

**GENDER PORTRAYAL IN SELECTED EARLY MALE AND FEMALE-AUTHORED IGBO NOVELS:
UBESIE'S *ISI AKWU DARA N'ALA* AND ONWUCHEKWA'S *CHINAAGOROM***

Okafor Ebele Eucharia (PhD)

Department of Linguistics, African & Asian Studies,
University of Lagos, Nigeria
ebeleokafor67@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The feminists claim that the early male writers present a lopsided view of gender, which is derogatory to the female gender; a view equally supported by the African womanists. Previous studies on gender portrayal in Igbo literature have concentrated on the image of female in male-authored works, thereby paying inadequate attention to the female-authored literature. This paper makes a comparative analysis of gender portrayal in selected early male and female-authored Igbo novels: Tony Ubesie's *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* (1973) and Julie Onwuchekwa's *Chinaagorom* (1983). This is to ascertain the manner in which the writers depict gender in their novels. The theory of Snail-Sense Feminism is employed to guide the analysis. The novels are purposively selected and content analysed. Both Ubesie and Onwuchekwa present women as seductive and gossipy. Ubesie, unlike Onwuchekwa, presents men's socio-cultural status, achievements and moral attributes, while women's achievements and their contributions to the family and community are ignored. It is established that both the early male and female Igbo writers present women negatively in their novels. But, the negative portrayal of women as observed in Onwuchekwa's novel was not as a means to dehumanize women but for didactic art. However, Onwuchekwa represents what seems to be the real position of both male and female genders in traditional Igbo society. She reconstructs the reality of the female gender which is misrepresented in the early male Igbo novels thereby breaking the glass ceiling which hinders women's social progress. Since the negative portrayal of women in literature affects them in real life, Igbo novelists, especially the male, should be more positive and balanced in the presentation of the female gender by focusing on the experiences of the women in Igbo society where women are self-fulfilled and empowered.

Keywords: Gender, portrayal, Igbo, novel

INTRODUCTION

Gender is a topical issue, especially as it concerns the socio-cultural position of men and women in society. Many scholars have argued that the perception of men and women in society affects the way they are portrayed in creative writing (Kolmar and Bartkowki, 2000; Cornwall, 2005; Akorede, 2011). The roles of male and female in African society were often described as separate and complementary, yet most writers ascribe to men a better position and a higher status (Sudarkasa, 2005). Consequently, the roles of females are considered insignificant to those of males because of the greater 'power and status' accorded to males more than females in most societies (Lips, 1997). According to Lips (1997), if women and men are accorded equal status in society, especially in literature, many of the differences in behaviour that are attributed to gender would disappear.

Several critical works have been undertaken on gender portrayal in society, culture, religion, economy, education, politics, family and literature. Gender portrayal in literature is now a global issue. Many scholars, especially women, who focus on analysing gender in literature, reveal that male-authored literature is replete with a pattern that present only men's socio-cultural status, achievements and moral attributes, ignoring women's achievements and their contributions to the family and community. This model of presentation of the female gender in male literature, especially the early male literature, is unfavourable to women. Women, therefore, strive to redefine women's rights, status, images and interests. Thus, female writers aim to draw attention to and change the way that gender is represented in male literature, since it is clear that a great many of these representational practices are not in the interest of either women or men (Mills, 1995). Gender discrimination is pervasive, especially in literature. Hence, Feminists/Womanists, aware of this tradition, venture into describing and interpreting (or reinterpreting) women's experiences as depicted in various kinds of male-authored literature, thereby paying inadequate attention to the female-authored literature. However, this paper makes a comparative analysis of gender portrayal in selected early

male and female-authored Igbo novels of Ubesie's *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* (1973) and Onwuchekwa's *Chinaagorom* (1983) respectively. The reason for the choice of one novel from each stratum is for equal representation because early female-authored Igbo novels are few. In addition, female Igbo writers started writing Igbo novels after the Nigeria-Biafra civil war. However, the male and female Igbo novels selected are early post-war Igbo novels. The analysis of the selected novels assists to ascertain the similarities and discrepancies in the manner in which the early male and female Igbo writers depict gender in their novels, and the writer who enhance one gender to the detriment of the other gender.

FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF GENDER PORTRAYAL IN MALE-AUTHORED LITERATURE

The feminists' questioning of the construction and representation of women not only in material life but in language and literature, especially male-authored literature, gives rise to feminist literary criticism. Oppermann (1994) points out that Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), which is the precursor of feminist literary criticism, criticizes Professor Von X's monumental work: *The Mental, Moral and Physical Inferiority of The Female Sex* with strong women's sensibility. Woolf argues that men's domination of women in literature is due to their ideas of the patriarchal society which prevented women from realizing their creativity and true potential. Woolf, however, sees the negative portrayal of women by men as the way men preserve and authenticate their sense of male superiority. To Woolf, women have served as mirrors to men for centuries and men who dominate ideas of the patriarchal society prevent women from realizing their creativity and true potentials. In this sense, Woolf urges women to write because writing is the only way women can assert their individuality and autonomy. On the contrary, Woolf, in her essay "Professions for Women", stresses the difficulties of being a female writer because it was not easy for her as a writer. She had to kill "the Angel in the House" in order to write her novels and critical works. To Oppermann, this means that a woman who writes should not think of herself as passive and subordinate and has to destroy the stereotypical image of housewife and mother.

AFRICAN WOMEN CRITIQUE OF GENDER PORTRAYAL IN MALE-AUTHORED LITERATURE

The works of the above feminists who criticised gender portrayal in male-authored Western literature influenced African scholars, including Igbo, to employ feminist and womanist consciousness in examining the position of women in African societies and indeed African male literature (Sotunsa, 2008; Olugbamigbe, 2010). Many African scholars, especially women, who examined gender portrayal in male-authored African literature revealed unsatisfactory/derogatory depiction of female gender, as against the male gender. African women believe that the negative portrayal of women in African literature stems from patriarchal ideology of viewing men as the norm and women as deviant. Lapin (1995 cited in Fonchingong, 2006) also confirms that men in the early years were usually the first educated, and hence the first authors. They populated their literature with women but in an idealized mode, woman was mother-nurturer and by extension symbol of a sweeter, more secure Africa which the educated man left behind. The scarcity of written literary works by women engendered male writers' unbalanced depiction of gender to be accepted as the true condition of African women. Sotunsa (2008: 82) posits that the pioneer African male writers mirrored patriarchy in their works. The male writers often portray man as the protagonist and antagonist who dominate other people, while the women are made peripheral and their characters hardly developed. Okoh (2008) shows that in the early literary works, the female characters play almost no significant part; if they are present, they are more or less objects performing function as mothers, wives, daughters or sisters assisting male gender to achieve greatness. The passive role of women and the supportive role they play in men's heroics are usually portrayed in male-authored literature. As a result, the only area in which male writers actually feature women is in the area of domesticity; hence, the reality of women's position in traditional African society is not captured in the early literary works by men. Male writers neglected the role of women in the community apart from mothering.

