



# Undermining Patriarchal Ideology in African Literature: A Study of Ngozi Chuma-Udeh's *Echoes of a New Dawn*

Ujowundu, Cornel O.

Department of English and Literary Studies

Anambra State University

Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria

E-mail: cornelujowundu@yahoo.com

Received: 05-07-2013

Accepted: 28-08-2013

Published: 01-11-2013

doi:10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.2n.6p.143

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.2n.6p.143>

## Abstract

In a patriarchal society, women are faced with all sorts of dehumanisation ranging from deprivation, negligence, maltreatment, marginalisation, oppression, subjugation, exploitation, humiliation and even isolation, all of which emanate from aspects of the people's culture. As a result, women now cry out for such aspects of the culture that undermine their wellbeing and emancipation to be eradicated. They, therefore, struggle for equality and emancipation in the male dominated society, especially the African society under study here. In this direction, literature becomes a tool for them to create awareness that the modern African woman through educational attainments is not just fighting for rights and privileges but also for something that must let the society understand that the women demand equal opportunities as human beings. Literature has, therefore, become a tool used to reflect the harsh realities of human lives, especially by the female writers like Ngozi Chuma-Udeh and some others concerning the socio-political, economic and religious realities of the womenfolk. Since literature has been found a veritable source of inspiration for national consciousness, it has become part of human life and existence, offering light, giving meaning and interpretation to man and his society as he struggles and aspires for a desired and cherished future. In the African society, for instance, women are seen not heard. They live under the shadows of men from their maiden homes to their matrimonial homes hence, they are regarded as second class citizens. They are usually neglected as their opinions are never sought before decisions are taken even in matters that directly affect them. In marriage, proposals are made to their fathers, or other male members of the family in the event of the father's death. In fact, in the African society, which is under study here, women are seen as mere tools of necessity—housewives, child bearers, gratifiers of men's sexual passion; and worst of all, not consulted in the decision making processes in their communities. The women as wives are expected to be submissive, obedient, unquestioning and servile while any challenge to these attributes attracts social disfavour. So the clearly defined roles for women are passed on to the girl-child as she grows. As soon as she is able to do things for herself, she starts assuming the roles society has mapped out for her: learning how to cook, care for the home, helping with everything else the mother does, and preparing for womanhood and matrimony. This paper, therefore, takes a critical look into Ngozi Chuma-Udeh's novel that advocates a new dawn for the women. The novelist wants the men to reconsider their negative notions about women and to also appreciate their contributions in the well-being of their societies, their families and the upbringing of the children.

**Keywords:** Patriarchy, Ideology, Feminism, Emancipation, Marriage, Humiliation, Ignorance

## 1. Introduction

The greatest achievement of the novel lies in the novelist's ability to move beyond mere exposition of the social crimes against humanity to powerfully demonstrate through the lives of the main characters the ways out of the degradation these humans find themselves. Of course, women all over the world are clamouring to be liberated from all forms of discrimination so as to enable them fit into the society, just as their male counterparts. The notion mostly among the female folks is that the women have contributed immensely in various aspects of human development and sustenance. Unfortunately, in most societies and cultures, women are enslaved, subjugated, humiliated and dehumanised. The origin of this distorted view of the women can even be traced back to the ancient times. Even Aristotle in his *Poetics* as quoted in Maduka (2011) argued that "women were not full human beings and that the nature of women were not that of a full human person (184). His view was that women by nature were deficient, not to be trusted and to be looked down upon. It is a universal phenomenon that women are not given equal rights with men and this led to their being subjected to many inhuman treatments in the society. Women are made to play the second fiddle—inferior role—in the society: in the family, in social gatherings, in politics and in national issues and these gave birth to feminism—women's movement for liberation and equality.

Feminism is a belief in the rights of women to have political, social and economic equality with men. It is a discourse that involves various movements, theories and philosophies, which are concerned with the issue of gender differences,

advocate equality for women and campaign for women rights and interests, which will emancipate them.

