

**POSTULATIONS ON MOTHERHOOD IN AFRICA AS
PORTRAYED BY MARGARET OGOLA'S *THE RIVER AND THE
SOURCE* AND BUCHI EMECHETA'S *THE JOYS OF
MOTHERHOOD***

BY

JANE WANGARI WAWERU

**A Research Project Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements For The Degree of Masters of Arts in Literature,
University Of Nairobi**

2014

DECLARATION

This Research Project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree in any other University.

Name Signature: _____ Date: _____

Jane W. Waweru

C50/71583/2011

This Research Project has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

First Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dr. Joseph Muleka

Second Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Prof. Monica Mweseli

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Gideon Waweru and mother Joyce Wanjiru, who made me into who I am today. To my dear husband, Joseph Ndegwa for being so helpful and understanding during this study. To my dear children, Sarah, Shiro, Mose, Shiko, Kabz, Mwes, Lala, Wesh and Zeddy for their great support in this endeavour. Special thanks to Kamwes and Lala, for the tender care they took for me during my study. I will be forever grateful. Sarah, how can I reward you for tirelessly and willingly typing my work? I owe apperception to you all. Above all, this is all God's glory who has seen me this far.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research would not have been successfully completed without the guidance tolerance and dedication of my esteemed supervisors- Dr. Joseph Muleka and Professor Monica Mweseli for whom I will be forever indebted. I wish to offer my gratitude to Dr. Tom Odhiambo for this assistance with study materials on the texts.

Of special mention are my esteemed tutors who relentlessly accorded their effort to lay foundation for this wonderful course-Prof. Chesaina, Prof. Mwanzi, Prof. Chris Wanjala, Prof Henry Indangasi, Dr. Odari, Dr. Shiundu, Dr. Rinkanya , Dr. Muchiri and Dr. Musonye.

My colleague students, Helen Muguro, Joyce, Tom Ogot, Ng'etich, Mweni Muramba and Gilbert for the moral support and intellectual company along the long journey of this research, I shall always remember you. My best friends-the Kahiga family, Dr. Karinga's family, The Kabira's family, Kibuja, Wanjenga and Kiroko, for their prayers and concern. God bless them abundantly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
CHAPTER ONE	1
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.2 Objectives	3
1.3 Hypothesis	4
1.4 Justification of the study	4
1.5 Scope and limitation	5
1.6 Theoretical framework.....	5
1.7 Literature review	8
1.8 Research Methodology	20
1.9 Conclusion	21
CHAPTER TWO	22
THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF MOTHERHOOD	22
2.1 The Joys of Motherhood	23
2.1.1 The Marriage Institution	23
2.1.2 The Expected Joys of Marriage	24
2.1.3 A Child in Marriage	27
2.1.4 The Special Joy of a Boy Child	31
2.2 The Challenges of Motherhood.....	35
2.2.2 Women and Childbirth.....	40

2.2.3 Assessment of a Childless Woman	47
2.2.4 Assessment of Polygamy and Motherhood.....	50
2.3 Conclusion	60
CHAPTER THREE	61
STRATEGIES USED BY OGOLA AND EMECHETA TO PRESENT THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF MOTHERHOOD	61
3.1 Use of Diction	62
3.1.1 Diction used in Setting	65
3.1.2 Diction used in the Expected Joys of Motherhood	66
3.1.3 Diction used in Challenges of Motherhood	68
3.1.4 Diction and Authorial View	70
3.2 Characterization	72
3.2.1 Characterization and Joys of Motherhood	72
3.2.2 Characterization and Challenges of Motherhood.....	76
3.3 Narration and description.....	86
3.3.1 Narration and Double Standards of Motherhood	90
3.4 Setting	99
3.4.1 The Urban Setting and Motherhood.....	100
3.4.2 Historical Transition	105
3.5 The use of imagery.....	110
3.5.1 The Images of the Girl Child	111
3.5.2 Images of Women in Marriage	114
3.5.3 Images of Women and Change	116
Conclusion	118
Works cited	132
APPENDIX	136
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK	136