The negative portrayal of women in literature makes Kolawole (1997) notes that, by omission and commission, most male writers in the early phase of African literature encouraged the marginalisation of women. Poulain de la Barre, a well-known feminist of the seventeenth century (cited in Kolmar and Bartkowki, 2000: 180), also asserts that "all that has been written about women by men should be suspect for the men are at once judge and party to the law suit". From Kolawole and Poulain de la Barre's opinions, the early male writers failed to properly situate and delineate the realities of African women in their literature. They only perceived women from masculine perspectives.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The model of Womanism suitable for the analysis of the selected early male and female Igbo novels is Ezeigbo's (2012) Snail-Sense Feminism. Ezeigbo proposes the "Snail-Sense Feminism" for African women based on the result of her research on the Nigerian woman from the pre-colonial and colonial periods to the present. She examines the indigenous strategies women used and can still use to protect themselves and negotiate around the rugged terrain of patriarchy with its restrictions and subjugations. Women in African cultures – from different parts of Nigeria – often adopt a conciliatory or cooperative attitude towards men. This is akin to what the snail does with the environment in which it moves and exists. Her snail-sense theory is derived from the habit of snails which most Nigerian women adopt in their relationships with men. The snail crawls over boulders, rocks, thorns, crags and rough terrains smoothly and efficiently with a well-lubricated tongue which is not damaged or destroyed by these harsh objects. The Igbo people say, 'ire oma ka ejule ji aga n'ogwu' (The snail crawls over thorns with a fine and well-lubricated tongue). Moreover, the snail carries its house (shell) on its back without feeling the strain. It goes wherever it wishes in this manner and arrives at its destination intact. If danger looms, it withdraws into its shell and is safe. Ezeigbo shows that this snail-sense strategy is what women often use in our society to survive in Nigerian's harsh patriarchal culture. It is this tendency to accommodate or tolerate the male and cooperate with men that informs her theory of "Snail-Sense Feminism". She emphasizes that the snail may not be a strong creature physically and can be crushed easily; yet it does not hesitate to climb trees, mount fences, climb up and down rocks, thorny and spiky surfaces. It goes steadily forward. It does not confront objects but negotiate its way past any obstacle. Ezeigbo affirms that a woman cannot but behave like a snail in our patriarchal society. In her opinion, Ezeigbo confirms that the Nigerian woman adopts snail-sense strategy in her relationship with men, just as the woman of the past (the indigenous woman) did in her interactions with people in her community.

Snail-Sense Feminism differs from other womanist theories because of its emphasis on the individuality. The individual must empower herself before she can empower others. She must stand before she can help other people to stand. The pursuit of individual success and development is central to snail-sense feminism. The woman should not just accommodate others, but should ensure that she achieves recognition for herself because self-preservation and self-actualization, especially through education, are crucial to a woman's success in life. And if she succeeds, the success of the family or the community follows naturally. Ezeigbo points out that Snail-Sense Feminism, symbiotically, advocates Western feminism's individualism and African womanism's communalism. Ezeigbo maintains that snail-sense feminism, adopting this habit of a snail, focuses on the individual, but encourages respect and tolerance for the group, with a readiness to negotiate and cooperate with others. Indeed the strength of Snail-Sense Feminism lies in its uniqueness in interrogating existing ideas about sisterhood, female bonding and group consciousness. In the end, it is the individual that constitutes the group. Ezeigbo also points out that negotiation or dialogue is sometimes more efficacious in achieving success in human relations than aggression or confrontation. The emphasis is on the ability of the snail to smoothen rough spaces to enable it to make its movement easy. In like manner, the Nigerian woman, especially the Igbo woman, ought to be wise, sensitive and proactive in her quest for justice and self-actualisation. She further stresses that the African woman should employ subtle means (negotiation) to tackle issues concerning men than aggression. This will help promote dignity and respect for womanhood and also solve the problems of male domination. Ezeigbo's idea of 'Snail Sense' supports dialogue and negotiation between men and women as a way to reconcile issues concerning both genders to enhance cooperation between them. A womanist will ensure peace and harmony in the family (not antagonism which brings about separation) by being "committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female.

Ezeigbo's Snail-Sense Feminism helps to understand the issue of gender perception in Igbo society as depicted in the selected Igbo novels. It is necessary in the analysis of the early male and female-authored Igbo novels selected for this paper. This is because the theory is based on African culture and centred on how to achieve and maintain the unity of the African family without gender bias. The selected Igbo novels depict the image of men and women in Igbo family, which necessitates their characterization positively or negatively. The application of the Ezeigbo's Snail-Sense Feminism in the analysis of the selected Igbo novels helps us to infer the root cause of the negative portrayal of female gender, more than the male one, and how both genders are reconstructed.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GENDER PORTRAYAL IN EARLY MALE AND FEMALE-AUTHORED IGBO NOVELS

The early male Igbo writer, Ubesie in *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala* (1973), and the early female Igbo writer, Onwuchekwa in *Chinaagorom* (1983), portray both their male and female characters positively as industrious, emotional and religious in their novels. The early male writer, Ubesie, further portrays the male characters positively as educated, peaceful, proud and boastful, patient and persevering, loving and caring, rich and successful, strong and superior, benevolent, brave and courageous, faithful and rational. In the same vein, the early female writer, Onwuchekwa, further presents both the male and female characters positively as important, successful, humble, loving and caring, educated and intelligent, strong, sociable, benevolent, domestic, faithful and assertive. She also portrays the female characters more positively as beautiful, thrifty, trustworthy, maternal, remorseful, chaste, good-natured and brave, while the male characters are presented as possessive. Onwuchekwa also depicts her female characters as submissive, amenable to advice and friendly, while her male characters are shown to be handsome. There is, however, some negative portrayal of both male and female characters by the writers under study.