Nanda (2009) says:

The modern feminist movement stems from the middle of the 1960s, in North America. At the root, this movement seeks equal political and social rights for women as compared with men. The main common theoretical assumption which gets shared by all branches of the movement has been that there has been a historical tradition of male exploitation of women, stemming originally from the sexual differences which led to division of labour, for example, in childrearing practices (212).

Heywood (2006) in his own contribution sees feminism as “an ideology that is inevitably linked to the women’s movement and an alternative to advance the social role of women,” (238), that as such:

it is associated with two basic beliefs: those women are disadvantaged because of their sex, and that this disadvantage can and should be overthrown. In this way, feminists argue that there is a political relationship between the sexes, the supremacy of men and the subjugation of women in most, if not all, societies (238).

From the above, one can deduce that these writers dwell much on the plights of women, both the young and old, and the desire for liberation from their limitations. The female writers in their works do not carry it to the extreme; they only request certain basic rights such as the right to education, the right to choose their husbands, the right to contribute to the social, political and economic development and advancement of their societies; instead of performing the roles of housewives, house helps, mothers, prostitutes and traders. It is worthy of note that female writers like Ngozi Chuma-Udeh do not revolt against the men but against certain social laws and cultural norms that have denied women their inalienable rights.

Thus, emancipation of women, a theory which undermines patriarchy, is also the struggle for sexual equality which has a long history and is likely to continue for some time; even if it should soon be out in the industrialised nations, it may well rage on in many “underdeveloped countries.” It was on this fact that Goldman (2001), asserts that “a woman is confronted with the necessity of emancipating herself from emancipation if she really desires to be free.” That in this world, if a woman is to be free to direct her own destiny and aims, certainly she should be worthy of the great enthusiasm, courage, perseverance and ceaseless efforts of the tremendous hosts of pioneer man and woman, who staked everything against a world of prejudice and ignorance. Goldman further says that “emancipation should make it possible for women to be human in the truest sense. That everything within her that creates assertion and activity should reach its fullest expression, all artificial barriers should be broken and the road towards greater freedom cleared of every trace of centuries of submission to slavery” (20). This was the original aim of the movement for women’s emancipation. This emancipation of women comes up as a result of women not being allowed to contribute in the society. Then, they do not vote let alone being voted for. In traditional patriarchal societies, women have far-reaching consequences and produce fundamental political changes. But, it is always resisted by the established power. However, it seems certain that this power will ultimately have to relent because the emancipation of women is both necessary and desirable. It will provide for a greater degree of social justice and, thus, benefit everyone.

The intention in this paper, therefore, is to examine how the emancipation of women, which undermines patriarchy, in a section of the Nigerian society is being undermined as portrayed in Chuma-Udeh’s *Echoes of a New Dawn*.

The conceptual framework for this study is the theory of Emancipation as propounded above by Goldman (2001) which undermines patriarchal ideology that expects the women to accept their position as assistants to men and therefore, remain submissive, docile and unheard.

## **2. Patriarchy and the Emancipation of Women in Ngozi Chuma-Udeh’s *Echoes Of A New Dawn***

Over the years, women all over the world have been subjected to various forms of suppression and oppression. As a result, a global policy making body, the Commission for the Status of Women (CSW) has been exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women. Every year representation of member states gather at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards, and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide. In line with this, Onwueme (2010) observes that:

Through the ages and across cultures, women have been subjected to one form of suppression or another. This ranges from the physical, mental, spiritual, social, educational, economic, to the political. This can be traced to the cultural mores and ideologies of patriarchy which condemn women to subservient positions in the society (216).

She further asserts that often times, religious beliefs are combined with cultural practices to keep women down. She cites Annie Ledere as saying that “nothing exists that has not been made by man—not thought, not language, not words” (216); and Roxanne Dumber who says that:

Humanity is generally conceived of from a totalising male perception, so that the female identity brings with it certain predefined sexual roles about what she may or may not do, rules that do not apply to the sexually unrestricted world of men (216).

