetuated by the colonial systems worsened the image of women in Nigeria thereby reducing their respect and importance. This growing perception of subordination of women and their inferiority to men coupled with the enactment of laws by the colonialist to control women's sexuality and fertility were a nail in the coffin of women. Therefore, these overt and covert plans of the colonialist with his cronies, the missionaries gave a lethal blow to Nigeria's social, political and economic systems which shot her women into prominence.

In conclusion, it is a truism that patriarchy existed in Nigeria before the advent of the colonialist but colonialism provided a congenial atmosphere for the image of women to change into people who are only good at staying at home whereas their men counterparts stayed in the public realm to take decisions for them without recourse to their plight. During the post-colonial era, the social pattern in Nigeria has reflected its

traditional cultural practices during the pre-colonial and colonial eras. This is because most Nigerian societies still adhere to the existed traditional values and practices. In this period there are great changes in the Nigerian society which has come about as a result of westernisation. This immensely affects the social image of the Nigerian women.

As it pertains in most patriarchal societies in Africa, boys and girls in Nigeria are socialised to behave in a way their society thinks suitable. Thus, boys in Nigeria are taught to be dominant and masculine whereas girls are expected to be polite, gentle and feminine. These generalised roles are emphasised at the various levels of socialisation which affects the image of the average Nigerian woman. Until now, most communities in Nigeria gave more respect to the male child than the female and as a result the male children are offered more security than their mothers and sisters. Therefore a woman who has no son lives in constant fear of losing her marriage to other women who might be married by the husband to help him get a son. Girls on the other hand are regarded as people who will be expanded through marriage. In Nigerian society a female-child is expected to remain chaste until she is given into marriage whereas the boys are not restricted. Nigerian movies have also contributed in portraying their women as witches, promiscuous and immodest. Movies that show positive roles that women play are very few and this shows that the producers of these movies are responding to the patriarchal values of socialisation process imprinted on the minds of the people from childhood to adulthood.

In marriage, the Nigerian woman marries a man and his entire family and she is required to extend the same treatment that she gives to her husband to the other members of her husband's family. Nigerian marriages are patriarchal in nature; the payment of a bride price gives the man the opportunity to demand special privileges

from the woman which often violate her rights and privileges. During the marriage ceremony the parents of the woman advise her to stay in the marriage irrespective of the treatment meted out to her by husband. This affects the image of the woman in the family thereby making the man intolerable towards the plight of the woman and in some cases it manifests in battery, psychological abuse and denial of economic sustenance of the woman. Most women in this situation are trapped and as result any attempt by the woman to extricate herself leads to gender based violence. At the household level, the structure of patriarchy has employed many and varied strategies to create unequal power relations between men and women; there are public and household strategies that the men employ to perpetuate gender discrimination in Nigeria. The household strategy is exclusionary while the public structure's strategy is segregationist (Golombok & Fivush, 1995). In this regard, the patriarchy in the household oppress the women and the public institutions use their powers to exclude and marginalise them in positions of authority and decision making. Interestingly, some of the Nigerian women especially those from Urhobo of Southern Nigeria who do not get married are seen as not having an identity and such women lose their social recognition as time goes on and they may be perceived to be prostitutes (Otite, 2006). Therefore, marriage was and is a very important institution through which women could improve their image. Hence a woman gains social position due to her husband's position in the Nigerian society.

Education in post- colonial Nigeria has proven to be an indispensable determinant of a woman's image and social class. A woman who is well educated is perceived to be a scholar in her own right not from her husband's position. However, because of the desire of most women in Nigeria to perform marital roles and give birth they tend to forgo education in their earlier lives (Parson, 1959).

Additionally, the image of a Nigeria woman becomes high depending on the level of her education and the nature of work she does. Hence, a woman who is found in medicine and law is given high social respect. It must be said that it is very difficult for a woman to climb up the social ladder in the post-colonial Nigeria. Certain professions are considered to be the preserve of men because of its vigorous nature and it becomes an aberration for a woman to belong to such a profession. Surprisingly, what is perceived to be a woman's vocation does not attract huge income. It is on this score that Fapounda (1985) presents the statistics to the effect that about 6% of Nigeria's women in the industrial sector occupy managerial positions. Despite the foregoing, some Nigerian women have been able to improve upon their lot by acquiring wealth and property. Chieftaincy, which is a very important institution in Africa, has also discriminated against Nigerian women. A woman in Nigeria can only take chieftaincy title if she not married but if she wants it the husband has to consent to it. It is worthy of note that the advent of religious groups has helped in improving the image of Nigerian women. Women now attain positions which hitherto they would not have been able to attain (Armstrong, 1993). Some of these women have assumed leadership positions as founders, seers, prophetess, pastors and bishops.

3.2 Plot overview of *The Joys of Motherhood*

In this novel, Nnu Ego, the protagonist, stumbles across the Yaba compound, almost delusional with grief. She makes her way to the waterfront, heading to Carter Bridge, intent on throwing herself off. The action shifts to twenty-five years previous to this moment, in the village of Ogboli in the Ibuza homeland. Agbadi, the esteemed local chief, is enamoured by the one woman he cannot possess, the beautiful and strong-willed Ona. During a hunting trip, Agbadi is gored by an injured elephant and not expected to live long. Ona slowly nurses him back to health. As he heals, he

humiliates her in the compound by loudly forcing his sexual attentions on her. She becomes pregnant as the result of this union. If it is a boy, the child will belong to Ona's father, but if it is a girl, Agbadi will accept responsibility. When Nnu Ego is born, a medicine man concludes that her chi, or guiding spirit, is the slave girl who was forcibly killed and buried with one of Agbadi's wives. Within the year, Ona dies during childbirth.

Sixteen years later, Nnu Ego is of marrying age. She is first betrothed to Amatokwu. When she does not become pregnant, relations cool between her and Amatokwu, and she is soon moved to another hut to make room for a new wife. Nnu Ego is relegated to working in the fields and taking care of the new wife's infant son. When Amatokwu catches Nnu Ego breast-feeding the hungry child, he beats her. Nnu Ego returns to her father to rest and recover, and the marriage ties are severed. Dedicated to finding his daughter a better match, Agbadi arranges a marriage between Nnu Ego and Nnaife, who lives in faraway Lagos. Nnaife's older brother escorts Nnu Ego to the city and her new life with Nnaife.

Nnaife and Nnu Ego live in the Yaba compound, where Nnaife does laundry for the Meers, a British couple. Happy in her marriage, Nnu Ego becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son, Ngozi. She also starts her own business selling cigarettes and matches beside the road. One morning, she discovers Ngozi dead in their one-room home. Distraught and devoid of hope, she rushes to the waterfront to throw herself off Carter Bridge. Nwakusor, an Ibo man coming off his shift at work, prevents her with the help of the crowd that has gathered.

Recovering from Ngozi's death is a slow and painful process. Eventually, Nnu Ego becomes pregnant again and gives birth to Oshia. She decides to focus solely on

raising the child instead of making extra income at her market stall. But economic pressures set in when the Meers return to England and Nnaife is suddenly out of a job. Nnu Ego resumes her local trade in cigarettes. Nnaife eventually secures a position that takes him far from home, working for a group of Englishmen. While he is away, British soldiers enter the abandoned compound and tell Nnu Ego that she and Oshia must vacate the premises. Nnu Ego takes a rented room in another part of town, where she gives birth to another son, Adim. Left on their own, the family slowly succumbs to malnutrition. Neighbours step in to help. Nnu Ego returns from her search for more contraband cigarettes to find that her husband has returned, flush with money. Nnu Ego secures a permanent stall in the marketplace and pressures Nnaife to find his next job.

One evening, Nnaife's friends arrive with the news that his brother has died in Ibuza. Nnaife has inherited all of his brother's wives, but only one will come to live with them in Lagos. Adaku arrives with her daughter, setting off tensions and rivalry between the two women. As Nnu Ego tries to sleep nearby, Nnaife invokes his rights as a husband and has sexual relations with Adaku. Nnaife starts a new job by cutting grass for the railroad. With less space and more mouths to feed, Nnu Ego and Adaku become pregnant around the same time. Nnu Ego gives birth to twin girls, while Adaku's son dies shortly after he is born. Feeling they are not being given enough money to support the household, the women go on strike. Nnu Ego's firm resolve eventually wavers, and she cooks a large conciliatory meal. But Nnaife does not come home to enjoy it. He has been forced to join the army and is shipped off to India and then Burma to fight in World War II.

With Nnaife away and his pay partially secure in a savings account, Nnu Ego, again pregnant, takes her family to Ibuza and to the deathbed of her father. After his two funerals, Nnu Ego is unwilling to return to Lagos. However, Adankwo, the eldest

wife of Nnaife's older brother, urges her to return to the city to keep an eye on Adaku. Nnu Ego returns to find that Nnaife had been home for a brief visit and had left some money for her that she failed to receive. Relations between Nnu Ego and Adaku grow increasingly strained, culminating in Nnu Ego's rude and brusque treatment of one of Adaku's visiting cousins. When Nnaife's friends step in to resolve the conflict, Adaku decides that she and her daughters will move out on their own. Impoverished once again, Nnu Ego spends the last of her savings before learning she had not been receiving her husband's yearly stipends due to an institutional error. Nnaife returns and spends most of this windfall. Though Nnu Ego is pregnant again, Nnaife decides to return to Ibuza, where he impregnates Adankwo and returns with a teenage bride, Okpo. Nnu Ego gives birth to twin girls.

The family moves to a mud house in another part of town. First Oshia and then Adim announce their intentions of furthering their educations. When Oshia tells Nnaife he has won a scholarship to study in the United States, Nnaife denounces him for his dereliction of his filial duty. Taiwo's marriage is arranged to an Ibo clerk, but Kehinde runs away to marry a Yoruba. Hearing the news, Nnaife flies into a rage and attempts to murder Kehinde's father-in-law with his cutlass. Nnaife is put in jail, tried, and sentenced to five years, a stint that is reduced provided he returns to Ibuza after his release. Nnu Ego has also returned to her homeland, where she dies several years later, alone by the roadside. Oshia returns to honour Nnu Ego with a costly funeral, befitting her sacrifices as a mother.

3.3 The image of African women in *The Joys of Motherhood*

For many years, African women have been relegated to a position of secondary importance in African society. This is valid particularly for the Igbo women Emecheta depicts in her work, *The Joys of Motherhood*. The lives of the Igbo women are carefully regulated by traditional laws; Igbo women are enslaved to their traditions which subjugate them to certain customs. That situation stems mainly from the nature of African societies which are mostly patriarchal (Umeh, 1993: 22-29).

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, African women are presented as second-class citizens and as a result there is preference for boys to girls. In this text, the image created is that it is better to give birth to a male than a female in a patriarchal Ibo society where the story is set. Consequently, premium is placed on the male child to the extent that when Nnaife's two wives, Adaku and Nnu Ego become pregnant and Nnu Ego gives birth to a set of twins which are girls Adaku is pessimist about how Nnaife will receive the news. Nnu Ego and Adaku begin to imagine their husband's reaction in this conversation:

'Your first set of girls, senior wife,' Adaku said by way of congratulation. 'Hm, I know, but I doubt if our husband will like them very much. One can hardly afford to have one girl in a town like this to say nothing of two' (p.140).

To show how much premium is placed on the male -child, Nnaife comes home from his outing only to be furious that Nnu Ego has given birth to a set of twins who are girls.