In furtherance to the above, the early male Igbo writer, Ubesie, depicts both the male and female characters negatively as promiscuous, but the female character is portrayed more negatively. Whereas the early male writer, Ubesie, and female writer, Onwuchekwa, portray the male characters as aggressive and violent, the female characters are presented as seductive. Onwuchekwa further depicts her female character as gossipy. Ubesie also presents the female characters as irresponsible, diabolical, quarrelsome, rude and stubborn, wicked and materialistic. Incidentally, the negative images used by the early male writer, Ubesie, to qualify the male character are posited as the effects of the evil tendencies of the female character. The following are some of the similarities and discrepancies in the presentation of the positive and negative attributes of the male and female genders in the early post-war male and female-authored Igbo novels.

SIMILARITIES IN THE POSITIVE PORTRAYAL IN THE IGBO NOVELS

Emotional

Brannon (1996) views emotion as simply feelings, rather than as dispositions or tendencies to behave in certain ways. According to Robinson, emotions are not identified through behaviour, but with inner feelings. It can be feelings of love, anger, fear, jealousy, grief, shame, embarrassment, nostalgia, remorse and so on. These feelings can be expressed through autonomic nervous system changes, changes in facial and vocal expressions, and action tendencies. The early male writer, Ubesie, and female writer, Onwuchekwa, depict their male and female characters as emotional. In Ubesie's *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala*, Ada weeps when Chike is unable to establish a business for her. Chike immediately decides to sell his children's bed to set-up a business for Ada. All through the novel, Ubesie presents Chike as emotional. Chike displays series of emotions of anger and regrets at Ada's unpleasant attitude towards him. For instance, he weeps on his brother's (Okechukwu's) shoulder when his brother visits them from the war front and narrates to him all Ada's irrational attitude towards him (p.162). Okechukwu is shocked when he discovers that Chike is weeping. He angrily threatens to kill all Ada's relations if anything happens to Chike as a result of her irrational behaviour. His response in an attempt to protect his brother shows male bonding. Wood (2003: 88) asserts that "like women, men value friendships, and count on friends to be there for them". According to Wood, many men create and express closeness more through action than through talk. Generally, the centre of most men's friendships is activities rather than conversation as Okechukwu shows in his actions toward Ada in order to defend Chike.

Onwuchekwa's *Chinaagorom* presents her male characters (Ihekammanandụ and Chijioke) and female characters (Dibugwu, Uloaku and Ajughjekwu) as emotional. Ihekammanandụ is emotionally disturbed because of his daughter's (Chinagoro's) pregnancy. He goes to a medicine-man, Okpotokpọ, with his in-law, Chijioke, to find out who is responsible for the pregnancy. Dibugwu feels very sorrowful and disappointed when she realises that her daughter, Chinagoro, is pregnant (p. 11). Dibugwu cries out in fright because she does not want to lose her good-natured son-in-law who takes care of her as a son. She is very sad that Chinagoro has soiled her relationship with her kind son-in-law. Onwuchekwa also uses anecdote to show how sorrowful Dibugwu feels towards Chinagoro's purported waywardness: "*Dinugwu wee tie si, 'Enwe kwọ nwa ya n'azu o maghi mgbe o jiri ghorọ utu rachaa'*" (p. 11). (Dibugwu screamed and cried, a Monkey carried his child on her back without knowing when she plucked

cherries). Dibugwu could not believe that the daughter she raised properly would disappoint her. Uloaku (Chinagoro's mother-in-law) is also very bitter concerning Chinagoro's pregnancy. She could not imagine that the girl she loves for her good character and recommends to his son, as a wife, will flirt (p. 11). The two women weep bitterly and return to Aba sorrowfully. From the above discussions, men and women express different types of emotion. The women display emotions of sadness, fear, and regret, whereas men show feelings of anger and dejection. Brannon (1996: 195-199) shows that gender roles and gender stereotypes remain important in the experience and expression of emotions. According to Brannon, women and men report different emotions in similar circumstances, and these differences fall along stereotypical lines. Women are shown to be more emotional than men, but only for a restricted range of emotions - happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, and surprise. Anger is shown to be absent from the list of emotions stereotypically associated with women, while sadness and fear are absent from the emotions associated with boys and men. However, men tend to suppress or deny their emotions, whereas women are more likely to express their feelings. Men suppress emotions like sadness and sympathy, while women suppress emotions like anger and sexuality.

Industry

Industry is the ability of a person to be committed in a job and perform it excellently. Therefore, industry is very important in every facet of life. It is not limited to any particular individual. Men and women are supposed to be industrious in their undertakings, notwithstanding their distinctive physical features, which show men as the stronger and women as the weaker sex. Hence, biology determines gender roles in every society. The early male and female writers present their male and female characters as industrious. But the male writer, Ubesie, further shows only men who are successful in their chosen profession, while the female writer, Onwuchekwa, presents more women, than men, who are successful in their chosen fields. Ubesie's *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* presents Chike and his wife, Ada, as industrious and responsible. All through the novel Chike is portrayed as a hardworking and successful man: "*Chike ji ego. O nwere moto. O bi n'ulo di mma*" (p. 18). (Chike has money, car and lives in a comfortable house). He has a chain of businesses and industries in Enugu and Lagos, respectively. He is rich and has houses in Enugu and Awka. He is well-known and commands respect wherever he goes because of his wealth. Ubesie shows Chike as a popular rich Igbo man (p. 33). His fame reaches everywhere so much that the soldiers at Awka usually supply fuel for his car. When he goes to the bank at Awka, as revealed in the story, the manager would immediately attend to him notwithstanding that some clients were there before him. Ada is presented as industrious, though she is later shown as irresponsible. Ada is shown as a business woman. She sells salt in the market and when she is going back home, she buys foodstuffs to supplement whatever Chike brings: "*Chike bute ihe oriri, nwunye ya (Ada) were ego o na-erita n'uru zuta ihe a ga-eji si ya*" (p. 69). (If Chike brought foodstuff, his wife (Ada) used the profit from her trading to buy ingredients to cook it). Ada uses her money to complement what Chike brings in their family, which is what obtains in traditional Igbo society. Igbo women work to complement their husbands' efforts in sustaining the family. The cooperation and complementarity between men and women is what Womanists advocate in order to maintain peace and unity in the family.