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The concept of motherhood underlies the very existence of the human race. The world over, motherhood is, so to say, the common denominator in debates defining a woman as a wife and as a mother. However, responses and reactions to motherhood are often varied. Uwakweh (1998) for instance, criticizes scholars who often write about motherhood as if all women possessed an equal sense of maternal instinct and as if they all considered motherhood the same way. Muleka (2007), underscores the premium placed on motherhood among the Luhya community when he observes that the value of a woman in that community is judged by her ability to get married and bear children for the husband. He adds that a woman who cannot bear children is seen as incapable of motherhood and hence despised and often ridiculed, and that for a woman to be happy in the community she must bear children. Similarly, Muthoni (1994) observes that girl children in the African society are from their earliest stage of their life predestined to look forward to marriage, wifehood and motherhood, and that it is upon this premise that their success is measured. In a similar study, Mwanzi (1997), in a case study of the Abanyole community writes that in this community, child bearing capacity is viewed with great importance. That when a wife dies, the husband gets another wife almost immediately to continue with the former wife's child bearing duties.

Chesaina (1997) in her study on Aembu and Mbeere wedding and work song writes that motherhood is a vital stronghold of these communities. The girl children born in these communities are viewed as a source of wealth by their fathers because they will bring dowry in the process of motherhood.

Schipper (1984) in an anthology of proverbs and sayings in African communities has indicated the African world view of women who have the ability to be mothers and those who have failed to be mothers. Indeed, Filomina Steady (1986) while comparing motherhood in Africa with that of the West states that the value of a woman in Africa is based on her capability and capacity to bear children for her husband. This then means that motherhood is something much celebrated.

However, opinion about motherhood is not that unanimous. For example, Stratton (1994) says that even though motherhood has its joys, it also has challenges that have at times suppressed a woman as a human person. Similarly, Filomina (1986) draws a differentiation between the view of motherhood in Africa and in the West. She says that the value of a woman in Africa is the capacity and the ability to be a mother, that is bearing children. This implies that motherhood though celebrated, also has its own challenges and at the same time the view of the concept itself is not universal. The fact that views on motherhood are not universal is further emphasized by Uwakweh (1998) who criticizes scholars that write about motherhood as if all women possessed an equal sense of maternal instinct and as if they all considered motherhood the same way. In a way, Uwakweh's views seem to emphasize what Stratton is implying, that is: motherhood is not all celebration. There are those who could abhor motherhood,

perhaps because of the type of challenges that Stratton above appears to point out. It is evident therefore that the concept of motherhood itself is not universal.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

As cited in my introduction, there are varied views on motherhood. Although motherhood is expected to be celebrated, there are skeptics of wholesome celebration of motherhood, because as they put it, there are challenges as well. Indeed, Stratton emphasizes that motherhood has particular challenges that can impede the growth of a woman as a human person. This is an observation that ought to interest scholarly investigation so as to find out the challenges that Stratton envisages. What, for example, are the challenges to a concept that many would have otherwise assumed to be all celebration?

This research has investigated these challenges because of the impact they are likely to have on a woman's growth. We have done this by analyzing how motherhood is portrayed by the two leading African women writers: Margaret Ogola in *The River and the Source* and Buchi Emecheta in *The joys of Motherhood* and what their views are. That is, the effects they may have on women as members of the society and as their human person.

1.2 Objectives

- i. To investigate joys and challenges of motherhood in the two texts
- ii. To examine the stylistic choices that the authors have used in their texts and how these bring out their vision.

- iii. To investigate the society's image of motherhood and its implications on the women's lives as depicted by the two authors

1.3 Hypothesis

- i. There are joys and challenges of motherhood as depicted by the two authors.
- ii. The analysis of the two authors stylistic choices will lead to the understanding of what their position of motherhood is.
- iii. That, literature as a product of the society reflects the society's image of motherhood.

1.4 Justification of the study

As cited in the introduction, one would assume that motherhood should universally or wholesomely be celebrated. It can be expected that motherhood is in the interest of women themselves. However, although motherhood is crucial to human existence, it has its challenges. Scholars like Stratton points out that these challenges of motherhood can impede women's growth and inspirations. The topic of motherhood has also attracted other genres of literature like proverbs, short stories and oral literature. In these, however, the human person in the woman, has not been exhaustively investigated. The joys and challenges of motherhood in the two texts were therefore justified to be investigated. The study is academically justified.