This scenario is expressed by the narrator as:

When Nnaife returned home in the evening and was told that his wife, Nnu Ego had two girls at the same time, he laughed loudly as he was wont to do when faced with an

impossible situation. “Nnu Ego, what are these? Could you not have done better?”(p.12).

By referring to these set of twins as “what are these?” in the above statement shows how inferior the patriarchal Ibo society sees women. In contrast, weeks later, Nnaife’s second wife, Adaku gives birth to a male child which makes him very ecstatic. Unfortunately this male child dies some days after and this is greeted with sorrow and depression and in lamenting about the death of Nnu Ego’s son, Adaku says she prefers one of her rival’s set of twins had died. Adaku laments: “O God, why did you not take one of the girls and leave me with my male child” (p.142).

The importance of male-child is given enough impetus when it creates jealousy and unhealthy rivalry between Adaku and Nnu Ego. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Oshie, the son of Nnu Ego has a dream and in this dream he sees his step-mother, Adaku harming him but when he tells his mother her reaction is not good. Nnu Ego quickly sends Oshie to a medicine man who tells her to perform some rituals to ward off any mishap. The medicine man stresses:

The child is right. You must protect your sons against the jealousy of the younger wife. If you bring me two hens and a yard of white cloth, I shall prepare a charm for your sons to wear. No jealousy will be able to reach them after that (p.144).

To crown it all, Nnu Ego has a scuffle with Adaku and instead of the elders telling Nnu Ego that she has erred; she is declared innocent by virtue of her having given birth to a male-child. In the settlement of this dispute Nwakuor retorts:

Don’t you know that according to the custom of our people you, Adaku, the daughter of whoever you are, are committing an unforgivable sin? Our life starts from

immortality and ends in immortality. If Nnaife had been married to only you, you would have ended his life on this round of his visiting earth. I know you have children, but they are girls, who in a few years' time will go to help build another man's immortality. The only woman who is immortalising your husband you make unhappy with your fine cloths and lucrative business. If I were in your shoes, I should go home and consult my 'chi' to find out why male offspring have been denied me (p.186).

It is in the light of this female-male imbalance that the African feminists are advocating for equality between male and female children. African feminists therefore, assume the responsibility for striving for such equal societies rather than hoping that men will someday redistribute privilege and power to create a better, more harmonious prospect for future generations.

Also, the African women in *The Joys of Motherhood* are presented as very assertive. Adaku for example, is portrayed as someone who is very bold, ambitious and capable of taking daring decisions when the need arises. In a patriarchal Ibo society, Emecheta depicts Adaku as someone who takes steps that are beneficial to her family when it dawns on her that she and her daughter are not wanted by Nnaife. She focuses on giving her daughters the best of education without following the customs and traditions which make it possible for only boys to have western formal education whereas girls are given home training because eventually they will get marriage quickly. Adaku's assertive nature is highlighted when she emphatically states:

Everybody accuses me of making money all the time. What else is there for me to do? I will spend the money I have in giving my girls a good start in life. They shall stop going to the market with me. I shall see that they get enrolled in a good school. I think that will benefit them in the future...Nnaife is not going to send them away to any husband before they are ready. I will see to that (p.188).

This is a woman who is bold enough to fight the status quo stereotypical representation of women as only good to be married. Adaku's singular action is in line with the African feminists goal of advocating for the need for the African tradition to adapt to its times so that rather than stagnate, it can enrich society, as customs and culture should do. This will make it possible for all the negative entrenched cultural practices which are detrimental to women to be done away with.

Moreover, Emecheta presents African women in her work, *The Joys of Motherhood* as people whose only honour is in getting married and giving birth to children. In this novel, Nnaife is recruited to fight for the colonialist and as a result Nnu Ego goes to her father with the intention of coming back to her husband if he returns from the war. Nnu Ego's father tells her to return to her husband and the reason he adduces for Nnu Ego's return is typical of a father who lives in a patriarchal society:

Have you ever heard of a complete woman without a husband? You have done your duty to your father, a man with such nobility of spirit it defied explanation. Now it is to your husband that you should go'. 'But,' Nnu Ego began to protest, 'he is still fighting in the war. I have not neglected him as such'. 'Suppose he has hurried home to see the new man-child you have borne him, only to be met by Adaku and her whines and ambitions?'(p.177).

This is a clear indication that in a patriarchal post-colonial Ibo society of Nigeria, a woman's dignity lies in her being married. In effect, an unmarried woman is not regarded irrespective of her exploits in the society. On this note, the African feminists are seeking to improve upon the stereotypical image of women as people who are to get married at all cost in order to be recognised and regarded in our society.

Furthermore, African women are presented in this novel as their own enemies. Women are characterised as people who will do anything possible to undo their fellow women. This is manifested in a quarrel that ensues between Adaku and Nnu Ego over the dream that Oshie has had which makes Adaku decide to move away from her matrimonial home. After this quarrel, Nnu Ego regrets her action by confessing to her co-wife that she could have her own son:

Maybe, you're right again, my senior yet the more I think about it the more I realise that we women set impossible standards for ourselves. That is we make life intolerable for one another. I cannot live up to your standards, senior wife so I have to set my own. (p.181).

It could be deduced that women in the patriarchal Ibo society set unattainable standards for themselves such as given birth to male-children. If they are unable to fulfil this ambition they tend to be restless and this can lead them into engaging in unnecessary clashes with their women folks. Hence, women in patriarchal African society contribute to the afflictions of their fellow women as Nnu Ego and Adaku occasionally engage in petty quarrels because of the fact that Adaku has no son so Nnu Ego sees herself more privileged than Adaku.

Also, in the patriarchal Ibo society of *The Joys of Motherhood*, African women are depicted as people whose permanent place is the kitchen. Consequently, men and women are socialised at birth to perform different roles; boys go out to play whereas girls do household chores. This text presents a scene where Adaku beckons Oshie, a male child and Dumbi, a female child to go and fetch water from the tap for the evening's meals and what comes out of Oshie's mouth is unfortunate: "I am not going! I am a boy, why should I help in the cooking? That's a woman's job" (p.143).

Oshie goes back to play with his friends but Nnaife adds to this problem by instructing him to “go out and stop listening to female gossip” (p.143). From the foregoing, it is not surprising that in patriarchal society the men grow up with the notion that a woman’s place is in the kitchen and not in the public domain. These stereotypical roles that have been given to men and women sometimes lead to the subordination of women and this is what the African feminists are fighting against. These roles eventually make women subservient to men in patriarchal societies.

Another presentation of African women by Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* is that they can be inherited as a property in a patriarchal society. As tradition demands, in the Ibo society of *The Joys of Motherhood*, any woman whose husband dies is inherited by the heir of the late husband if the woman is not old. However, any woman who is old is catered for by her sons. It is unsurprising when Nnaife inherits Adaku after the death of her husband. This act of inheriting a woman after the demise of her husband is given prominence when after the funeral of Obi Nwokocha the narrator says:

...after this, his widows would be free to be inherited by any members of Agbadi’s family that fancied them. Some of the very old wives would not have to cope with new husbands, because their sons and daughters would provide for them (p. 172).

Similarly, Nnu Ego begins to complain about the culture of a man inheriting his late brother’s wife which the narrator explicitly renders as:

Nnu Ego knew that her father could not help her. He would say to her, ‘listen, daughter, I have seven wives of my own. I married three of them, four I inherited on the death of relatives. Your mother was only a mistress who refused to marry me. So why do you want to stand in your

husband's way? Please don't disgrace the name of the family again (p.132).

Nnu Ego is right in becoming apprehensive about her husband wanting to inherit Adaku whose husband is dead because the events that follow when Adaku comes into the family are not good. This brings about unhealthy rivalry between the two wives which eventually results in Nnu Ego becoming emotionally distressed. This distress is manifested in the way the arrival of Adaku changes the mood in the house:

...Nnu Ego fought back tears as she prepared her own bed for Nnaife and Adaku. It was a good thing she was determined to play the role of the mature senior wife; she was not going to give herself any heartache when the time came for Adaku to sleep on that bed. She must stuff her ears with cloth and make sure she also stuffed her nipple into the mouth of her young son Adim, when they all lay down to sleep (p.138).

By presenting women as commodities that can be inherited, Emecheta denounces this situation which is perpetrated against women because of patriarchal principles. Emecheta's depiction of that situation of African woman is an important step forward in that denunciation. Similarly, it is because of some of these negative cultural practices that post-colonial African writers express the difficulties women from independent countries face as they battle patriarchal attitudes and institutions of their oppressors as well as from their own people.

Women are also presented as people that could be beaten at will in *The Joys of Motherhood*. Nnaife goes out to play guitar with his friends and on returning he finds a bowl which is carefully covered. He predicts that the bowl might be containing his food but to his dismay he finds the three pounds that he has given to his wives carefully covered in the bowl. Nnaife's shock and dismay is expressed as: "Now what is this he asked in bitter anger. His voice was tremulous and he directed his displeasure at Nnu

Ego, who seemed to shrink under his stare” (p.14). In a reply to Nnaife’s question, Adaku answers her husband saying:

The food money you gave us is too small. Nwakusor and other men give their wives double the amount you give us .When we go to the market, we have to keep wandering from stall to stall in search of bargaining, because we can never afford anything (p.149).

Suddenly, we hear Adaku screaming from the room “help! Help! He’s going to kill me - you madman”. Nnaife is seen beating Adaku who is pregnant for him in the room. It has to take the intervention of Nnu Ego and other co-tenants to rescue Adaku from the hands of Nnaife. Even though these women have not done well by not providing their husband food to eat, he has no moral justification to lock Adaku in the room and beat her up. Nnaife’s decision to beat the wife who is pregnant is very dangerous because this action could trigger complications. No one raises any alarm about Nnaife’s behaviour because in a patriarchal Ibo society wife battery is not frowned upon because the women themselves consider it as part of their marital lives. It is also a way of emphasising the power of patriarchy which nurtures such a diminishing situation African women are in. At the same time, Emecheta illustrates the weight of traditions that restrain the reactions of some African women. Thus, there are a number of rules and values that need to be questioned in order to help African women regain and keep their identity and these are what the African feminists advocate for.

In addition, women in *The Joys of Motherhood* are seen as appendages of men. In this novel it is the men who dictate or rule the women and as a result the women have no option than to succumb to the dictates of the men. Coupled with the cultural practices, the women are remote- controlled and as such they do not have any choice

that leads to their fulfilment. To shed light on this, Nnu Ego reflects on herself and asserts that:

God, when will you create a woman who will be fulfilled in herself, a full human being, not anybody's appendage?.. After all, I was born alone and I shall die alone. What have I gained from this? Yes, I have many children... I am a prisoner of my own flesh and blood. Is it such an enviable position? Men make it look as if we must aspire for children or die. That's why when I lost my first son I wanted to die, because I failed to live up to the standard expected of me by the males in my life, my father and my husband and now I have to include my sons. But who made the law that we should not hope in our daughters? We women subscribe to that law more than anyone until we change all this, it is still a man's world which women will always help to build (pp.209-10).

The emotional admission of the plight of women in a patriarchal society underscores the fact that women in this society have no means of rejecting the choices and preferences of men which sometimes bring pain to them as it has brought to Nnu Ego. It is on the bases of this that the African feminists are seeking for space for women that will make them free to make their own choices and not live on the whims and caprices of men.