Onwuchekwa's *Chinaagorom* also depicts men and women as hardworking, rich and successful through her male characters (Chinedum and his male friends) and female characters (Chinagoro and Ekemma). Ekemma is a business woman, who travels to Cotonou for her business transactions. Ekemma's hard work also motivates Chinedum to assist her in training her children in school. Ekemma as a real Womanist is determined, and works hard to take care of her family. Chinedum and his wife, Chinagoro, are industrious, rich and responsible. Dr. Chinedum works in one of the oil companies in Lagos as an assistant director. He dedicates his time to his job and works for the progress of his company. Chinagoro is dutiful both at home and in the office. She takes good care of her husband, Dr. Chinedum, and her children as a wife and mother. Her husband comes home for lunch and then returns to the office. Chinagoro makes sure her husband's food is ready before he comes back home. She employs Snail-Sense mechanism to get her husband's assistance in her education. For instance, one afternoon, when they have finished eating and had their siesta, Chinagoro humbly informs her husband of her intention to further her education in university (p. 80). : "*Mgbe ha tetara ka oriaku ya gwara ya n'obi di umeala na o ga-amasị ya ma ya bu di ya kwe ka ya bu oriaku ya mutuzie akwukwo, ya ga-ewelitekwa ugwu na aha di ya; nyekwara bu oriaku ya aka iba uru di iche n'ulo ebe a luru ya*" (p. 80). (When they woke up, his wife humbly told him that she would appreciate it if he (her husband) would agree for her (his wife) to further her education. It would bring the greatest respect and honour to him; and also make her useful to their family). Chinagoro's attitude shows how women negotiate with their husbands to achieve their aim. Snail-Sense Feminism is all about women devising a humble means to negotiate their way to the top. Chinedum supports Chinagoro's education. Chinagoro does everything necessary to make her family

to be united. Apart from being a good housewife, Chinagoro is educated as a lawyer. She works as a secretary and a legal adviser in the same oil company where her husband, Dr. Chinedum, works (p. 90). As an individual, Chinagoro is self-actualised, self-reliant, self-contained and benevolent as a result of her education. Ezeigbo's Snail-Sense Feminism emphasises on women's empowerment through education in order to be useful in the society. Mrs Ayodele (Chinagoro's friend) is an accountant in the same oil company where Chinagoro's husband works. All these characters are not just depicted as occupying positions in offices but actually working hard to earn their salaries. Women are shown to work in offices like men, but they maintain the level of work prescribed for women such as secretary, adviser and accountant. Chinedum's friends, Alhaji Ibrahim and Mr. Kunle Babatunde, are successful businessmen in Aba: "*Ndi a bu ndi na-azu ahia a maara aha ha maka inwe ego. Ha rekasiri erekasiri n'ego*" (p. 68). (These are traders who are known for their wealth. They are stinkingly rich). Men's success is projected more highly than the women's achievement in Onwuchekwa's novel.

SIMILARITIES IN THE NEGATIVE PORTRAYAL IN THE IGBO NOVELS

Seduction

Women are shown to seduce men with their beauty. The early male writer, Ubesie, and female writer, Onwuchekwa, portray their female characters as seductive. Ubesie's *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* depicts women as those who use their beauty and money to seduce men, while men are self-controlled and contented. He narrates how Ada adorned herself to lure the army commandant who seized her goods in Agulu (when some men who trade for her are returning from Otuocha), but he resists her:

O wee je saa ahụ, tuturu ihe o na-ete n'onu tee, tee otanjele, tee otu ude... onye ji egbe ma o bu mma akaghị ya, n'ihi na ihe ndi ozo na-enweghi ike iji egbe gbata, ma o bu jiri ogu luta, Ada na-iji mma ahụ ya na ihe o na-ete n'ahụ na eze ochi ya na-enweta ya.... O wee je lee onwe ya n'ugegbe, tugharikwaa azu ya lekwa n'ugegbe, kwee n'isi, si na ya bu agu abaala n'akpukpo ewu (p. 92).

(She took her bath, applied her lipsticks, eye shadow and rubbed pomade.... someone who has a gun and a cutlass is not better than her because what others cannot get with a gun or strength, Ada gets through her beauty, make-up and laughter She looked herself in the mirror, turned her back and looked, nodded and said that she the leopard has changed into a goat's skin).

Ubesie uses the metaphorical language '*... na ya bu agu abaala n'akpukpo ewu*' (... that she the leopard has changed into a goat's skin), to show how women camouflage in their attempt to seduce men. Ada's attempt to seduce the army commander fails, because he is strong-willed. She attempts to bribe him (the army commander) but the commander rejects the bribe, in order to portray men as those who are content with their salary and position (p. 94). Women are then shown as seductive and corrupt and men as faithful and honest. Ubesie's portrayal is contrary to what happens in society where men wallow in corruption.

Onwuchekwa's *Chinaagorom* also portrays women as seductive. She shows that women seduce men through their dressing: "*Ha jie ngwa nke a taa, ha e jie nke ozo echi. Ha tee nke anya, nke onu na nke mbubere anya na-acha ntu ntu n'elu anya. O na-afodu ka ufodu ha gbara oto ebe ha na-achọ iji ngwa ga-emebi Dokita Chijioke isi*" (p. 85). (They would wear this one today, and another one tomorrow. They would apply the eye pencil, lipsticks and eye shadow. They would almost go naked all in the bid to attract Doctor Chijioke Chinedum). Onwuchekwa also presents well-educated women as seductive: "*O di otutu umunwanyị muru oke akwukwo di ugbu a, oru ha bu ichupu ndi amughị oke akwukwo n'ulo di ha, ka di ha wee lura ha*" (p. 80). (Now there are so many well-educated women whose stock in trade is to displace the less-educated ones in their matrimonial home in order for their husbands to marry them). The women are shown as seductresses who destroy families, which is not Womanist ideal.