One of such roles is that a woman, whatever her status, is created for marriage and motherhood. So any woman who by choice or otherwise does not meet up this expectation bears the stigma of being regarded as less than a whole woman. The idea that a woman can become successful through self-confidence and hard work is not recognised. A woman’s social dignity and status in the home are measured by her ability to have children, especially male ones, which is

directly limited to the African society, as marriage and motherhood become the only signification for her existence and essence as a woman.

African women in their status have always been active in agriculture, trade and other economic pursuits, but a majority of them are in the informal labour force. In view of this, Aidoo (1984) succinctly remarks that a woman is “. . . a sexual aid, a wet nurse, a nurse maid for your children; a cook-steward and general housekeeper; a listening post, an economic and general consultant; a field hand and . . . a punch ball” (17).

Aidoo perceives the woman's situation as the symbol of African history—a history of slavery, colonialism and repressive power that crystallise in the image of the African woman as a slave. Most African women all over the world face a variety of legal, economic and social constraints. Indeed, some laws still treat them as minors. Women are known to grow fifty percent of food products in Africa and, yet, few are allowed to own the land they work. It is often more difficult for women to gain access to information and technology, resources and women end up working twice as long as men, like fifteen to eighteen hours a day but, often, earn only one tenth as much; they often age prematurely. Thus, Harrison Geoff as quoted in Acholonu (1995) correctly observes that “women's burdens—heavy throughout the Third World—are enough to break a camel's back in much of Africa” (34).

It was on this fact that Brown (2008) affirms that women are: “The first to get up and the last to retire, the work-horse of the family” (98). According to him, in industry and trade, women have been confined to small-scale operations in the informal sector; however vibrant these operations are, and despite the trading empires built up by the most successful female entrepreneurs, women's average incomes are still relatively low. Women are also handicapped in access to formal sector jobs by their lower educational attainments, and those who succeed are placed in lower grades, and lower paid jobs.

Meanwhile, Obbo (1980) observes, “elite women who wish to improve their legal and economic status must expect to lose honour and respect”(3). He feels that there is often sexism in job promotions and unpleasant consequences if women stand up to men. There is often more respect for male professionals (even from women themselves), than there is for females. According to him, women often suffer from employment discrimination because they need to take time off for maternity leave or when a child is sick. To him also, career women often have to work harder at their jobs to keep even with their male counterparts (3).

Despite all these obstacles, women continue to move into different professions including those traditionally seen as male jobs, such as engineering and architecture. Women can be found at senior levels in many organisations in many countries. They are also taking up various different professions such as law, medicine, and politics, etc. These women may be in the minority now but things are changing all over Africa.

Some scholars have, however, considered the conditions, situations and the status of women at different points in time, concerning the struggle for emancipation among women. Thus, Sor Juana Ine's *Dele Cruze* believes that women should be treated the same way as men without being biased to gender differences. She is of the belief that women deserve the chance to be treated equally with men. She, therefore, asks: “Have (women) not a rational soul as men do? So, then, why can't women profit by the privilege of enlightenment as they do?” (77).

Some writers also are of the view that women struggle for emancipation from the grassroots, and that women at each point in time struggle for liberation from domination and seek to be free and enjoy equal opportunities as men do. Acholonu (1995) observes the gathering of women called the Umuada in Igbo land, how they operate and prove themselves the opposite of what the society takes them to be and says:

As a group, wives organise themselves in clubs and associations to cater for issues concerning the female population of their communities. These range from trade, marriage, religion, customs, and festivals to family squabbles and issues relating to the polity of the general community. In Igbo land, women as wives have the onus of intervening in difficult issues of political and military nature where men prove incapable of restoring law and order (26).

She is of the opinion that the presentation of a woman as oppressed, supposed by a male-dominated culture in which she has no rights, no respect and a status subordinate to that of man, is a dangerous misrepresentation of the true state of affairs, a negation of the different cultures in which she finds herself (27).