1.5 Scope and limitation

We limited the research to close critical reading of the two texts: *The River and the Source* by Margaret Ogola and *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emechata. Since the topic of motherhood is very important, we consulted scholarly journals on the topic.

Our choice of the authors was motivated by the titles of their works. *The Joys of Motherhood* would interest a scholar who would perhaps arouse desire into the concept of motherhood. The content of this text was to be found ironical. The concept of motherhood is satirized through the title.

The River and the Source attracted our curiosity due to its metaphorical title. The content would interest a scholar to find out why the literary text would allude to geographical features.

Although the authors of the two texts are geographical apart, yet, their writings about motherhood seem to have similarities, especially where culture order of the subjects is expected to be adhered to. The two authors seem to shed a light of the implications of motherhood in Africa.

1.6 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by sociological literary criticism. The rise of this criticism is associated with Kenneth Burke, a twentieth century literary theorist in his article “literature as equipment for living.” Sociological literary criticism analyses how literature works in a society. Burke specifically considers pieces of art and literature as a systematic reflection of society and societal behavior. This idea is adopted by Ngugi Wa Thiong’o in *Writers in Politics* (1978) who says that literature has a function in the society. And that literature, as a reflection of the society has the duty to

correct misconceptions in the society, therefore art has a function. Okot PBitek in *Africa's Cultural Revolution* (1973) states that the best literature never fails to make a profound effect on the society. The idea in sociological theory is reflected by Wanjala (1975) where he asserts that:

.....A writer as a useful citizen of his society may have a vision for change in his society that may be at variance with that of the majority of his society. His alienation is expressed in withdrawal from the values which majority of his society stands for in order to levy criticism in a view of creating a better social situation

We also used feminist literary criticism. Bressler (2007) in *Literary Criticism : An Introduction to Theory and Practice* states that Feminist Literary Criticism developed in the literary studies in the second half of the twentieth century. Feminist literary criticism advocates for equal rights for all women, and indeed for all people in all areas of life, socially, politically, professionally, personally, economically, aesthetically and psychologically. Emerging in the 1960's, Feminist criticism is one strand of feminist studies. Informed by feminist literary theory and scholarship, feminist criticism is an umbrella term for a variety of approaches to culture and literature that are of particular interest to women. P. 167

Feminist Criticism being an umbrella term for a variety of approaches, we selected the branch of proposed by Elaine Showalter. She believes that female writers were deliberately excluded from the literary canon of male professors. In her essay "Towards a Feminist Poetics" (1997) Showalter asserts that the feminist theorists must construct a female framework for analysis of female experiences rather than adapt to male models, a process she named gynocentrism P. 176.

Gynocentrism provides critics with four models that address the nature of women's writings; the biological, the linguistic, the psychoanalytical and the cultural. These bring out differences in between male and female literary works.

The biological model emphasized how the female body marks itself upon a text by providing a host of literary images a long with a personal intimate tone. The linguistic model addresses the fluidity of the female discourse which is different from the male's rigid one. The psychoanalytical model analyses the female psyche which can affect what she writes, while the cultural model investigates how society shapes women's goals responses and points of view. P. 176.

The meaning of the term feminism as used by Ifi Amadiume (1987) in her PhD thesis is relevant. The term is used as a political consciousness by women that lead to a strong sense of self awareness, self esteem, female solidarity and consequently the questioning and challenging of gender inequalities in social systems and institutions. We also used the African Feminism proposed by Filomina Steady.

Filomina Steady who after examining the commonalities of experiences and response of African women in Africa and the Diaspora, defines an African feminism in a number of traditional rights and responsibilities of African women. This allows her to conclude that the African woman is in practice much more a feminist than her European counterpart. In her work *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally* p.31 she states:

True feminism is an abnegation of male protection and a determination to be resourceful and reliant. The majority of the black women in Africa and the Diaspora have developed these characteristics, though not always by choice. p.35

Apart from feminist approach, we also used stylistics. Barry (1995) states that stylistics is a critical approach which uses the methods and findings of the science of linguistics in the analysis of literary texts. By 'Linguistics' here is meant the scientist study of language and its structure. Stylistics has the aim of showing how the technical linguistic features of literary work, such as the grammatical structure of its sentences contribute to its overall meanings and effects. This aspect assisted in unraveling the meaning of the language used in the two texts.