DISCREPANCIES IN THE POSITIVE PORTRAYAL IN THE IGBO NOVELS

Peacemaker

Ubesie shows only the male characters as peaceful, while Onwuchekwa presents both the male and female characters as peaceful. In Ubesie's *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala*, Chike is shown as a peaceful man, while Ada is a cantankerous woman. Chike always tries to make peace with Ada, but Ada is shown to be very obstinate. Each time he advises Ada to change her attitude towards him in order for them to live in peace as husband and wife, Ada insults him (p. 86). Chike still begs Ada to be patient because he has enough money that will take care of them when the war ends: "*Nne... Ihe m nwere n'ulo bank di iche iche n'obodo bekee kariri puku naira anọ. O buru na i nwee ndidi, ogu bie, anyi amalite kporiwe ndu. Ihe obula na-eme ugbu a, cheta na m bu di gi. Na-akwanyere m ugwu di ka di gi, ka o ga-abu...*" (p. 86). (Beloved... what I have in different banks abroad is more than four thousand naira. If you are patient, after the war we will begin to enjoy life. You should remember that I am your husband. Irrespective of what is happening now, you should respect me as your husband). Ada is always angry whenever Chike is talking about having money in different banks or reminding her of the respect she owes him. Chike has not finished talking when Ada shuns him: "*Ada ekweghi ka Chike kwuchaa ihe o kpu n'onu, wanye onu ya ka nkita ara*" (p. 86). (Ada did not allow Chike to finish what he wanted to say, and attacks him like a mad dog). She hurls abuse at him. Chike seems not to bother about Ada's insults until she tells him "*Di gbakwaa oku!*" (p. 86). (Husband my foot!). Chike is shocked. Ubesie illustrates that women respect their husbands because of their money and discard them when they are disadvantaged. Ada calls Chike "*nna anyi*" (My lord) or 'Nna Chukwuma' (Chukwuma's father) when he is wealthy. But, now Chike is poor as a result of the war, Ada disrespects him and calls him 'that man'. Ada's attitude portrays women as those who destabilize peace in the family. Ubesie's portrayal of Ada is not typical of Igbo women. Snail-Sense Feminists encourage women to live peacefully with men for the good and progress of the family. Nnaemeka (2010) urges women to work in readiness to negotiate with men even in difficult circumstances. However, Ada's radical behaviour is not typical of an African womanist, because she refuses to embrace peace for the co-existence of her family.

In Onwuchekwa's *Chinaagorom*, Ekemma and Chinedum are peaceful and loving. Ekemma, who is the president of her town (Eziukwu) women's organization in Lagos, is described as a good and peace-loving woman leader. She settles a quarrel between two of their members, Alaezi and Ajughiekwu, over the sharing of kolanut in Chinedum's house. Alaezi forgets to give Ajughiekwu her own share of the kolanut and Ajughiekwu, who is described as cantankerous, attacks her (Alaezi) like a roaring lion. Immediately Ekemma discovers what has happened, she pacifies Ajughiekwu: "*Ekemma bu onye isi ndinyom huru na ikpe kaara Ajughiekwu o wee medoo ya obi site n'inye ya oke oji nke ya, n'ihu na o maara... Ajughiekwu bu oku na-enwu enwu na-achokwa onye ga-etinye ya mmanu oku ka o wee mee ire karira*" (p. 5). (Ekemma, the women's leader, saw that Ajughiekwu was right and appeased her by giving Ajughiekwu her (Ekemma's) own share of the kolanut. This is because she knew... Ajughiekwu as a cantankerous woman). Women are shown as good leaders and peacemakers. Ekemma's leadership quality and peaceful character endear her to both men and women.

Trustworthiness

Onwuchekwa's *Chinaagorom* presents women as trustworthy through her female character, Chinagoro, while Ubesie did not. Chinedum shows this in his words when he appreciates Chinagoro for obeying his instructions. Chinedum tells Chinagoro to keep his visit to Nigeria, which leads to her pregnancy, secret from their parents. Even when Chinagoro is accused of committing adultery behind her husband, she maintains her husband's words without minding all the criticisms, until she is delivered of her baby boy. Chinedum is happy for Chinagoro's obedience by thanking God for giving him such a wife who is trustworthy: "*Obasi Di N'elu mere m luta nwanyi di ka gi. I bu nwanyi kwesiri ntukwasị obi. O maara obi di ya.... Mu na mmadu ejighi gi ato. I maara na di bu ugwu. Jidesie agwa oma gi ike ka I wee na-eri mkpuru obi m na-aga n'ihu*" (p. 45). (God made me to marry a woman like you. You are a trustworthy woman. One who knows the mind of her husband.... I do not joke with you. You know that your husband is your honour. Hold on to your good character so that you will continue to win my heart all the time). Women dehumanize themselves to please men. Chinagoro suffers humiliation from her parents, in-laws and friends and still remains calm and resolute to satisfy her husband. Womanists urge women to be trustworthy but they are not in support of women's long-suffering disposition as a result of their subordination by men in order to test their

obedience, reliability and societal perception of them. This is because such abuse can traumatize women and can maim them for life.

DISCREPANCIES IN THE NEGATIVE PORTRAYAL IN THE IGBO NOVELS

Prostitution

Prostitutes devote, or usually offer their body to indiscriminate sexual intercourse, especially for hire; or as a common harlot (Mills, 1989, p. 194). In *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala*, Ubesie portrays men and women as prostitutes through Ada and an army officer. Ada is shown as a common harlot. According to Ubesie, if Ada goes out in the morning, when she comes back would be when people had finished cooking dinner. Chike hears different stories that, although his wife is married, she is no better than a prostitute. Those who know Chike are telling him that his wife normally goes to the army camp. If Chike inquires about her (Ada's) whereabouts, she ignores him. Ubesie shows immoral women as wicked and useless women who are not worth dying for or living for. The army officers feel that they prefer to be given a befitting burial than to be scorned because of a woman. Therefore, the army men abandon Ada to avoid a shameful death.

Ubesie shows that it is difficult for women to stop prostitution. This makes Chike wish that he would have stopped Ada's business if he had a means of feeding his family. This suggests why rich men in Igbo society refuse their wives to work because of fear of infidelity. This type of fear is illogical because all women are not like Ada. The African womanist supports women's right to work because it helps women's independence, assertion and allows them to support their family. They frown at women using prostitution to get financial independence, which may cause family chaos and disunity.