By a set of social induction, women were denied political, social and economic powers. The ideologies which put them outside the realms of power have hitherto proved effective. The inhuman treatment made them feel totally inferior to their husbands. According to Mutiso (1981), “Only men mattered, and women get recognition through their husbands; some delicacies and even parts of some animals were taboo to women” (2).

However, one clear fact here is that women are the social cream of the society, but ironically, about two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women. This, of course, is not a reflection on the mental capacities of women but of cultural practices and prejudices which militate against acquisition of necessary education. Maria Sokenu also observes the above view and expresses that:

While it cannot be proved that a lot of women have been denied opportunity of education because of their sex, there are proven cases that they have suffered in the area of access of opportunity because of the notion among men that women could not pursue many careers.

So, in advocating the emancipation of women in the Nigerian society, the novelist, Ngozi Chuma-Udeh, tries to arouse female consciousness against their deprivations, and disadvantages which men through culture, religion and legislation imposed on them. Ujowundu (2009) says:

*Echoes of a New Dawn* portrays Ngozi Chuma-Udeh as a woman activist who remains daunted in her unquenchable fight for women liberation, especially from the shackles placed on them by culture, politics, religion and other sociological areas of human life. As an ardent feminist, she detests any form of intimidation and subjugation meted out against the womenfolk in the society. Her unwavering belief is that women are part and parcel of the society and as a result should not play second fiddle (124).

He sees Ngozi as a woman crusader who through her novel brought to limelight her stand on the issue of the importance of women liberation in the society. He further says that:

The book is one of the most unique feminine novels of courage. Ngozi is a great woman rights fighter and a complete social commentator in the affairs of women. She always fights to the core in order to lessen the struggle of dehumanisation, humiliation, denigration and exploration of the widows in our contemporary society. Her work is very interesting, sensitising, informative and educative, one of its kind (126).

From the views above, Ujowundu sees Ngozi as a woman that explores almost all aspects of suffering of some widows in the difficult and hard times. Thus, women evidently play essential roles in the continuation of life on earth and, therefore, should be treated equally as their male counterparts. He believes that the novel brings relief to the suffering widows and enlightens them on what to do when they find themselves in such circumstances.

This paper critically examines the humiliation, subjugation and dehumanisation suffered by women over the ages which gave birth to agitations for emancipation, such that despite the achievements recorded by the struggles, the challenges still prevail in the contemporary world today.

In this contemporary world of today, women are still faced with the challenges of humiliation, subjugation, dehumanisation and still struggle for emancipation. Ngozi Chuma-Udeh is one of the female writers in African literature who came up with a total and implicit rejection of this derogatory lifestyle created by the norms of the society to restrict and subjugate women in all spheres of life. The writer portrays in her work provoking themes that are centred on the existence of women in the contemporary society.

In fact, Ngozi in her novel, *Echoes of a New Dawn*, shows the humiliation women pass through when they lose their husbands, especially in terms of performing mourning rites. Her major character, Lucia, born at Illinois to black American parents, met Chris Neziyanya, a professor of African literature during her study at the University of Zambia, Literary Department and later got married to him. After the death of Professor Neziyanya, Lucia was shocked that her love and happiness have gone. The family members took her home from hospital; dragged her to the thatched hut of ashes, where she will not talk to anybody, not even her own children. As the narrator says:

The most frightening angle was that there seemed to be no room for escape from this horrid predicament. She was not given an inch to react or even express herself. There was no need for that. She must not talk; she must not be heard, for she had no opinion to express. She is a woman sitting in ashes (3).

Meanwhile, Lucia in her surprise sat in the hut of ashes for two weeks. The society was not interested in sympathising with the conditions of women that lost their husbands. The most important thing to them was their tradition and customs where a woman will suffer through evils to claim her innocence in the death of her husband. Lucia wonders how women survive all these from the society that reduces women to something lesser than animals. As regards the flies and ants that lie with her at the time, the narrator says:

Once more she shook her head to clear the fog trying to engulf her. Where has she gone wrong? Why should she be subjected to this type of mortification? When has it become a crime to love? Yes . . . to love! She has found herself in this sorry pass all because of love. In her wildest dreams she never believed that such hedonistic, cannibalistic rituals could thrive in any human society (5).