To add to Emecheta's presentation of African woman, in *The Joys of Motherhood* she presents the women as a means through which fathers can get wealth and other material gains. Daughters are therefore seen as property of their fathers who use them as avenue for amassing riches. This is achieved through the exorbitant bride prices that fathers expect from their prospective son in-laws and in most cases their daughters are given to men with heavy purses. In effect, as depicted in *The Joys of Motherhood*, the decision of the father is fundamental for the marriage of his daughter. That decision is all the more important as it is the father himself who receives the bride

price for his daughter. As a result, the father's decision may be influenced by his own interests. This can be noticed in *The Joys of Motherhood* where Nnaife interferes in the marriage of his daughter Kehinde. Therefore, in the novel, young girls are quickly given out in marriage whereas boys are kept in schools to receive formal education. This is observed in the way the narrator describes the speed with which girls are given out in marriage: "One planned for and had sleepless nights over boys: girls on the other were to help in running the house and be disposed of as soon as possible unless, one is asking for trouble" (p.230). In giving his daughter's hand in marriage, Nnaife decides to give Taiwo to a man who is wealthy so that he gets more money for his retirement. Nnaife's motive for doing this is captured as:

Nnaife quickly approves of this man, knowing that his daughter was striking a good bargain, and he was in a hurry to get as much money as possible from his children before retiring. Thank goodness, he had no older brothers, so the whole bride price would come to him (p. 229).

Comparatively, Kehinde who loves the butcher's son faces the refusal of Nnaife who wants to choose a husband for her. Nnaife's decision is influenced by the fact that he considers that the butcher and his family are not rich enough to give him a huge bride price. This leads to a chaotic situation because Nnaife is sentenced to a five-year imprisonment for threatening to kill the butcher. The conception men have of the bride price turns women into some kind of goods possessed by men. Women are in some way an investment from which men expect more profits through the bride price. It is because of the intention of fathers to use their daughters as gateways to get riches that Agbadi gives his daughter the name Nnu Ego which means "she is mine" because he sees through her a future which is full of richness:

He bent down and peeped at the day-old child wrapped and kept warm by the fireside and remarked: "This child is priceless, more than twenty bags of cowries. I think that should really be her name, because she is a beauty and she is mine. Yes, 'Nnu Ego': twenty bags of cowries." (p.26).

It is in this vein that the African feminists seek to espouse the idea of the African tradition adapting to the changing needs of the time. Thus, they fight against the culture and traditions that are detrimental to the welfare and image of women such as the payment of huge bride prices which makes women the property of men in a patriarchal society thereby making men treat them with impunity. Post-colonial African writers on the other hand, write to express the difficulties women from colonised countries face as a result of patriarchy which institutionalise some cultural practices that make women unable to lead their lives devoid of oppression.

Also, in the *Joys of Motherhood*, women are portrayed as object of sacrifice. In this novel, the first wife of Agbadi, Agunwa, dies and as the culture of the people of Ibuza demands when it is time for Agunwa to be lowered into her grave, her slave is expected to jump into the grave willingly and die with her but because she is a woman she is cajoled into the grave. This beautiful slave woman consistently pleads for her life to be spared as she struggles to come out of the grave after she has been pushed into it.

This painful episode is narrated as:

Then her personal slave was ceremoniously called in a loud voice by the medicine man. She must be laid inside the grave first. A good slave was supposed to jump into the grave willingly happy to accompany her mistress but this young and beautiful woman did not wish to die yet. She kept begging for her life, much to the annoyance of the many of men standing around. The woman stood far for this was a custom they found revolting. The poor slave was pushed into the shallow grave but she struggled out,

fighting and pleading, appealing to her owner Agbadi (p.20).

From this, it could be deduced that there could be other slaves who are males but the people choose this young beautiful female slave as a sacrificial lamb which buttresses the way women have been discriminated against in the patriarchal society of Ibuza. The attitude of these men towards this slave girl is in contravention with equality of all men which feminists espouse. The pitiful manner through which this beautiful female slave dies and the events heralding her death lead much to be desired. In the first place Agbadi's eldest son "gave the woman a sharp blow with the head of the cutlass he was carrying" and as he does this he says "go down like a good slave" (p. 20).

Another relative gave her final blow to the head and she finally dies with her blood spurting and splashing the men standing around and the pain that this innocent beautiful, young slave goes through makes her sarcastically remark "thank you for this kindness, Nwokocha, the son of Agbadi. I shall come back to your household, but as a legitimate daughter. I shall come back..." (p. 20).

In lieu with the above, there are occasions in *The Joys of Motherhood* where young budding women are given out to serve the gods and as a result they cannot marry any man. Thus, in their entire lives they are condemned as a living sacrifice to the gods. Typically, Nnu Ego's mother, Ona, dedicates her entire life to worship the gods and therefore she cannot marry any man. Emecheta brings this to the limelight as:

How else could she behave since she could not marry?
Because her father had no son, she had been dedicated to the gods to produce children in his name, not that of any husband. Oh torn she was between two men. She had to be loyal to her father, as well as to her lover Agbadi (pp. 17-18).

Consequently, post-colonial writers and feminists hold the view that all cultural practices that are detrimental to women must be stopped.

Also, Emecheta projects African women as prisoners in their own households. This is symbolic of the fact that Nnu Ego sacrifices all that she has including meeting the needs of her family. She effectively agrees that she has become a prisoner throughout. She makes it abundantly clear when she picks quarrels with Nnaife over the meagre housekeeping money he gives her and the co-wife to cook through this narration:

On her way back to their room, it occurred to Nnu Ego that she was a prisoner, imprisoned by her love for her children, imprisoned in her role as a senior wife. She was not even expected to demand more money from her family; that was considered below the standard expected of a woman in her position (p.153).

Tied to the above is the fact that in this book, Nnu Ego is again, imprisoned by the entrenched cultural practices of the people of Ibo. She is imprisoned by the culture that requires that women should bring forth many children preferably males in order to be deemed successful in a patriarchal society. This level of imprisonment overwhelms her as she unequivocally retorts:

Yes, I have many children but, what do I have to feed them on? On my own life, I have to work myself to the bone to look after them; I have to give them my all. And if I am lucky enough to die in peace, I even have to give them my soul. They will worship my dead spirit to provide for them. It will be hailed as a good spirit so long as there are plenty of yams and children in the family, but if anything should go wrong, if a young wife does not conceive or there is a famine my dead spirit will be blamed. When will I be free...I am a prisoner of my own flesh and blood. Is it such an enviable position? The men

make it look like as if we must aspire for children or die (p.210).

Nnu Ego's imprisonment by the entrenched culture of her community and her household brings into mind the fact that in some African countries women have been made prisoners due to their desire to strictly adhere to some cultural and religious practices in their communities. This view is shared by Lightfoot- Klein when Okome (2003) quotes him as saying:

Custom in Africa is stronger than domination, stronger than the law, stronger even than religion. Over the years, customary practices have been incorporated into religion, and ultimately have come to be believed by their adopted gods, whoever they may be (p. 71).

To add to the above depiction of African women, Emecheta portrays them as people who can go through difficulties in life without a husband. This is displayed by Adaku and Nnu Ego when their husband, Nnaife is forcefully enrolled into the British Army. Nnu Ego for instance, has the singular responsibility of feeding and sending her children to school out of the petty trade she engages in. Hitherto, Nnaife takes care of the home but with his recruitment into the army she has no choice than to shoulder all the responsibilities of her husband which she surmounts. Initially Nnu Ego expresses her worry about the arduous task her husband's absence has bestowed on her when the narrator retorts:

Nnu Ego gave in to all the suppressed emotion that was inside her. 'How are we going to manage?' she asked Ubani, who though from the east, had become a close friend. What are we going to do with all these children? I can't afford to feed us all as well as paying the rent (p.165).

This lamentation notwithstanding, Nnu Ego is able to give her children education and also provide their basic needs and survive as well. This shows that the African woman has the capacity to survive difficulties that a single mother with children faces. The narrator thus straightforwardly asserts:

Nnu Ego had scraped and saved to pay the last two terms school fees for Oshia and Adim, and she congratulated herself on having managed when people began saying that the war was over, that the enemy, whoever he was, had killed himself (p. 191).

Nnu Ego's rival, Adaku, on the other hand has to abdicate her traditional responsibility as women in the absence of Nnaife to become a public woman who trades in beans and papers which fetch her money to buy a larger stall for herself. In this large stall she decides to sell abada material for lappers. The sudden turnaround of Adaku's fortunes mesmerises Nnu Ego and this is presented as:

On that day Adaku was living up to the meaning of her name "the daughter of wealth". She told Nnu Ego that she was giving up selling beans and papers; she was buying a larger stall on which she would have abada material for lappers. She smiled to see the wonder and surprise on Nnu Ego's face. She would have passed on her former stall to Nnu Ego, she said, but she was leasing it to someone who would pay her yearly. 'That will take care of my rent' she finished laughing. 'You mean you won't have to depend on men friends to do anything for you?' 'No', she replied. 'I want to be a dignified single woman (p. 191).

These exploits by Adaku and Nnu Ego are indicative of the fact that a woman can work hard to amass wealth to be able to cater for herself and her children in the absence of a man's support.

Another quality of the African woman that Emecheta shows in her book, *The Joys of Motherhood* is that she cherishes children more than material gains. Nnu Ego loses her child through miscarriage and she decides to stop trading during her second pregnancy ostensibly to forestall any miscarriage so she concentrated solely on having a baby thereby neglecting any opportunity to make money through trading but she prefers having a baby to trading which might make her lose another baby. The raconteur conveys Nnu Ego's thought cleverly as:

She had reminded herself of the old that money and children don't go together. If you spent all your time making money and getting rich, the gods wouldn't give you any children, if you wanted children, you had to forget money, and be content to be poor (p. 86).

In the end Nnu Ego becomes very poor because she chooses to take care of her children without expecting to gain anything materially from them for she finds solace in seeing them becoming comfortable and happy instead. Hence, it is reported that: "She might not have any money to supplement her husband's income, but were they not in a white man's world where it was the duty of the father to provide for his family?" (p. 87).

Moreover, women in this novel are presented as commodities and for that matter men can grab as many as they can. This portrayal of women manifests in *The Joys of Motherhood* when Agbadi, a very wealthy local chief marries more of them. Any time Agbadi raids any neighbouring village he is sure of bringing home best-looking women. Women are surprisingly portrayed through the insatiable desire of Agbadi as commodities that can easily be dispensed with when they are no longer useful. This act of commoditisation of women is explained by Emecheta as:

He married a few women in the traditional sense, but as he watched each of them sink into domesticity and

motherhood he was soon bored and would go further afield for some other exciting, tall and proud female. This predilection of his is extended to his mistresses as well (p.5).

In this regard during leisure, Agbadi neglects his wives in favour of his concubines. This act of neglect is what precipitates the death of his senior wife, Agunwa who becomes very ill in the night in the absence Agbadi who decides to have sexual intercourse with Ona within the earshot of all the members of his courtyard. It is therefore not surprising when some members of Ibuza community attribute her death to the hearing of her husband giving pleasure to Ona:

Agbadi's senior wife, Agunwa becomes ill that very night. Some said later that she sacrificed herself for her husband; but a few had noticed that it was bad for her moral to hear her husband giving pleasure to another woman in the same courtyard where she slept, and to such a woman who openly treated the man they all worshipped so badly (p.18).