Ubesie shows through Ada that women's quest for financial independence leads to immorality. Ada's children are aware of their mother's immoral behaviour to the extent that they refuse to follow her to Nanka where she wants to continue her prostitution. Children are known to love their mothers, but Ada's prostitution makes her children hate her. Womanism frowns at this type of behaviour because a woman's character should command respect in order to function as a role model to other women. Ada's behaviour is not womanish. The Womanists condemn Ada's character as untypical of an Igbo woman. Women, especially married ones, struggle for the interest and well-being of their families, and not for selfish gain. Ada moves to Nanka to be able to meet his male friends at will: "*O kwuru sị na ọ bụ maka ịzụ ahịa ka o ji biri ebe ahụ.... Ọ nọ ebe ahụ na-azu ahia nnu, na-erekwa onwe ya kọbọ*" (p. 88). (She said that she lived in Nanka because of her business.... She was there to do business and sell herself cheap). Ubesie uses the metaphor, '*na-erekwa onwe ya kọbọ*' (selling herself for a penny), to suggest that prostitution devalues womanhood. By '*kọbọ*' (penny) (the least denomination in the Nigerian currency), he maintains that whatever money Ada realises from her illicit business is nothing (*kọbọ*) compared to her worth as a woman.

Ada's relationship with men at Nanka also depicts women as prostitutes. Chike visits Ada to sympathize with her for what has happened to her: "*Mgbe ọ na-eru be Ada nso, ọ nūrụ ka ụmụ nwoke nọ n'ime ụlọ Ada, na-achị ọchị. Obi ya ekweghi ya jide*" (p. 111). (When he was approaching Ada's house, he heard some men laughing inside Ada's house. He became sad). Chike is greatly annoyed at his wife's prostitution. He feels that the woman whose bride price he paid is being used freely by men. Ubesie shows this through the following idiom: "*Ndị mmadu na-akpa nkụ n'ubi ya ka a ga-asị na ọ bụ ọhịa nkụ. Ma, ụta adịrị ụmụ nwoke nọ ebe ahụ. Ọ bụ Ada sị ha bịawa, ha nile ji wee na-abịa be Ada*" (p. 111). (People were collecting firewood in his farm as if it was a bush. But, men who were there were not to blame. All of them were there because Ada invited them). Women are portrayed as property owned by men like farmland. Chike sees Ada as his farmland which men use as if it does not belong to anyone. Ubesie exonerates men from women's prostitution because they are invited by women. Ada despises Chike and follows men to a night party. Ada's waywardness is prominent from the way many men sit around her in the party. They are not jealous of the man who has brought her at the club because Ubesie shows that Ada is: "*.... akwụ chaara ọha, onye gburu, ibe ya egburu*" (p. 143). (... Palmnut which belonged to the public, people, everybody took turns to harvest it). Ubesie uses the above idiomatic expression to depict Ada's wayward practices. The justification of men's immorality by Ubesie is a clear indication that Ubesie is not gender sensitive. He is obviously biased against women. The truth of the matter is that both Ada and the men who visit her are guilty of immorality. The reason behind the invitation does not justify the response to the invitation by her male friends.

Ubesie shows the height of women's prostitution through Ada's attitude when she comes back to Chike's house. Men are visiting Ada in Chike's house without minding his presence. Ada's attitude is an affront to her husband and family. It is an unmitigated reduction and debasement of her husband in the eyes of the whole world. Ubesie blames women for the subjection their husbands receive in their house in the cause of their (women's) prostitution. Ada's lack of respect for Chike makes men troop Chike's house as if he was dead (p. 139). The picture of Ada's male friends frequenting her house with impunity is an apparent suggestion that the entire home has broken down; that there is no man in the house or that the man is dead. Chike's capitulation at this point suggests that the man in him has died; he has lost his manhood. Ubesie shows that Chike is unable to react against Ada's prostitution because of his poverty: "*Nwoke adighi ka o na-adị na mbụ, o naghị emekwa ka o na-eme na mbụ.... Ma agha ghaara ihe nile gharikọọ...*" (p. 139). (The man was not as he used to be, he did not behave the way he used to behave.... But war had totally destroyed everything). The alliteration "*agha ghaara ihe nile gharikọọ*" (p. 139). (The war has destroyed everything), is a testimony to the total destruction and gross devaluation of all traditional institutions (including marriage) by the civil war. Through Ada, women are shown to be born prostitutes and will die in prostitution. Ubesie does not criticise men's prostitution, but shows women as prostitutes through Ada's speech, behaviour, appearance and relationships. It is questionable why Ubesie does not reach the same conclusion about Ada's male friends who patronise her. Prostitution is a matter of give and take, so both the giver and the taker should be judged alike. It is surprising that Ubesie is silent on Ada's parents; if prostitution is deep-rooted in Ada's gene, then her parents also share the same genetic stain. Ubesie demonstrates that a beautiful woman can be her husband's joy or pain, and women like Ada are their husbands' heartache.

On the contrary, Ubesie portrays men as prostitutes. An army officer who detains Ada and her men from the way back from Otuocha and wants to kill them is cited as an example: "*Obi kporo nwoke a nku, ma nani otu ihe o jighi egwuri egwu bu mmanya na umunwanyị. O nwere ike iji mmanya mee ebere, ma nwanị mara mma anaghị esi ebe o no agafe*" (p. 104). By this, Ubesie suggests that men are as weak as women. The army officer's lifestyle is used to balance Ada's lifestyle. Ada's business trip to Otuocha leads her into the hands of a randy army officer who could have killed her group but for Ada's presence. Some men are shown as not strong-willed. They are unreasonable when they see women. Ada lives with the army officer in Awka until she runs away. From Ubesie's description of male and female prostitution, he castigated and humiliated Ada more than the army officer. Olasope (2012) shows that women are castigated because of prostitution but men who are prostitutes are viewed as exhibiting ordinary behaviour.

Diabolism

The male writer presents women as naturally diabolical while men are not. In Ubesie's *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala*, women are described as diabolical when there is a change in fortune. Ada is diabolical and one who has the tendency to poison her husband, Chike, because she resents Chike's poverty. Ubesie also shows that women can poison their husbands because of their prostitution. Ada wants to poison Chike because she feels Chike is preventing her from visiting her male-friends: "*Otutu ihe malitere gbawa ya (Ada) n'uche. Nke mbu bu inyegbu Chike na nsi....*" (p. 174). (So many things started coming into her mind. The first was to poison Chike....). However, it should be noted that women go to such extremes when they are in a desperate situation. This is contradictory to the Womanist ideal of complementarity between men and women.