However, in this contemporary society, that has these types of barbaric traditions against women, parents are always determining who will marry their daughters. The young girls of this society also refuse to marry from their villages, because of their traditions and no woman would like to experience the rites of “*ikwa ajadu*.” (widowhood rites) So, parents advise their daughters to marry from neighbouring villages, so that they can be out of the traditions. In the novel, Cecilia’s parents, especially her mother, refused to give her hand in marriage to Chris Nez. This happens because of the humiliation women pass through. Men marry from anywhere and no man is facing the mourning rites of “*ikwa ajadu*” when they lose their wives. In many communities today, the culture and traditions imposed on women make them go away and marry elsewhere, to protect their desire, dignity and husband’s property, that is, the children and other physical belongings. As the narrator says:

We have to recount the past so as to live meaningfully in the present. The women philosophise. My daughter, our tradition is terrible. The yoke of the widowhood rites is a nightmare no woman wants to witness. We, who are married into this village, live in daily fear of it (66).

The novel portrays how women are subjugated in the married context as a taboo. It is generally believed that the main purpose of marriage is to have a child or children. This is a living fact. A child is believed to be the source of wealth. It is also a source of joy to the family. It is believed that a girl who fails to give birth to a baby, no matter the sex, creates room for hatred and gossip. The husband could be forced to marry another wife or wives. These other wives will insult, bully and ridicule the first wife because she is childless. In the novel, Nkechi’s husband brought in another woman with two children because Nkechi could not give him a child. The novelist says:

Lucia wondered greatly at this society’s way of life. It used to be bizarre to her why the society should be unkind to a

barren woman who needed support and encouragement (75).

This shows how important a child is, that is why women are subjected to their husbands and receive humiliations from other wives. Nkechi was portrayed as second class among the other women, despite the fact that she was the senior wife. Like other African women, her husband wasted no time in getting himself another wife after six years of childlessness. Nkechi, however, came to a head when the new wife started ordering her around, gossiping against her for “childlessness” with full support of her husband who warned her sternly that if she could not bear children, she should be glad to serve another woman who did what she could not do. Nkechi felt humiliated and dejected of being alive. Her husband and the second wife termed her a “witch.” As the novel says:

When one of the new women’s children became sick, she was accused of bewitching the child. Her husband had beaten the daylight out of her and sent her back to her father’s house with so much humiliation (76).

Udeh’s approach towards the problem is modern. This is because of the class of couples under discussion—an educated man who teaches with white men and his wife who also teaches at white man’s school. One notices that Luke Neziyanya made no efforts to marry a second wife or have children outside his matrimonial home. One tends to sympathise with him, when his elder brother Diokpa Obu, brought Nkem for him to marry as a second wife but instead of the man he called his wife.

According to tradition, a man is supported to marry another wife, if his wife is childless. Diokpa did this for his young brother Luke, because his brother’s wife was childless after four years of marriage. Nkem was exploited, dejected when her dowry was paid without the knowledge of the man who will live with her as husband. She felt humiliated and rejected. The society reduced women to nothing. Therefore, she says: “I am your wife; I cannot go back to my father’s house again because a dowry has been paid on my head” (139).

The novelist also narrates how Moslem women in Nigerian contemporary society are subjected to isolation (*purdah*) as they cover their faces and move like masquerades. They are locked up in the house by their husbands, so that no one will talk to them. Their husband’s marry four wives and the same thing happens to them all. It is done because women will not challenge or question the traditions. Women will never decide on what concerns them.

Chuma-Udeh’s *Echoes of a New Dawn* observes the dehumanisation of women in contemporary society, where women suffer much in the hands of men in the society, at boiling point where women are seen as nothing in the eyes of men, with their tradition and culture. Women, thus, become the centre of suffering, especially the widows. Lucia as a widow in the novel thought it was a scene of horror in a film that a woman will bath with water mopped up from the remains of her dead husband, to let the community know that she is not guilty of the man’s death. It is unfair to the life of a woman as the narrator says:

Why should a society make their women undergo such dehumanising rites? Are women not really considered as human beings within this community? Surely the pains of losing a husband are enough to crush the soul of any woman (94).