Also, African women are portrayed as people who should not resist the sexual pleasures of their husbands even though they might not be in the position to offer them. The way that Nnaife welcomes his second wife to her marital home epitomises this depiction of women when he does not allow Nnu Ego any respite. Nnaife does not allow Nnu Ego to rest for a while as he demands to sleep with her and she has no choice than to succumb to his sexual desires. The manner with which Nnaife exercises his sexual have sex with his wife is demonstrated this way:

He demanded his marital right as if determined not to give her a chance to change her mind. She had thought she would be allowed to rest at least on the first night after her arrival before being pounced upon by this hungry man, her new husband. After such experience Nnu Ego knew

why horrible-looking men raped women, because they are aware of their inadequacy (p. 44).

It is therefore not surprising when she feels very much tired in the morning. This is a clear indication that women in the patriarchal Ibuza society are expected to regard men as their lords and owners and for that matter the feelings of women do not matter at all. It is in the light of the above that feminists are of the view that a woman's body is her inherent property, not to be owned, used, and dumped by men.

In addition to Emecheta's depiction of the African women, she presents them as people who should ensure peace and tranquillity in the household. Agunwa, the first wife of Agbadi is characterised as someone who is peaceful and has the ability to calm down all her co-wives to ensure that they co-exist in Agbadi's compound. Agbadi himself recognises this attribute when after Agunwa's death he does not mince words in describing her to her two grown up sons as "your mother is a good woman. So unobtrusive, so quite. I don't know who else will help me keep an eye on those young wives of mine, and see to the smooth running of my household" (p. 19). By this assertion, Agbadi sees Agunwa as indispensable in her courtyard and it is noteworthy that he gives her a befitting burial, which is she is buried in her husband's compound. After her death, Agbadi sends a big cow to her people to announce her death and commands "make sure that her slave and her cooking things go with her. We must all mourn her" (p.19).

Another woman who represents the peaceful nature of the African woman in *The Joys of Motherhood* is Nnu Ego, Nnaife's first wife. When Nnaife brings Adaku, his late brother's wife home any woman in her shoes would have protested but she decides to create a peaceful atmosphere in the home for all of them to co-habit it. She controls her temper and composes herself so well that those around will not see her as

been overly jealous and unhappy. She remains very cool, calm and collected in the face of the emotional trauma that the presence of this new wife brings. To add salt to an injury, Nnaife tries to tease her by telling her “try to sleep, too, senior wife” (p. 138). In the face of all these challenges she remembers that she has to let peace prevail and this is described as:

‘A happy senior wife makes a happy household’, Nnu Ego snapped. She suspected that her unhappiness at Adaku’s presence was by now common knowledge and she was not going to encourage it further. She hurried in and, to take her mind off herself, busied herself entertaining people who came throughout the evening to see the new wife. Nnu Ego fought back tears as she prepared her own bed for Nnaife and Adaku (p.138).

Any woman could have caused a stir at home at the sight of a rival in her matrimonial home but she is determined to make peace at the expense of her emotional comfort and such is the mark of an African woman that Emecheta expertly portrays.

It must be emphasised that in the patriarchal society of Iboza in *The Joys of Motherhood*, African women are perceived as people who are mostly remembered by their children and not men. This observation is given weight when Oshie gets the opportunity to travel abroad to seek greener pastures and Nnaife, his father is expected to accompany him to the airport to bid him farewell. Nnaife knowingly does not show up and only surfaces when Oshie has emplaned to United State of America. On Nnaife’s arrival to the house in the evening his wife demands to know why he has stayed away. Nnaife’s reason for not showing up is fittingly brought to the fore in this narration:

If there was any gain to come from his sacrifices, he wanted it now and preferably in cash. Glory was worthwhile, too, but to Nnaife what was the good news of

a big name without money? He felt very bitter at Oshie, and, though he knew Nnu Ego would have waited hopefully for him until the plane left, he made no effort to be there for his son's departure. He purposely stayed at work that day, and when he did arrive home, he was in a nasty mood. Nnu Ego however was determined to know why he had not showed up. Nnaife pointed out to her that the children were her children. 'Will they remember me when am old? No, they will remember only their mother. And have you not noticed that women stay longer than men on this earth? So why should I give up my day's work for a son who has spat on my face?' (Pp.227-228).

Indeed, Nnu Ego is highly remembered in Ibuza after his death not Nnaife. To this day she is remembered in Ibuza and the events that follow after her death are testimonies to this fact: "And her reward? Did she not have the greatest funeral Ibuza had ever seen? It took Oshie three years to pay off the money he had borrowed to show the world what a good son he was" (p.254). Even after death people accuse Nnu Ego of giving all to her children: "still many agreed that she had given all to her children. The joy of being a mother was giving all to your children, they said" (p. 254).

Last but not least, *The Joys of Motherhood* defines women as people who are good at making babies only. In this light, any woman who is unable to give birth is given names. Typically, in this novel, an Itsekiri man's wife who is not able to give birth is nicknamed *Iyawo* which means a woman without a child (p.112). In the same breath, when Nnu Ego finds it difficult to give birth during her first marriage, her husband, Amatokwu sees her as useless and less human deserving of any good treatment. On this note, Amatokwu keeps on abusing her verbally and when she demands to be treated well the conversation that takes place between him and his wife is reported as:

‘What do you want me to do?’ Amatokwu asked. ‘I am a busy man. I have no time to waste my precious male seed on a woman who is infertile. I have raised children for my line. If you really want to know, you are so dry and jumpy. When a man comes to a woman he wants to be cooled, not scratched by a nervy female who is all bones (p.31).

The use of these words, “dry”, “jumpy” and “nervy” in the quote above connote someone who is anxious, frightened and boring. For Amatokwu to have used these words to describe his wife because she is not blessed with the fruit of the womb is derogatory. Nnu Ego is thus projected as someone who is not wanted and it is not surprising that in her sorrowful mood she avers: “a woman without a child for her husband is a failed woman” (p.65).

Lastly, in the midst of male hegemony some women are willing to break new grounds to fight patriarchy. Consequently, a woman is portrayed as someone who is capable of making some changes in her life when all odds are against her. Adaku for instance, exhibits this trait when after a scuffle with Nnu Ego over the entrenched tradition of disregarding a woman who does not give birth to a male child, she does not grieve over it but goes all out to give her daughters the best because she believes: “As for my daughters, they will have to take their own chances in this world, I am not prepared to stay here and be turned into a mad woman, just because I have no sons”. True to her words she offers a practical solution to her problem in this speech: “I shall see that they get enrolled in a good school. I think that will benefit them in the future. Many rich families send their daughters to school these days; I shall do the same with mine” (p.188).

Post- independence feminist writers are seeking to correct the erroneous impression that a woman has to be submissive, gentle and tied to the apron string of a

man for the society to acknowledge her and by this act of decisiveness from Adaku, one the African feminists ideology has been brought to the limelight.

3.4 The image of African women in *Beyond the Horizon*

Women critics are not happy about the way men have presented women in literary works over the years and this is reiterated by Ruth (1998:104) when she advances that:

“men have controlled the conceptual arena and have determined social values as well as the structure of institutions”. On this note, this part of the chapter looks at how Darko, a female author has presented African women in her novels, *Beyond the Horizon*

3.5 The context of Amma Darko

Darko is one of the acclaimed Ghanaian female writers and she has published books in German, English, French, Spanish and Turkish. She was born in 1956 in Tamale, Ghana and had her university education at University of Science and Technology in Kumasi. After her education she worked briefly at Ghana Technology Consultancy centre. During her working days at this centre, there was a coup d'état in Ghana which compelled young men in Ghana at that time to travel abroad. Consequently, Darko got a visa and travelled to Germany. She felt very much isolated in Germany because she knew nobody there. During this time of isolation, Darko began writing her maiden novel, *Beyond the Horizon (Der Verkanfte Traum)* which was published in 1991 in Germany. She came back to Ghana, studied accountancy and took an appointment as a tax inspector for the government. She has several novels to her credit and notable among them are *Beyond, The Housemaid, Faceless* and *Not without Flowers*.

Amma Darko sets the novel in Ghana during the period when women in the country continue to face discrimination and inequality. Prior to the emergence of British rule in Ghana, the state was not united and Ghana comprised of various ethnic groups with their distinguishable line of descent and social structure. Women in pre-colonial Ghana played distinctive roles based on their social organisation and historical background. As it pertains in many African societies, the allocation of resources, power, status, rights and duties between men and women were determined by descent, succession and inheritance, paternity, affiliation and economic potential (Aidoo,1995). For example, among the Akan tribe in Ghana women had considerable economic and legal independence. In Akan social structure, the women and men complimented each other. In other ethnic groups such as Kokomba, Kusase, Ewe and Dagomba who trace their descent paternally had men dominating their social structure and restriction on women were common.

From the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras, chieftaincy has become Ghana's substratum. This institution is seen as protecting the history and traditions of the people and in this institution men and women played defined roles. In Northern Ghana for instance, among the Dagombas three skins, Kukulogu, Kpatuya, and Gundogu were reserved for women. Comparatively, the matrilineal Akan society had a chieftaincy institution which divided responsibilities between men and women. The heir to the chieftaincy stool was always a man but the woman had the power to appoint. This woman called *Ohemaa* wielded considerable power in the Akan chieftaincy institution.

Historically, Ghanaian women have been oppressed and dominated by men. Women have been taught to be obedient to their husbands and respect their elders. They are told that a man could marry more than one woman (Manu, 1984; Oppong, 1973; Nukunya, 1969). This position of the woman has become possible because of entrenched traditional practices such as early marriage and polygamy. In education, Ghanaian women have been socialised from birth to take up domestic roles in the society. According to Graham (1971), since the inception of Western Education in Ghana, Education of the Ghanaian women was determined by their positions in the society which was to prepare them for domestic roles and to make them into good wives and mothers. In case of the boys, the education was to train them to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families.

Colonialism combined with European and African ideologies to create practices which were detrimental to the image of Women in post-colonial Ghana. African women who hitherto were occupying important positions in Ghana were now reduced to subservient. The superimposition of British values and morality defined men as heads of the family; they are not given access to good health care and education and this created discrimination at work places. Like many African societies which had contact with Europeans during colonialism, when the colonialist came to Ghana, they looked at Ghanaian culture with racial superiority. When they saw that there was division of labour between men and women and there was bride wealth and polygamy as well, they saw it as barbarous and detrimental to women. As a result, the missionaries started stereotyping the Ghanaian woman as victims in need of protection.

The role of Ghanaian women was thus limited to being a good mother and an exemplary housewife while men were identified as workers and farmers. Ghanaian women were made responsible for taking care of the home and feeding the male

workers who could therefore work freely for the colonial economy and grow cash crops. From this period the colonised men joined in the subordination of women (Gan, 2012). Therefore, colonialism in Ghana reinforced the portrayal of women as being substandard and subservient. This projected the Ghanaian women as people who should be pure and interested in child-bearing.