Gossip

The female writer, Onwuchekwa, depicts women as gossipy through Nweke and Ajughiekwu who spread false and malicious rumours about Chinagoro's pregnancy. Nweke is described as a person who delights in gossiping: "*... O korọ na-aga na oriaku Chinedum atụọla ime n'azu di ya*" (p. 10). (... she went on to say that Chinedum's wife had had illicit pregnancy). Nweke's attitude depicts women as naturally flippant. Ajughiekwu (a widow) rejects the education of the female child because she feels that Chinagoro's education induces her waywardness. She feels that Chinedum has made a wrong choice by marrying an educated woman when Chinagoro is accused of being wayward:

Ugbu a Chinedum ahula nsu di n'ilu nwanị mara oke mma ma muokwa oke akwukwo. A si ya luru onye amaghị akwukwo, o si na ya chorọ onye gara koleji. Ndo, o hula isi ya ugbu a. Anaghị agwa ochi ni na ahia esula. Nwanị muru

akwukwo nkita rachara anya ka nwoke na-alu. O gaghị ere. Umụ ndinyom atọ ndị a ndị m muru agaghị aga skuul, ka ha ghara iwa anya iberibe na-eme umu nwanji iso ndikom ozo wee hapu di ha (p. 58).

(Now, Chinedum has seen the loss in marrying a very beautiful woman who is well educated. He was told to marry an illiterate, he said he wants an educated woman. Sorry, he has seen the effect now. You don't tell a deaf person that there is commotion in the market. Would a man marry a wild educated woman? No. My three female children will not go to school, so that they will not be wild and assertive like other women who flirt irrespective of their husbands).

Onwuchekwa exposes the fate of women in traditional Igbo society. The societal belief that educated women are discourteous contributes to women being denied basic education but rather married them off. Onwuchekwa shows through Chinagoro that educated women, married or unmarried, are good-natured. Ajughiekwu who later finds out that Chinagoro is innocent, feels remorseful about her lies against Chinagoro's pregnancy. She could not sleep and blames herself for all the negative things she said about Chinagoro. She feels bad and kneels down to ask God for forgiveness (p. 60). Women gossip about their fellow women because they make different choices, or because they do things with which they do not agree. The portrayal of women as gossipy/flippant is not supported by the Womanists because it destroys the image of women. As women we should stand up for one another but do not humble each other. Probably if women think about what they are doing before sharing stories, or spreading gossips, they can realize that it is coming from a place of jealousy, unreliability, or maybe pain in themselves.

Superiority and Inferiority

The male writer, Ubesie, shows men as physically strong and superior while women are weak. Ubesie's *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* presents the superiority of men (to women) through Okechukwu's profession, biological nature and strength (p. 164). Ubesie further shows that God created Okechukwu to be superior to Ada, because Ada is a woman, and Okechukwu is a man. Men's physical strength is shown by Ubesie as one of the qualities which define a man and makes them superior to women. This strength is a natural gift bestowed on men by God. Women are portrayed as the weaker sex who would be only foolhardy to challenge men no matter what the men do to them. Specifically, the women are seen as inferior to their male counterparts in terms of physical strength. Womanists reject the portrayal of men as superior to women. Ahule (2007) argues against the notion that God created men to be superior to women. He uses quotations from the Holy Bible and Quran to support his claim that man and woman are created equal and are acting in unison to portray the true nature of God. He shows the equality of man and woman through a simple arithmetic equation: "man + woman = man", and regrets that the word 'man' is almost often used to refer to the whole of humanity, which shows male domineering attitude to women. Ahule's position shows that men can be womanists, a corollary to Acholonu's reference to men who support the cause of women as motherist. Incidentally, the supposed inferiority of the female, shown by Ubesie, is mainly based on natural predisposition and not on any discernible feminine deficiency. Simone de Beauvoir (cited in Feminism-Rationalwiki, 2013: 1) asserts that "It is not women's inferiority that has determined their historical insignificance: it is their historical insignificance that has doomed them to inferiority." In other words, women are not inferior because of their natural positions and tendencies, but due to their non-recognition in the society.

Quarrel

The male writers portray women as virulent and quarrelsome, while men are not. The stereotypical description of women as more evil and quarrelsome than men is seen in the selected Igbo novels written by men. The male writer uses women's appearance and relationships with others to characterize them as wicked and quarrelsome people. In *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala*, Ubesie portrays Ada as a quarrelsome woman. Ada comes back from a night party and insults Chike for not greeting her: "*Ada gbowa ya uja ka ebe nkita na-agbo ndi ohi. Chike, i sila m, 'nno'*.... *O bara mba gbagoo n'elu, o bara gbadata n'ala. O kpoo Chike iyi, o kpoo nne Chike iyi... o kpoo nna ya nwuru anwu iyi nke ya*" (145). (Ada barked at him like the way a dog barks at thieves. Chike, have you greeted me, 'welcome'.... She scolded him, pacing up and down. She insulted Chike, she insulted Chike's mother... she insulted his dead father). Ada's behaviour portrays women as those who are quarrelsome and do not have respect, even for the dead. Chike advises Ada against her rudeness and she takes it as an offence and warns Chike for daring a mad dog. Ada's

comparison of herself with a wild dog shows women to be very wicked and quarrelsome, which is not a womanist ideal.

Wickedness

In Ubesie's *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala*, Ada is a wicked and cantankerous woman who always finds fault with Chike's character: "*Chike mee ihe oma, Ada achoo uzọ, o ga-esi kochaa ya... Ebe o bu na Chike lutara ajo nwanyị, o marala ka o si eze ya*" (p. 136-137). (If Chike does good things, Ada finds a way to criticise him.... Since Chike married a wicked woman, he has known how to avoid her). Ada's behaviour is used to portray women as wicked people who oppress men, even when they do good things for them. Ada is also shown to be wicked as observed by her son, Chukwuma: "*Chukwuma huru ka ajo nwanyị a bu nne ya si na-abara nna ya mba, hihie n'isi, puwa ezi*" (p. 146). (Chukwuma saw how this wicked woman who was his mother insulted his father, shook his head and went outside). Ada's wickedness towards her husband, Chike, makes people, including women, avoid her, because they see her as evil. They refuse to associate with her, let alone offer her accommodation when the army officers send her out of her house at Nanka. This is because of her wicked and devilish behaviour. The portrayal of women as devilish is not acceptable to Womanists because of its psychological implications on women. Ada's wickedness hinders the spirit of sisterhood which Womanists advocate for the survival of women.