The novelist allows us to see the evil tradition and custom of a society and how important the tradition is, only against women. When a young woman loses her husband, she will undergo traditional trauma. This is a society that uses tradition to pull down women. In the novel, Lucia was surprised about what she saw in Africa, a place she believes was a home. She sees the tradition keep unfolding with many events that dehumanise women.

Widows in the society are dehumanised. They are treated like cowards, tradition makes women less in their dignity and allows them to go through hell, after all, they are just ordinary women who cannot make decisions. However, some people seem not to understand why a group of people living in a particular community will use traditions that are barbaric and evil against their women, particularly widows.

In the novel, Cheta has not smiled for two years. She is wondering and in melancholy, about all that happened to her while mourning. They forced her to swear before the Aja Ani Shrine that she was not the killer of her husband as tradition demands. She passed through humiliation about it all and says:

I was set in seclusion for three weeks. Then I had to swear before the Aja Ani Shrine that I was not the killer of my husband. That day, I was taken away from my seclusion tent and brought before the shrine. The cloth I had on for the past three weeks was wrenched away from my body as I stood naked before the elders (190).

We see a society where people, especially men, vow not to listen or take any idea from a woman. This is why Cheta looked at the casket and told their kinsmen that the person in there is not her husband but they will not listen. She is an ordinary woman for that matter. Their kinsmen see her idea as a means of covering her deed. Also to show she is not the killer after being free from the swearing before the shrine, the same tradition forced her to carry the casket containing another person on her bare head round the village. The people of the village spat on her, some poured dirt while others called her names as she passed through their homes.

Chuma-Udeh, thus, portrays Lucia as a woman of determination. She will never run away from Africa. Instead, she will fight to liberate the women of the community; the women, who are dejected and dehumanised both in society and economic ways. The women denied exercising their desires the way they want as the old woman told them that others are dying in silence because of these evil traditions against women. She asked them to use their education to fight for the entire womanhood as she said when event takes place and is allowed to persist for one year, it becomes a tradition and a reference point.

The tradition of this community gives the eldest man in a family the right to inherit everything and Diokpa Obu is the

one who wants to have his right. Nkechi on her own side thinks of their refusal to let go her father's homestead. As the novelist says:

You don't seem to understand. Your refusal would be the best thing that would even happen to the old man. If Rusha refuses to marry him, she must leave. Your uncle backed with tradition will send her away and forcefully inherit your father's homestead. She will leave with her sons and you, my daughter. As I said before is only a woman, an ordinary woman. You will not have any say at all . . . (106).

Moverover, Nkechi told Lucia that the kinsmen of the society are happy when a homestead is overtaken by weeds. She seeks a solution with Nkechi for the next burial rite, as they changed the putrid water that is from her dead husband's body. Through Ifebi, we read that:

Her tortured soul was so deep in thought that she almost overturned the other bucket waiting for her in the bathroom. Oh! . . . surely, there was another bucket of water in there. The bucket was filled to the brim—almost overflowing with sparkling clean water. The sparkle caught the rays of the sun and the glitter cast rays of hope in Lucia's soul. A sense of calm and wellbeing descended on the widow (95).

As Lucia exclaimed audibly at Nkechi, tears of relief stung her eyelids. Indeed, she was not in this alone. There was no time to waste. She took her bath, discarded the clothes she had worn for two weeks and changed into a mourning cloth made of thick black calico which was kept there for her.

In the novel, Lucia sneaks out of her house because she wants to be informed about the forthcoming "ikwa ajadu" rituals that await her, the burial ceremony rites. At the burial, Lucia having got information about the rites, joined with her children, Nkechi and Ifebi to destroy an age-long tradition by pouring red mud on the chief priest when he fell inside the grave. This means that chief priest had died and henceforth seized to be the chief priest of Aja Ani because he is being buried alive. Diokpa Obu on his own part was also pushed inside the grave by the second twin and the red mud also touched him. And he left the compound, a broken man, and the mourning rites destroyed forever.