3.6 Plot overview of *Beyond the Horizon*

I am staring painfully at an image. My image? No! - What is left of what once used to be my image. And from my left and right, all about me, I keep hearing chuckles and paintings, wild bed spring creaks, screaming oohs and yelling aahs. They are coming from rooms that are the same as mine, rooms where the same things are done as they are in mine. And in all of them there are pretty women like myself, one in each room waiting to be used and abused by strange men... I am just in brief silky red underpants...I've used myself and I have allowed myself to be too used to care any longer. But that doesn't render me emotionless. I've still got a lot of feelings in me, though I'm not sure if they aren't the wrong ones... I shiver at the sight of my sore cracked lip...This gaudy pick rouge I've plastered on my ebony black face looks horrid too, I know, but I wear it because it's a trademark of my profession (p.1).

The quote above is the flashback of how Mara, a naïve girl from the village of Naka recounts the ordeals she goes through when she is blackmailed into prostitution by her husband and his bosom friend, Osey. In this novel, Mara's harrowing experience starts from Naka, a farming village where her mother admonishes her this way:

Your life is your road, Mara. God puts you at the start of this road and propels you to walk on, and only He knows where your road will end, but it is the road He chooses for you and you must walk it with gratefulness because it's the best for you (p.3).

This advice is given to Mara on the occasion of her being married to Akobi, the son of the village undertaker in exchange for two white cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloth, beads, gold jewellery and two bottles of London Dry Gin. Mara is then taken to Accra. Akobi, a clerk in government office in Accra, bribes and pays huge sums of money to obtain visa in order for him to travel abroad. In Accra, Akobi neglects and abuses Mara who believes that it is the duty of a wife to suffer for her husband. Akobi succeeds in getting the much needed visa to Europe and in his absence Mara does everything possible to improve a lot from been a 'greenhorn' village girl into sophisticated city girl. In Germany, Akobi marries Gitte, a German woman which he introduces to her as his sister. Akobi finally sends his friend, Osey to bring Mara to Germany with the intention of initiating her into prostitution by first forcibly making her watch porn movie which horrifies her:

This action that I saw horrified me and left me sitting in my seat heated up with mouth wide open. The people on the screen, they were... that is to say, they were several men and women all together, about fifteen or so; among them, black women, Africans; and they were doing it there...there on the screen. They were doing the thing plain there on the screen before everybody. And there was no trace of shame or whatever on their faces. Not one bit (p.61).

Mara is therefore, blackmailed from this period into prostitution by Akobi who takes all the money that she gets from the prostitution and spends it with his girlfriend, Comfort. Mara becomes devastated because all that she could offer her family is material things. In this vein, she says "material things are all I can offer them. As for myself, there's nothing dignified and decent left of me to give them" (p.140). In the end, Comfort is deported to Africa and she becomes the partner of one of the high ranking army official

in Nigeria whereas Akobi is imprisoned in Germany for attempting to sneak out while he is owing money to the bank and a couple of mail order houses and is caught.

3.7 The image of African women in *Beyond the Horizon*

In *Beyond the Horizon*, African women are portrayed as sex commodity. Akobi, the husband of Mara treats her as sex commodity. In their sex lives, Akobi sees her as an object that has no sexual feelings so anytime he wants to have sex with her he just beckons her to sleep on the mattress, jumps on her and when he is satisfied he instructs her to go back to where she is sleeping. Mara recounts her ordeals as:

Cool composed and authoritative, he indicated with a pat of his hand on the space besides him. I did so, more out of appreciation of starting another fight than anything else. Wordlessly, he stripped off my clothes, stripped off his trousers, turned my back to him and entered me. Then he ordered me off the mattress to go and lay out my mat because he wanted to sleep alone (p.22).

In this instance, Mara is seen as a sex commodity instead of a sexual partner. If she is a sexual partner then Akobi should treat her with respect not as a piece of wood that does not have any feelings. Mama Kiosk, Mara's confidant, echoes this when Mara informs her of her situation by forthrightly saying:

Your husband is one of those men who have no respect for village people. Tradition demands that the wife respects, obeys and worships her husband but it demands respect in return for care, good care of the wife. Your husband neglects you and yet demands respect and complete worship from you (, p.13).

Osey, Akobi's close friend, also decides to have sexual relationship with Mara when the former is told to bring the latter to Germany. It is because the men in this novel see women as sex object anytime any man wants to have sex with a woman she should

accept it irrespective of the people and the place involved. Mara refuses Osey which makes him highly annoyed instead of being ashamed. She narrates this episode as:

There was even a note of anger in his tone, I must say, very much to my satisfaction, since, after all, I felt that I was the one entitled to be angry, not him. I couldn't understand the world any longer. I mean, here was a man openly claiming to be my husband's best friend trying to seduce me, and who was not only bored and angry at my reaction, my threat to report him, but go out of his way to call it monkey drama (p.66).

In Germany, Akobi continues to treat Mara as a sex object by having brutal sex with her. Mara recounts the manner in which Akobi has sex with her by claiming: "...then he took my jeans, spread them on the bathroom floor, and knelt down. I felt him enter me from behind and the next second he was out of me again" (p.184). Hence, Akobi performs his sexual duties in a barbaric manner without any emotional attachment to it. In contrast, he treats Gitte, her German wife well sexually which adds to the fact that the African woman in this novel is captured as a sex commodity and every sex object is ill-treated sexually. This shows that married women are expected in a patriarchal society to be sexually submissive and passive to their husbands, men are the initiators of sex and also they set conditions for it. The reason that one could adduce for a man treating the wife as a sex organ is made known when Messer (2004) avers that women are expected to satisfy the sexual desires of their husbands. As a result when a husband needs sex, the wife should comply because that is part of the marriage contract. To add to Messer's assertion, Charvet (1982) suggests that the family as a social unit has become a brewery for patriarchal practices by socializing its young to accept sexually differentiated roles. This cause of difference and discrimination emanates from the fact that society sees women as sexual beings and not as human beings. On this note, both

Akobi and Osey see their wives and women in general as sexual beings so they should be treated as such.

Moreover, Akobi and his friend, Osey introduce their wives Mara and Vivian respectively into prostitution and the money that these women get are spent recklessly by these men. This shows that African women in this novel are presented as people who could be exploited with ease. Vivian recounts this unfortunate treatment in these words: “Even the money that I make, he controls it. I can’t buy anything without his consent, not even for my own mother at home” (p.89). Due to the way these women are exploited, Mara becomes so used that she recounts her ordeal in a flashback as:

I am in brief silky red underpants so I’m virtually naked, but that is not why I feel so cold because this coldness I feel does not grip my body so much as it does my soul. It’s deep inside me that feels this chilliness, from the dejected soul my body harbours, a soul grown old from the much use of its shelter (p.1).

Mara expresses the psychological trauma that she goes through as a result of the way she is exploited through prostitution this way:

When I wasn’t sleeping with a man I was crouching over a bucket of steaming hot water diluted with camphor and alum sometime the treatment left me with a numb vagina, so that I even felt nothing when the men were sleeping with me, but it was better than the pain on top of it all, I was swallowing scores of pain killers and tranquillisers every day and taking drugs to keep me going (p.120).

Before Akobi travels abroad he gives money to Mara to trade with but demanded interest on it. When Akobi and Osey use their wives as a means to acquire wealth, they are exploiting them for their own parochial interest. Surprisingly, these women agree to this exploitation without complaining about it and their inactions buttress the view that

women in patriarchal societies are not only constantly defined in relation to men but are defined as dependent and subordinate to them as well. As a result, women are nurtured to acquire those qualities, which fit them into relationship of dependence on men. These qualities include gentleness, passivity, submission and striving to please men always (McDowell and Bringle, 1992). It is therefore not surprising that these women are submissive to their men irrespective of the treatment that are meted out to them.

It is in view of the above that the post-colonial African feminists seek the good treatment of women in our society. They do not want women to be mistreated and as a result they are readily interested in working out guidelines that protect women and eradicate discrimination. In essence, these feminists react to this maltreatment of women which is subjugating and negative. Thus, they articulate the view that the existing culture of male domination in the male dominated society is not healthy for the development of the society.

African women are again, depicted as people who are incapable of taking their own decisions. This is unfortunate because if they are not allowed to take their own decisions, they cannot articulate their views well which will not empower them to be free from unwarranted influences. It is on this note that in bringing out the need to include women in decision making Balk (1997) and Hindin (2000) note that the amount of influence a woman has in decision-making is a key indicator of women's empowerment and the power dynamic of gender relationships.

In *Beyond the Horizon*, Mara has no right to choose her own partner. Hence, Akobi is given to Mara by her father without her consent. Meanwhile, Mara's elder sister suffers similar fate and the consequence is disastrous so one would have expected

her parents to exercise caution in imposing a man on Mara. Mara narrates the drama that precedes her being given out into marriage without her consent in this vivid manner:

I remember the day clearly. I returned from the village well with my fourth bucket of water of the day when mother excitedly beckoned to me in all my wetness and muddiness, dragged me into her hut and breathlessly told me the 'good news'. 'Your father has found a husband for you', she gasped, 'a good man!' All I did was grin helplessly because I clearly remembered the same good by father. And my sister was now a wreck (pp.13-14).

From the quote above it is noteworthy that if these women are given a stake in an important issue like marriage they will marry men that they know and can live with which will prevent the wreck that marrying these men has brought them. Mara's lament shows her frustration about this problem "I just didn't know him. I was living with this man and sleeping in one room with him and I just didn't know him" (p.21).

Furthermore, women are shown as property that can be sold to the highest bidder in *Beyond the Horizon*. In this text, Mara is given out to the highest bidder, Akobi. Mara's father collects two cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloth, beads, gold jewellery and two bottles of London Dry Gin before she is given her out and this amounts to selling her as if she is a property that must be sold exorbitantly. The attitude of Mara's father is summed up by Mara: "But father, it appeared, had a different formula for choosing or accepting husbands for his daughters, which took more consideration the number of cows coming as the bride price than the character of the man"(p.4).

In effect, an African woman like Mara in the patriarchal society of Naka is seen as an object that can be sold for profit and that her happiness is immaterial. Even

though the payment of bride price raises the status of the women in the society, it gives the men enough impetus to see the women as commodity and this commodification of the women provides fertile grounds for wife battery. It is therefore not surprising that Akobi treats Mara the way he does in the book. It is on the basis of the above that the post-colonial African feminists are advocating for the equal treatment of all the people in the society irrespective of their sex, creed and religion.

Also, the African women are projected in this novel as people that must be battered at the least provocation. We see Akobi and Osey battering their wives consistently. A typical incident is recorded when Mara tells his friend and confidant, Mama Kiosk that she is pregnant but Akobi becomes very angry that when Mara eventually tells him, she receives severest beatings from him. This is quite uncharacteristic of a man because in African society giving birth to a child is an experience that everyone relishes but instead of being happy, Akobi rather becomes angry and vents it on Mara through battery. This experience is reported by Mara this way:

I called softly after supper next day when I started and he was removing bits from his teeth , but now he stopped dead, the stick still stuck somewhere between two of his upper teeth. Then slowly he removed the stick, sucked through his teeth and said ‘Mama Kiosk says you are pregnant!’ ‘Yes, Akobi’, I answered and sat on the chair because I felt a sudden dizziness. ‘Did Mama Kiosk sleep with you? He asked...before I knew what happening wham was! First slap... wham! Wham! Wham! Three more in succession. And I scurried into what had now become my favourite corner, slumping to the floor (pp.16-17).