1.7 Literature review

The aspect of motherhood in Africa has attracted several scholars. Male writers like Ngugi and Senghor (1986) have used motherhood as trope to deliberate their political ideology. The topic of motherhood has also been depicted by Schipper (1985) in a collection of poems from Africa. In these poems, there are both positive and negative implications regarding motherhood. One of the proverbs from the Ganda community of Uganda in the anthology states that 'a woman who brings forth takes trouble upon herself'. Another one states that 'beauty without children cannot prosper' is from Mongo community in Zaire. The two proverbs portray debatable ideas about motherhood in Africa.

In his M A thesis, Muleka (2001) observes that portrayal of girl characters in children's books has effects on the growing child who will then grow to be an adult and a mother. That the books may perpetuate the stereotypes of girl child negatively.

The books, he writes are the reflection of the society which boosts the boy child's chauvinism and reduces the girl child's enthusiasm through the women role models she reads in the children's books. In other words, the girl child from a tender age learns that she is destined to a lower place than that of her boy child's counterpart—that of marriage and child bearing. In particular, the study examines how characters are portrayed in literature emanating from an exclusively patriarchal setting like the Kenyan one.

Muleka (2007) has also conducted a study on girl child among the Abakhayo community of Western Kenya. He states that the girl child in the community is evaluated only by the cows she will bring to the family as a dowry. Unlike the boy child who actually inherits land and property of his parents, she has to leave the homestead and get married to mother children under all circumstances.

Mwanzi (1997) in a case study of Abanyole of Western Kenya states that when a man dies in this community the wife and children plus the livestock are inherited by the deceased's brother or by a close male relative. But when a woman dies the man will get himself another woman of his choice to marry almost immediately to continue with his former wife's duties. The woman is inherited so that she can continue to mother children for her dead husband's lineage. The inheritor has no attachment to the children he sires with this widow, and is only responsible for the children he gets with his own wife. It is the responsibility of the inherited woman to bring up these children alone which can burden her with challenges.

Chesaina (1997) has conducted a study on women's oral songs among the Aembu and Mbeere of Eastern Kenya. The songs, she states, are a form of cultural protest for women. She has described how the women in these communities use oral songs to voice their dissatisfaction in the *status quo*. Through symbols, the women as mothers voice their challenges.

She says:

The song is a genre of oral literature that is the most powerful in terms of versatility and communicability. It is distinguished not only by its verse form but also by its extensive use of imagery and symbolic language. p 192

Chesaina states that looking for food and feeding the family, cultivating the land and harvesting is a mother's responsibility. They voice their frustrations in the work songs. When there is famine they travel far to look for food, a very tedious task. They use work song to sensitize against social exclusion they undergo. They sing as they work in the solidarity of womanhood.

In marriage song, Chesaina writes that women challenge their exclusion their exclusion in dowry negotiations of their daughters and also in the beer sharing which they themselves brew, yet they are not allowed to share it. In the song, women use symbolic language and images to send message that they too should be recognized as contributors to the girl's upbringing and yet they face exclusion.

Muthoni (1997) in an interview among the Miitine community of the Ameru of Eastern Kenya says that the women allow themselves to be physically abused or beaten by their drunk husbands because they need to retain the matrimonial land for their children. When asked why they do not leave the abusive husbands, they said they feared what the people would say. In other words, mothers in this community

have to put up with oppressive marriages due to fear of societal image about them. She says that the woman is aware of her intelligence but rules and regulations have suppressed her desire to voice her grievances to the outside world. pg 161.

Another challenge that Muthoni (1997) has written about the Ameru women is barrenness. This is a negation of mother hood. In this community, if a wife does not give birth, the man is encouraged by his friends as well as by the clan elders to remarry. In this case, the barren woman is not bound to live with the husband. If she doubts her barrenness, the clan elders would advise her to remarry. The husband would then return the dowry to her father and the woman would remarry. Another challenge is that a barren woman can never act as a midwife because women who have children perceive the barren woman as malicious and jealous of those with children. Barrenness is said to be a curse, a punishment for an evil deed committed by the family in the past.