### 3. Conclusion

Women, as we often see, are not fighting for equal rights but only equal opportunities and they should come together as Lucia and Nkechi did to find a solution. We observed through this study that Chuma-Udeh uses appropriate narrative techniques to explore the theme of gender oppression as a scourge that has its source in traditional beliefs, religion and politics. This study feels that the problem is that these aspects of society have been structured and solidified by patriarchy to marginalise and silence women who constitute a half of the human population.

This study, therefore, enjoins the writer in crying out that women should no longer be decorative accessories, objects to be moved about, companions to be flattered or calmed by promises. This is because women are the nation's primary, fundamental roots, from which all else grows and blossoms. The significance and appropriateness of the choice of this novel for this study thus lies in the observation here that it entails a new definition of women's roles and position as forces of tradition and modernity impinge on black women's consciousness in contemporary society.

So the study advocates that the women should be given equal opportunities in all aspects of life and human endeavours as they contribute immensely in the growth and wellbeing of our society. Thus, all those aspects of culture, customs or traditions that undermine their existence should be eradicated. They should not be seen as only child-breeders, sex objects or irrational beings at the beck-and-call of the men. All forms of discrimination against them should be stopped.

Of course, from the novel one can see that women are not trying to assume the position of men as the heads of their families. They are not questioning the integrity or the authority of men. They are after the restoration of their battered image from the men and the society. So they want to be treated with respect and be given the opportunity to objectively express their desires and potentials as they believe they can do well. Therefore, the researcher advises that all women should rise with one voice in condemning male dominance and the exploitation of womanhood.

### References

- Acholonu, C.O. (1995) *Motherism: The Afrocentric Alternative to Feminism*. Owerri: Afa Publications.
- *Feminism in the Eyes of the White woman and Their African Supporters—A Book of Readings in Language and Literature for Colleges and Universities*. Benue State: CESTH Printer, 1999.
- Aidoo, A. A. (1984); *Women in Africa*. Ibadan: Heinemann.
- Annette, K. (1988). *Gender and Theory Dialogues on Feminist Criticism*. London: Longman,
- Brown, L. (2008). *Women Writers in Black Africa*. London: Longman.
- Chuma-Udeh, N. (2007). *Trends and Issues in Nigerian Literature*. Onitsha: Base 5 Press.
- *Caribbean Literature: Text and Contest*. Onitsha: Base 5 Press, 2007
- *Echoes of a New Dawn*. Onitsha: Malchjay Nigeria Ltd., 2007
- Goldman, E. (2001); *The Struggle for Women Rights*. London: Longman.
- Heywood, C.L. (2006). *Issues of Gender and Women Liberation*. London: Heinemann.
- Maduka, C. T. (2011) "Feminism, Womanism and Motherism in African Literature." Discourse. *Journal of Nigerian*

---

*English and Literature*. One, Uyo: Scholars Press.

Mbah, C.C. (2006) *Political Theory and Methodology*. Enugu: Rex Charles and Patrick.

Mutio, G.C.M. (1981). *Socio-Political Thought in African Literature*. London: Frank Cass.

Nanda, T.R. (2009). *Gender Issues: Theory and Practice*. New York: Rinehart

Nnolim, C. E. 2009 *Issues in African Literature*. Bayelsa: Treasure Resource Communication Ltd.

Obbo, C. (1980); *African Women: The struggle for Economic Independence*. London: Ind. Press.

Onwueme, J. U. (2010). "Literature and the Pressure of Women Liberation" in Luke Eyoh, *Journal of Nigerian English and Literature* (JONEL) vol. 8. Uyo: Scholars Press.

*The Holy Bible*

Ujowundu, C. O. (2009). *A Guide to Studies in the Novel*. Onitsha: Sure Success.