This is unfortunate looking at the condition of Mara at that time which should elicit love and care from her husband instead she gets beaten for becoming pregnant. It must

be reiterated that this constant beating of Mara has a psychological effects on her to the extent that in summarising her ordeals she retorts:

When I didn't bring him the bowl of water and soap in time for washing his hands before and after eating, I received a nasty kick in the knee. When I forgot the chewing stick for his teeth, which he always demanded be placed neatly beside his bowl of served food, I got a slap in the face. And when the napkin was not at hand when he looked for it, I received a knuckle knock on my forehead (p.1).

Again, Darko depicts women in her novel, *Beyond the Horizon* as people who are created to serve men. Most African women in this novel are characterised as people who are born to do the bidding of the men and from Mara to Vivian they have sacrificed a lot for their husbands to live comfortably both at home and abroad without complaining. They have to prostitute in order for their husbands to live comfortably abroad and even in Ghana, Mara for example has to slave for Akobi all the time and these make one have the idea that indeed African women in this novel have the preoccupation of living for the sake of men. Mara espouses this phenomenon when she raises this concern:

...it was me who always carried back the empty bucket and bathing accessories and saw to drying his towel ready for next morning since he hated wet towel touching his skin. It was natural, too, that when he demanded it, I slept on the concrete floor on just my thin mat while he slept all alone on the large grass mattress since, after all, mother had taught me that a wife was there for a man for one thing, and that was to ensure his well-being, which includes his pleasure (p.13).

By this speech, Mara has painted a very unfortunate picture of the African women as people who were created for men in a patriarchal society and as such the women's sole

business is to satisfy the men irrespective of the string attached to it and at their own peril. It is therefore not surprising when Mara and Vivian sacrifice their happiness and dignity as women by going through excruciating pains through prostitution in order to satisfy their societal norm.

It is on this premise that the African feminists and post-colonial critics look at the way the African women have been oppressed physically and emotionally with the intention of rewriting the wrongs against women in Africa which have been perpetuated by colonialism with its attendant patriarchal rule.

To add to the discussion, the African women in this text are presented as people who are docile, naïve and inferior to men in a patriarchal society. The men in this novel symbolised by Akobi and Osey capitalise on the docility, naivety and inferiority complex of Mara and Vivian to batter and exploit them with ease. It is out of naivety, docility and inferiority complex that Osey and Akobi use Mara and Vivian as sex slaves to amass wealth without these women having the lion share of it. But for their docility, naivety and inferiority, these women could have decided to hide greater part of the money that they realise from the sex trade. In contrast, Comfort, the girlfriend of Akobi sees herself as superior and intelligent and as such she consents to Akobi's proposal on realising that he is going to travel abroad and Akobi could have used her as a prostitute but Akobi sees her as very intelligent enough to read between the lines. In Germany, Comfort sits idle and milks Akobi and Mara whereas Mara sleeps with countless men to make money. This speech which is made by Mara when she is informed by Akobi that he is travelling abroad reinforces the assertion that the African women are seen as docile, naïve and inferior:

‘Akobi’, I said dreamily, ‘whatever you say I am sure is the right thing. What you decide on I am sure is the right

thing. I am sure Akobi'. And it was like I was in the middle of a dream, being made love to by Don Juan. There was nothing Akobi would have said at that moment that I wouldn't have done. His word at that moment was holy. And not even the Pope could have thwarted me. If Akobi had suddenly suggested I allowed myself to be beheaded, that cutting my head off at that moment was the right thing to do, I would readily and gladly have given in still gone hopping headless, singing hallelujah unto him. So taken in was I by him (p. 36).

The feeling of naivety, inferiority and docility that is impregnated in African women is made through the ideologies of patriarchy and gender and as result Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:36) points out that:

Women are shackled by their own negative self-image by centuries of exteriorisation of the ideologies of patriarchy and gender hierarchy. Their own reactions to objective problems therefore are often self-deflating and self-crippling. Woman reacts with fear, dependence complex and attitudes to please and cajole where more self-assertive actions are needed.

Another presentation of African women is that they must not be shown love. Akobi and his crony, Osey have shown consistently that they do not have an iota of love for their spouses hence they treat them with disdain. Akobi and Osey send for their spouses, Mara and Kaye and make them work in a brothel specifically to acquire wealth for them. Ironically, the money that these women make through the sale of their bodies is spent by their husbands. Akobi typically spends the money on her mistress, Comfort. If these men love their wives they will not treat them unjustly as they do which makes them go through the most inhumane condition that a woman could be subjected to. In recounting this debilitating condition that she has gone through in the hands of Akobi Mara professes:

I felt drained, so drained that I had asked for a glass of water. My husband brings me from home to a foreign land and puts me in a brothel to work, and what money I make, he uses to pay the rent on his lover's apartment, and to renovate a house for her in her village back home. I came to Gerhardt expecting the worst, but this was even worse than I had conceived of (pp.137-138).

This issue of mistreatment of a woman in a patriarchal society does not bring about development because as Egejuru (1997) posits “women issues constitute important aspects of working towards a most just and humane future for African society” (p.9).

Thus, feminism and post-colonial theory seek social change in women's status by changing the way in which society views them and this goal is reiterated by Peter (2010) who declares that feminism “wants society to change its ideas on patriarchy and accept women as being a valuable part of society” (p. 30).

To add to the above presentation of African women in *Beyond the Horizon*, women are portrayed as people who are easily deceived. Osey brings his Kaye to Frankfurt, Germany, coerces and blackmails her into prostitution. In this regard, nude pictures of Kaye are taken by Osey which uses to blackmail her anytime she wishes to back out. Osey tells Kaye that anytime that she makes any effort at stopping prostitution he will send these nude pictures to Kaye's family back home and anytime he does this Kaye is forced to submit to the dictate of Osey. Mara comments on this act by Osey when she postulates:

...then he coerced her into prostitution, pocketed every mark she made and kept her in the trade by blackmailing her with pictures he had clandestinely taken of her in action with different men. ‘You back out today, tomorrow these pictures will be on their way back to your family at home’, he had threatened whenever she mentioned her

desire to get out of the business so for a whole year and a half Kaye worked for him (p.117).

This is blackmail at the highest level and it does not make a woman feel free and have the right to her own life. On this score, post-colonial African feminists advocate for the right of an African women in the every facet of African society including politics and economics.

The African woman in *Beyond the Horizon* is also identified as materialistic and opportunistic. Being an opportunist connotes taking advantage of opportunities as they arise. Materialism, on the other hand, means preoccupation for material things. The African women in this fiction who reside in Accra, the capital town have insatiable desires for material possessions that they do not date men who are lowly ranged on the social ladder; they rather prefer men who have hefty purses. Comfort, a typist at the ministries where Akobi works, cannot be left out in this category of women. Akobi expresses interest in her and sends her to the village but she turns his proposal down. Apparently, Comfort prefers men who are wealthy irrespective of their stature. The narrator advances this to support comfort's reason for turning down Akobi's proposal:

And the very next day, back within the walls of the ministries, Comfort gave him a nasty cold shoulder. Ignoring him, she elegantly disappeared into the back of the silver metallic Pontiac belonging to the ugly, fat first secretary to the Housing and Construction Minister, who in spite of his munched-up face and flabby pot belly had laid half of the pretty girls... (p.6).

Nonetheless, Comfort makes a quick turnaround on realising that Akobi has got the opportunity to travel to Germany. She knows very well that if she allies herself with Akobi she might get the opportunity to travel abroad. It is therefore not surprising when she intelligently warms her way into Akobi's heart that she sees him off at the airport

instead of Mara, Akobi's wife. Mama Kiosk, Mara's trusted friend, makes us aware of this when she tells Mara "it was her who saw him off at the airport" (p.45). Shockingly, Akobi comes for Comfort earlier than Mara but with the sinister motive of using him as a sex worker. But for Akobi's opportunity to travel abroad Comfort would not have looked in of Akobi with is a sign of opportunism.

Amma Darko also presents African woman as loving, caring, sympathetic, and empathetic and a good companion in *Beyond the Horizon*. Mama Kiosk, an elderly woman who is the best friend of Mara undoubtedly exhibits these rare qualities. She shows pure love and motherly care to Mara in times of distress and in her Mara finds a strong tower to rely on unlike her husband who treats her badly. Mama Kiosk gives Mara food clothing and offers sound advices to her because she sees Mara as a "Greenhorn" (p.45); someone who has just come to the city and does not know her way around and looks innocent. A classic example is gleaned when Mara takes seed and is going through some hormonal changes, she runs to Mama Kiosk who explains her present hormonal changes to be early signs of pregnancy. Mara herself recounts this scene as:

Then one day I went and knocked on Mama Kiosk's door. She let me in, calling jovially, 'Greenhorn, what brings you here at this hour?' 'There is something wrong with me, Mama Kiosk', I uttered under my breath, and I must talk to somebody. Her jovial look turned serious. 'Come', she beckoned me to a seat, and added, 'you have something serious on your chest, I can see'. Let it out...I haven't seen my blood for two months now, Mama Kiosk,' I began and I am also suffering fits and dizziness. You think I'm dying?' To my astonishment, Mama Kiosk roared with laughter, stood me upon my feet, clasped me to her generous bosom, and shrieked excitedly, 'you are pregnant greenhorn! (p.15).

From this speech, it is obvious that Mama Kiosk is the only person who has shown successively that she cares for her and for that matter she feels comfortable sharing her problems with her. This singular act by Mama Kiosk is in consonance with feminists' principle which seeks to fight for the welfare of their fellow women and when Darko decides to characterise Mama Kiosk as caring and sympathetic towards her fellow women, she is bringing to the fore the need to support and encourage the poor and vulnerable in our society which are mostly women.

Also, African women have been presented as people who bear the brunt of men's desire to succeed in life. Akobi has the desire for travelling abroad and to realise this ambition Mara has to suffer greatly. Mara has to lose her precious jewellery through Akobi's trickery. Akobi convinces Mara that he is sending her high quality gold to the city for safe keeping which she obliges. To Mara's bewilderment when she returns to the city of Accra and begins looking for her jewellery and other belongings they were nowhere to be found. Mara's anxious search for her high-quality gold is vividly presented to readers by herself as:

Anxious to lay eyes once more on my gold jewellery which in the true sense of the word was my only life insurance, the only property I owned in life, I looked for it in the place where I knew Akobi was likely to keep it. I looked and searched and found nothing; neither the jewellery nor my new cloths. And the costly waist-beads I inherited from my grandmother when she died I didn't find. Plus other things, all of which were gone, even the little delicate ebony carving mother had given me the first time I was leaving for the city as my protector (p.31).

Eventually Mara decides to demand answers from Akobi about the whereabouts of her high-quality gold and other precious belongings but Akobi tells her plainly that he has sold all the items to enable him acquire the passport for his journey to Germany. This is

quite unfortunate in the sense that Akobi should have informed Mara about his intentions rather than deceiving him that he is sending those items to the city for safe keeping which is tends out not to be true. Mara becomes shocked on realising that her gold and other precious belongings are missing and this makes her enquire from Akobi the whereabouts of these items:

‘Akobi,’ I said on the Sunday morning, ‘yesterday I searched for my jewellery and clothes and other things but I didn’t find them. Did you put them here?’ he was lying face up on the mattress. ‘No’, he replied curtly. ‘You said you were bringing them for safekeeping but I didn’t find them here’ I went on desperately. ‘Because they are not here,’ replied off-headedly, his face searching the corrugated-sheet ceiling (pp.32-33).