CONCLUSION

The paper examined the question of gender portrayal in early male and female-authored Igbo novels. Male writers, especially the early ones, have been accused and criticized based on their lopsided presentation of gender, which is detrimental to the female gender. It is evident that in the novels analysed above, the early male writer depict women as inferior to men. Notably, the low status of women shown in these novels is not a result of behavioural tendencies, but as natural tendencies. As womanists, Onwuchekwa shows from her female character, Chinagoro, that some Igbo women are not competing with their husbands or trying to usurp the position of their husbands. Instead they are content with their natural state and therefore give respect to their husbands. The men and society should see these roles as complementary and not to perceive them as demeaning roles and exploit them to maltreat women, which womanists oppose.

There are clear evidence of similarities and discrepancies in the way the early male and female Igbo writers portray gender in their novels. However, there are more discrepancies than similarities in gender portrayal found in the novels. The early male Igbo writer, Ubesie, reflects the position of the male and female genders during the Nigerian Civil War which present an imbalance in his portrayal. Ubesie presents the female character more negatively than Onwuchekwa. On the other hand, the early female writer, Onwuchekwa, re-represents what seems to be the real position of the male and female genders in Igbo traditional society. Onwuchekwa presents the female characters mainly positively than the male characters. The discrepancies are partly a result of gender bias and partly a result of the degree to which the early male Igbo writer, Ubesie, presents the positive and negative aspects of the male and female characters. Ubesie presents a high degree of the positive aspects of the male characters and a high degree of the negative attributes of the female characters. On the contrary, the early female writer, Onwuchekwa, presents a high degree of the positive aspects of the female characters and a high degree of the negative features of the male characters. The portrayal of the female gender mainly negative in literature is unacceptable by Womanists. Ezeigbo's Snail-Sense Feminism supports peace and unity through dialogue and negotiation between men and women as a way to reconcile issues concerning gender and to enhance cooperation between both genders. However, sustaining peace in the family and society requires a more positive depiction of the female gender. This will help to change the mind-set of people against women and persuade them to respect and recognise the contributions of women in the society. This is because the way women are portrayed in literature is the way they are treated in real life. Women should shun prostitution in the face of difficulties, work hard and be prayerful and focused in whatever they do. This will help them to devote more effort in their work in order to achieve success.

REFERENCES

Ahule, B. G. (2007). The Religious Dimension of Gender in Development. In O. Okpoh, Jr. and P. S. Dung (Eds.), *Gender, Power and Politics in Nigeria* (pp. 200-218). Ibadan: Aboki publishers.

- Akorede, Y. O. (2011). *Womanism and the Intra-Gender Conflict Theory*. Porto-Novo, Republic of Benin: Sonou Press.
- Brannon, L. (1996). *Gender: Psychological Perspectives*. London: Allyn and Bacon.
- Chukukere, G. C. (1995). *Gender Voices and Choices: Redefining Women in Contemporary African Fiction*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Cornwall, A. (2005). Introduction: Perspectives on Gender in Africa. In A. Cornwall (Ed.), *Readings in Gender in Africa* (pp. 1-19). London: The International African Institute.
- Ezeigbo, T. A. (2012). *Snail-Sense Feminism: Building on an Indigenous Model*. Lagos: Wealthsmith Books.
- Feminism-Rationalwiki. Retrieved April 30, 2013 from <http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/feminism>
- Fonchingong, C. C. (2006). Unbending Gender Narratives in African Literature. [Electronic version] *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 8 (1), 135-147.
- Kolawole, M. E. (1997). *Womanism and African Consciousness*. Trento, New Jersey: Africa World Press.
- Kolmar, M. & Bartkowki, L. (2000). *Feminist Theory: A Reader, 2nd ed.* New York: McGraw Hill.
- Lips, H. M. (1997). *Sex and Gender: An Introduction, 3rd ed.* London: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Mills, J. (1989). *Womanwords: A Dictionary of Words about Women*. New York: Maxwell Macmillan International.
- Mills, S. (1995). *Feminist Stylistics*. London: Routledge.
- Nnaemeka, O. (2010) Womanism Bibliography. Retrieved February 12, 2010, from <http://science.jrank.org/pages/8159/womanism.html>.>womanism-Bibliography
- Nwapa, F. (2008). Women and Creative Writing in Africa. In T. Olaniyan & A. Quayson (Eds.), *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* (pp. 526-532). USA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Ogundipe-Leslie, M. (2008). Stiwanism: Feminism in an African Context. In T. Olaniyan & A. Quayson (Eds.), *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* (pp. 542-550). USA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Okoh, J. O. (2008). Challenging Gender Inequality: Nigerian Women Dramatists. In A. U. Iwara (Ed.), *Nigerian and the Millennium Development Goals* (pp. 91-108). Lagos: Fulbright Alumni Association of Nigeria (FAAN).
- Olasope, O. O. (2012). Prostitution: The Appetites of Athenian Men in the Classical Period. *Lagos Notes and Records, A Journal of the Faculty of Arts*, 89-104. University of Lagos.
- Olugbamigbe, Y. (2010). Feminism, Reorientation and Retrieval: Changing Reality and Identity in Male Authored Literary Works. In Y. O. O. Akorede and A. A. Asiyanbola (Eds.), *Gender Theories and Polemics: A Critical Source Book, A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Mrs. Mary EbunKolawole* (pp. 159-168). Porto-Novo, Republic of Benin: Sonou Press.
- Onwuchekwa, J. N. (1983). *Chinaagorom*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Nigeria Publishers.
- Oppermann, S. (1994). *Feminist Literary Criticism: Expanding the Canon as Regards the Novel*. Retrieved June 14, 2009, from <http://members.tripod.com/-warlight/OPPERMANN.html-1/2/08>
- Skinner, E. (1996). *Women and the National Experience: Primary Sources in American History*. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers.

Sotunsa, M. (2008). *Feminism & Gender Discourse: The African Experience*. Sagamu: Ojoko-Biri-Kale Press.

Sudarkasa, N. (2005). The 'Status of Women' in Indigenous African Societies. In A. Cornwall (Ed.), *Readings in Gender in Africa* (pp. 25-41). London: The International African Institute.

Ubesie, T. U. (1973). *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.

Wood, J. T. (2003). *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender and Culture, 5th ed.* United States: Thomson, Wadsworth Publishing.

www.ijaasng.com