This answer given by Akobi shows that in his desire to go abroad in order to acquire material things his wife has to suffer by means of losing all her inherited property that she has kept all this while and to make her sacrifice worthless, Akobi goes abroad and comes for her girlfriend ahead of Mara whose precious ornament and sacrifice has seen him go through the financial difficulties that are associated with travelling abroad. It is noteworthy from the aforesaid that African women indeed bear the brunt of men’s struggle to reconcile traditional expectations and this is hammered by Appadurai (1994) who postulates: “Women bear the brunt of this sort of trick, for they are often subject to the abuse and violence of men who are themselves torn about the relationship between heritage and opportunity in shifting spatial and political formations” (pp. 42-43).

Furthermore, Darko portrays African women in *Beyond the Horizon* as people who can be trusted. Akobi sends Mara to the city of Accra and makes life uncomfortable for her instead of treating her as a wife and companion. He makes Mara go through a lot of emotional and psychological trauma by making her throw people’s

rubbish away for foodstuffs and hawking at the point that her pregnancy is advance in months. Mara does all these in order to survive because Akobi does not give her housekeeping money. In these situations one woman who acts as a mother and trusted friend is Mama Kiosk. The trust that Mara has in this woman is unprecedented and this makes Mara confide in her constantly for solutions to her marital problems. The trust that Mara has in Mama Kiosk is trumpeted by Mara:

Between Mama Kiosk and me now existed a mother-daughter relationship. I had grown to trust and talk openly with her about everything. Then too she was the one person I spent most of my time with since I left in the evening with her...So it was that in my desperate need for a mother I saw a substitute in Mama Kiosk. And she took on the role wholeheartedly, advising me on what to do and what not to do; asking and searching for herbs, which she made me sniff and chew; bringing me up to date on hygiene and noting down for me things I could start buying. She was a true friend and a perfect substitute mother (p.23).

But for the trust that Mama Kiosk has reposed in Mara, she would not have been comfortable in going to her with all her problems which helps in alleviating some of her sufferings. This trust makes Mara listen to Mama Kiosk's wise counselling which eventually leads to her starting to trade in order to survive in the harsh city of Accra coupled with very callous and irresponsible husband, Akobi.

Additionally, Darko brings to the notice of readers that an educated African woman has the capacity to fight patriarchal control and domination. An educated African woman has been projected by Darko in *Beyond the Horizon* as someone who has the power to make informed decisions about her life without falling prey to the dictates of patriarchy. All the African women in this novel who are not educated such as Mara and Vivian are subjected to all sort of inhuman treated but Comfort is able to

read between the lines and decide for herself without facing any problem. In this novel, Comfort rejects Akobi initially when she realises that he is not a match for but shockingly when she gets the information that Akobi is going abroad she warms her way into his arms. Surprisingly, Comfort is the one who sees Akobi off at the airport and gets to Germany earlier than Mara. Mama Kiosk narrates this episode to Mara this way:

It's this his other woman, Comfort. She was the reason why he left you early and without even a proper good-bye. It was to be with her... and not just that, Greenhorn. It was her who saw him off at the airport. To tell you the truth, Greenhorn, if I was you, now that he's gone I would forget him and start thinking wholly about yourself and your son (p.45).

Also, in *Beyond the Horizon*, the African woman is portrayed as very superstitious. Akobi eventually writes to Mara and informs her that there is an Agent who has come to Ghana and will be returning with her. Accordingly, Mara prepares feverishly for this trip but before he makes this journey she decides to visit a medicine man so that he can help her ward off any potential problem that she might face on her way:

Much against my will, however (since I considered it incompatible with this new 'modern' and 'civilised' me), I visited the village medicine man a few days before my departure on the insistence of my mother who said (and I agreed with her) that it was better than suddenly being told at the last minute that I shouldn't, say, shake hands with anyone at the airport, or who knows what would have come up in my case. So I went. And what a ritual! The medicine man (naturally, after I had met his demand of a bottle of London Dry Gin and a pure white fat hen) covered me from head to toe with white powder, mixed a pounded of herbs and the dried marrow of some unnamed wild animals with water and made me drink a whole calabash of it. It tasted like hell (p.55).

After these rituals, Mara is assured by the medicine man that she is going to do well in Germany and all is going to be golden and that she will come home very rich and honourably. Contrary to this prophecy by the medicine man Mara meets tough times in Germany which makes her enter into prostitution in order to make ends meet. In the end been excessively superstitious does not pay much as Mara's efforts at seeking help to make successful does not yield any results.

Finally, Darko presents African women as workaholic, very supportive and capable of sacrificing their lives for the sake of their husbands and humanity in general. These attributes of the African woman is inherent in Mara and Kaye, the spouses of Akobi and Osey correspondingly. There is nothing that these women will not do to help their husbands and in the light of this they hawk eggs, throw rubbish away and even prostitute as a means to support their husbands make ends meet. Even though Mara is pregnant, when she realises that Akobi is about to travel abroad she starts hawking boiled eggs from one location to the other, sells cheap tobacco, fresh coconut and roasted groundnuts with banana with the sole aim of raising some money to help her husband pay for his travel expenses. Mara's workaholic disposition manifests through this narration by her:

Then I sought an alternative place where I would hawk, and settled on the train station. But it was a place where a lot of women already hawked boiled eggs so I cut down my eggs by a third and also hawked roasted groundnuts to go with banana...then I also took up selling cheap tobacco at the night market, and, when time permitted on Sundays, fresh coconut at the beach (pp. 38-39).

This depicts the traditional role of an African woman and she has to do this as part of her business as a woman. On this ground, Dagarembga (2006) describes African women this way:

This business of womanhood as a heavy burden; she said 'how could it not be? Aren't we the ones who bear children? When it is like that you can't just decide today I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that, the next day I want to be educated! When there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them. And these things are not easy, from a very early age. The earlier the better so that it is easy later on. Easy! As if it is ever easy (p.16).

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has analysed the way Emecheta and Darko have presented African women in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* respectively. After the analysis, it came to light that Emecheta has presented African women as second class citizens, very assertive, as people whose honour is to get married and give birth, as their own enemies, as people whose permanent place is in the kitchen, as people who can be inherited, as appendages of men, as objects to be sacrificed at will, as people who can be sold to the highest bidder in order to get money and material gains, and as people who stand on their own to cater for their children.

Comparatively, Darko presents African women as sex commodities, as people who could be exploited easily, as people who are capable of taking their own decisions, as property that can be sold to the highest bidder, as people who must be battered, as people who are created for the sake of men, as people who must not be shown love, as people who are very kind and as people who are workaholic.

Another conclusion that has been drawn from the analysis is that there are similarities between the presentations of African women in these two novels. Both Emecheta and Darko have presented African women as: commodities that can be sold to the highest bidder, people who are created for the sake of men, people who can be battered at the least provocation, very supportive and second class citizens.

In a nutshell, the African women are indispensable in the society and as a result there is the need for all feminists to come on board to make sure those women are recognised as the cornerstone of Africa's development. To give weight to this, Segun (2001) hypothesises:

Women have an additional commitment to employ their art to place women at the centre of development and change. There should be the sort of empowerment that reveals to women their peculiarities, for so long suppressed by male domination (p.297).

On the other hand, Chukwuma (2002) also lends credence to the need for the African women to better position themselves by motivating their fellow women to write so that their issues will be heard and in doing this she proposes:

The success of feminism in the African context derives from the discovered awareness by women of their indispensability to the male. This is the bedrock of her actions. This gives her the anchor and the voice. Thus, the myth of male superiority disappears, for the woman looks inward for fresh appreciation of self (p.229).

Based on the issues above, a post-colonial African feminist like Buchi Emecheta and Amma Darko have recognised the need for a common struggle with African men to reconstruct Africa. She has also recognised that there were/are inequalities in African society as a result of colonialism and that African culture must be analysed holistically in order that what is of value to her women are maintained and those of less value are discarded to create a just society where African women can strive devoid of cultural barriers.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This study sought to examine the image of African women in patriarchal society by using *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* written by Buchi Emecheta and Amma Darko respectively. In discussing the image of African women in these texts, the focus was on their content analysis.

4.1 Findings

From the content inquiry of the texts it has come to light that Buchi Emecheta presents African women in the first place as second-class citizens and as result there is preference for boys to girls. This has created the impression that it is better to give birth to a male child in the patriarchal society of Ibuza where the story is set.

In addition, the African woman is portrayed as very assertive. Adaku for instance, is portrayed as very bold, ambitious and capable of taking daring decisions when the need arises. This makes her focus on given her daughters the best education without following the age-long tradition of allowing only boys to acquire western education whereas girls are given home training with the view of giving their hands in marriage quickly.

Again, African women are presented as people whose honour is in getting married and giving birth to children. In this novel Nnaife, the husband of Nnu Ego and Adaku is recruited into the British army which makes her return home to her father but

on arrival her father tells her to go home with the reason that no woman is complete without a husband which she obliges.

Furthermore, the African women are portrayed in the novel as their own enemies. This comes about during a quarrel that ensues between Adaku and Nnu Ego over a dream that she has had which makes Adaku decide to leave her matrimonial home.

In the patriarchal Igbo society of Ibuza in *The Joys of Motherhood*, African women are presented as people whose permanent place is in the kitchen. Consequently, men and women are socialised at birth to perform different roles; boys go out to play whereas girls do household chores.

Another presentation of women in this novel is that they can be inherited as property in Ibuza. Nnu Ego becomes apprehensive about Nnaife, the husband of Nnu Ego inheriting Adaku whose husband has died and this brings unhealthy rivalry between these women.

An African woman is also presented as someone who can be beaten at will. Nnaife beats Adaku mercilessly when he returns home and finds out that her wives have not prepared food that evening because according to them the money which is given for the preparation of the meal is not enough.

Also, these African women are portrayed as appendages of men. It is men who dictate or rule the women and as a result the women have no choice than to succumb to the dictates of men. This makes Nnu Ego question God about when he will create a woman that will be fulfilled in herself and become a full human being, not anybody's appendage.

African women in this novel is presented as a means through which their fathers can get wealth and other material gains. This is achieved through the payment of exorbitant bride prices that fathers expect from their prospective in-laws.

Emecheta portrays African women as object of sacrifice. The first wife of Agbadi dies and a beautiful female slave is made to accompany her into the grave. Young budding women are occasionally given to the gods to worship them which make these young girls become condemned as living sacrifices to these gods.

The women are also projected as prisoners in their own houses. Nnu Ego for example sacrifices all her belongings but at the end she does not get the joy in that motherhood should bring to her. This makes her remark that she is a prisoner of her own flesh and blood.

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Emecheta brings out the image of African women as people who can go through difficulties in life and overcome them. Adaku and Nnu Ego are able to cater for their children and see them through education without Nnaife.

Another quality of the African woman that this book brings out is they cherish children more than material gains. Nnu Ego loses her pregnancy and decides that she is not going to trade again in order to concentrate on having a baby.

African women are also perceived as people who should ensure peace and tranquillity in the home. Agunwa, the first wife of Agbadi is depicted as someone who is peaceful and has the capacity to calm down all her co-wives.

In her depiction of African women, Emecheta portrays them as individuals who should not resist sexual pleasures of their husbands even though they might not be in the position to offer them. Nnaife exemplifies this when he fails to allow Nnu Ego

respice before demanding for sex. She has no other option than to satisfy Nnaife though she is very tired as a result of a long journey she has embarked on from Ibuza to Lagos.

African women are again presented to be highly remembered by their children than men. Nnu Ego dies and people continue to remember her because in her community of Ibuza her townsmen hold the opinion that as a mother she has given it all to her children and in return she has had one of the best funerals ever to have been organised for a mother.

When it comes to making of babies, Emecheta presents the African woman as someone who is only good at making babies and that any woman who fails in this regard is even nicknamed. One of such women is tagged as “Iyawo”, meaning a woman without a child. Amatokwu, for example, abuses Nnaife when he detects that she cannot bear children when he is married to her and this results in the dissolution of the marriage.

Finally, Emecheta presents African woman as someone whose capacity for making changes in life is unquestionable at a time when all odds are against her. Adaku, Nnaife’s younger wife decides she will not grieve over her inability to give birth male children. She rather leaves her home and stays on the street to offer education to her daughters to buttress the argument that it not bad to give birth to girls as the patriarchal society of Ibuza portrays.

Comparatively, Amma Darko presents her African women in *Beyond the Horizon* as sex commodities. The commoditisation of these women manifests in the way Akobi constantly have brutal sex with Mara anytime he feels like doing it. Akobi does not give his wife the chance to enjoy sex in this regard because he hurriedly performs this task and leaves the wife unfulfilled.

Darko also sees African women in this novel as people who are exploited easily. Akobi and Osey introduce their wives into prostitution and the money which is accrued from this enterprise goes into making their lives comfortable whereas their wives who go through this trade do not benefit.

The African women are also portrayed as incapable of making their own decisions in life and that men have to take decisions for them. Mara and her sister are not allowed to make choices as regards marriage partners and as result these men chosen for them treat them with disrespect.

Additionally, African women are presented to the readers as individuals who should be given to the highest bidder. Mara is given out to Akobi whose father presents two cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloth, beads, gold jewellery and two bottles of London Dry Gin. In the community of Naka where the story is set Akobi's father is the only person who can afford these. Hence Mara is sold to Akobi very expensively in order that her father gets wealth and other material gains.

Another presentation of the African women by Darko is that they should be battered at the slightest opportunity. Akobi and Osey perpetually beat their wives and even when they travel abroad they do not allow the western culture to influence their attitudes against these women.

Women are seen in this text as people created for the sake of men. Hence Mara, Vivian and Kaye for example sacrifice their lives and dignities as women for their husbands to get mother to spend lavishly on themselves and other women.

Again, these African women are presented as docile, naïve and inferior to men. Akobi and Osey capitalise on these weaknesses of their wives to milk and maltreat

them without winking an eye. These African women are also presented as people who should not be loved. Akobi and his crony symbolises this when they show many times in this text that they do not have an iota of love for their partners and as a result they abuse Mara and Vivian continuously.

To add to the above presentation of African women, Amma Darko has presented African women as people who can easily be deceived. Osey and Akobi bring their spouses to Germany with the intention that they will be doing decent jobs but when they arrive they are coerced into prostitution. When it comes to acquisition of wealth and taking opportunities, Darko presents African women as very opportunistic and materialistic. Comfort and her friends who work at the Ministries are not ready to go out with men whose purses are not heavy and Akobi himself becomes a victim. Comfort rejects Akobi initially when she accompanies him to his village and realises that he is not well to do. However, she makes a quick turnaround when she realises that Akobi is travelling abroad. It is therefore not surprising when she is the first person to go to Germany instead of Mara.

Darko also presents the African woman as sympathetic and empathetic towards her fellow woman. Mama Kiosk exhibits these attributes when Mara gets to Accra and she is maltreated by Akobi.

Darko has furthermore projected African women as people who bear the brunt their husband's desire to succeed in life. In this light, Mara has to lose her precious gold jewellery and other belongings unwillingly for Akobi to travel abroad to realise his long term ambition of becoming wealthy.

Mama Kiosk in this novel is also presented as someone who can be trusted. In the midst of Akobi maltreating Mara, Mama Kiosk becomes her trusted friend and in

her Mara finds solace. This makes Mara go to her with all her problems and her motherly advices culminate in making her survive in the harsh matrimonial environment she finds herself.

Another significant depiction of African women by Amma Darko in *Beyond the Horizon* which is worthy of note is the fact that she presents an educated African women as someone who possess the capacity to fight patriarchal control. Unlike Mara, Vivian and Kaye, Comfort, an educated African woman who works in the ministries is able to position herself strategically for what she wants in life without been dictated to.

The African woman is lastly presented as superstitious. This superstition stems from the fact that when Mara for instance finally gets the chance to join Akobi in Frankfurt, Germany, her mother insists that they visit a medicine man in their village to offer some rituals to ward off any misfortunate that might befall her. Mara unwillingly agrees with the mother but when she gets to Germany the opposite of that which this medicine man comes to pass.

From this study it was found that there are similarities between the way Buchi Emecheta and Amma Darko have presented African women in their novels, *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* respectively. Both Buchi Emecheta and Amma Darko have presented African women as people who are commodities and must be sold to the highest bidder. In *Beyond the Horizon*, Nnaife, decides to give her daughter's hand in marriage to the highest bidder. Similarly, Mara in *Beyond the Horizon* is giving to Akobi to marry in exchange for a huge bride price.

Also, in these two novels, African women have been presented as people who are created for the sake of men. Mara in *Beyond the Horizon* does everything possible to make sure that Akobi lives comfortably by hawking boiled eggs even though she is

pregnant. Adaku and Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* have to obey their husband, Nnaife without complaining.

Again, in these novels, both authors have presented African women as people who can be battered easily. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnaife beats his second wife, Adaku for refusing to cook the evening's meal. Similarly, Akobi also beats Mara, his wife in *Beyond the Horizon* even though she is pregnant.

Last but not least, both Emecheta and Darko have presented African women in their novels as people who are supportive. Mara in *Beyond the Horizon* works ceaselessly to get enough money to help Akobi to travel abroad whereas Adaku and Nnu Ego, the wives of Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* work very hard to cater for their children in the absence of Nnaife.

4.2 Conclusion

From the above discussions, it could be seen that both Emecheta and Darko have presented African women positively and negatively in these texts. The image that these novelists have carved for African women stem from some of the negative cultural practices that have relegated African women to the background. As feminist writers, Emecheta and Darko have used these novels to strike out some of the archaic practices, traditions and customs that are not real part of African heritage.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter states the summary of findings, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study sought to examine the image of African women in patriarchal society by using *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* written by Amma Darko and Buchi Emecheta respectively. In discussing the image of these African women in the texts, the focus was on content analysis of these texts.

In exploring the image of African women in these books, the researcher adopted Africa feminism and post-colonial African literary theory as its theoretical frameworks. These theories were appropriate because these texts have been written in the post-colonial era; their authors are feminists who are of the firm belief that colonialism meant unmitigated suffering for the African woman and that to bridge the gap between men and women African feminism which seeks to bring equality between men and women must be embraced.

The researcher sought to find out how Buchi Emecheta presents African women in *The Joys of Motherhood*. Again, the purpose was to probe into how Amma Darko presents African woman in her novel, *Beyond the Horizon*. Furthermore, this study was conducted to examine whether there are similarities and differences between the way both Emecheta and Darko present the African women in the novels.

From the analysis of the way Emecheta and Darko have presented the African women in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Beyond the Horizon* respectively, it could be seen that Emecheta presents African women as: second- class citizens, very assertive, people whose only honour is to give birth to children preferably male ones, their own enemies, people whose permanent place is in the kitchen, people who can be inherited, appendages of men, means for fathers to get rich and object of sacrifice.

Darko on the other hand presents African women as: sex commodities, people who could be exploited easily, people who are incapable of taking their own decisions, property that must be sold to the highest bidder, people who must be battered, people created for the sake of men, must not be shown love, very materialistic, loving and caring, people who bear the brunt of their husband's desire to succeed, workaholics, very assertive and capable of sacrificing for her family.

Another interesting findings from the analysis is that both Emecheta and Darko present African women similarly as: sex commodities, very assertive, people created for the sake of men, people who must be battered at the least provocation and very supportive.

5.2 Conclusion

In spite of their contexts, these two novelists, Buchi Emecheta and Amma Darko have used these texts to touch on issues central to the condition of the African woman. They have succeeded in bringing to the fore the gender imbalances in our patriarchal African society and educated the readers on the need to bridge this gender imbalance in our African society. The plot of these books have reflected the plight of the African woman trapped by the claws of traditions. In *The Joys of Motherhood* for example, Emecheta provides a unique opportunity for the myth that motherhood is

synonymous to female self-fulfilment to be fulfilled. This myth is satirised by Emecheta when Nnu Ego labours all her life to nurture several children but all of them deserts her

Also, in analysing these two texts, it is evident that an educated African woman is well prepared to challenge the status quo traditional depiction of women which are not helpful. Comfort in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* is an epitome of an educated African woman who knows what she wants and does not allow the dictates of tradition to hoodwink her. It is therefore high time all writers presented the developmental nature of the female character through a varied exploration of the theme of female assertiveness in the various societal facets which enslave the female. Basically, their thematic messages should enforce the fact that even in the face of deep seated patriarchal nature of our society African women should strive to assert themselves.

To achieve this, literary genres should present complementary roles between men and women which will fill the gap between the way African women in the African and Western literary contexts have been presented.

5.3 Recommendations

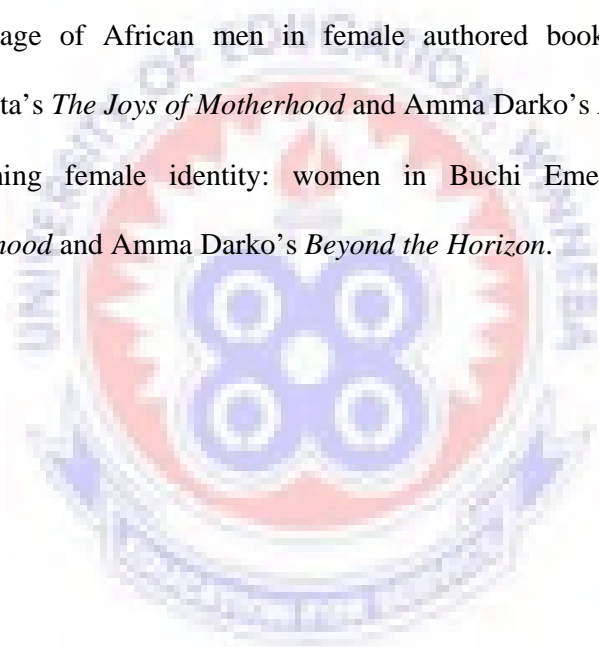
In the light of the presentation of African women in *The Joys of Motherhood* written by Buchi Emecheta and *Beyond the Horizon* written by Amma Darko, I recommend that texts written by female writers should be promoted as Literature texts in our schools. African writers should also recast a new image for the African women in literary works in order to reduce the stereotypical way that they have been presented in books. This can be done when these writers use female characters to change the status quo by not presenting them as mere victims but people with capabilities to stand

on their feet. This will give impetus to the emancipation of women in Traditional African society and African feminism.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

As has already been stated this study sought to explore the image of African women in a patriarchal society using Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* and Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. However, for further scholarly work on these two set of books the following thesis topic could be researched into:

- The image of African men in female authored books: a study of Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* and Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*.
- Reclaiming female identity: women in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* and Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*.



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