Paradoxically, while a woman's barrenness is openly spoken of, a man's impotence is never publicized. To hide his impotence he is encouraged to marry. The wife then is obliged to get children secretly with other men. The impotent husband would then bring up these children as his. If the villagers know the truth, it is only whispered and any one speaking it publicly is severely disciplined by the council of elders.

Amadiume (1987) has written about the Nnobi people of the Igbo community in Nigeria. In her PhD thesis, she narrates how this community, in which she belongs, has a gender balance when it comes to ownership of land and property acquisition. Although in most African societies, as we have seen, do not recognize the woman as

an inheritor of land and property, the Nnobi women are free to marry women who would bear children for them through the siring by close male family members. This seems to suggest that motherhood is as an aspect that most women aspire for. Through the acquired motherhood by the women they 'marry', these women property and land owners lay foundation for their economic growth. Children born in such cases perpetuate the creation of economic stability of the 'woman husbands', while they too have the advantage of inheriting the woman's wealth. Thus motherhood is a vital entity.

Muleka (2007) in a study on images of women in Abakhayo 'Bweya' oral poetry and their social significance for girl child writes that, the oral songs in this community prescribe a girl to grow up, get married and hence be a mother. A girl is seemingly predestined to marriage. Any girl who does not concede to this order is termed to be a misfit in the society. In case she dies before she becomes a mother she is not buried in her parent's compound, but in a bush far away. A girl is expected to 'stick' to her matrimonial home. The oral poems state that the girls' behavior is similarly as that of the mother who brings her up. This notion poses a challenge to mothers as they try to nurture their girls to fit into their matrimonial homes, no matter how suppressing these homes might be.

Odhiambo Tom in his essay on the Margaret Ogola's *The River and the Source* - "writing alternative womanhood in Kenya" writes that it is within the institution of the family that women struggle and seek to create spaces that allow them some measure of freedom to plot their lives. That women can wage struggles to emancipate themselves through formal education. According to him, women in the Luo

community had not been given a chance to tell their story. This is representative of other African communities where a woman's challenges have not been given a forum to be addressed. Margaret Ogola, he says, has captured a phase in history, which, through literature writing, a woman's place can be redressed to conform with social-economic emancipation.

Carol Boyce Davis (1986) has done study on Emechetas's *The Joys of Motherhood*. In this she says that traditional attitudes on women have enslaved the woman. That the story of Nnu Ego, alludes to the woman who strife to get out of barrenness at all cost. This endeavor to redefine herself lands her into great challenges physiologically, economically and socially.

Wright (2013) and others, have conducted a research on lone mothers in South Africa. This group of mothers was selected for research as they are the care givers and bread winners for their families. These mothers, who have low level of educational qualifications, the employment they get pay lowly. They have the challenge to balance child care and work. They inform that challenges are faced at every turn, whether in work or not in work. That these lone mothers in South Africa experience particularly high level of poverty, and suffer financial and physical insecurities which is compounded by lack of autonomy. Another challenge of these mothers is that they are the focal points for debates around the undeserving poor dependency culture, and of the un-sustainability of the social security budget, and that they are often the object of negative sentiment in the in the media. The fact that lone mothers face prejudice, stigma and doubts over their ability to bring up their children properly is important in

this study. This negative connotation of motherhood is not only in South Africa but also elsewhere in the world.

In South Africa, a widow with children is an archetypal type of a lone mother too. Women who had been divorced or separated by their spouses are sometimes regarded as at fault to their 'failure to retain' the father of their child. Ntshongwana (2010).

Pillay (2008) also writes that the rise of lone motherhood in South Africa has its historical base, that of apartheid. The migration laws barred male laborers to migrate to urban areas accompanied by wives. For a long period, females became the sole heads of their families with the absence of the black male African fathers. The challenges of South African mothers are seemingly unique.

Autobiographical information can be useful in this study. Muchiri (2010) says the following about an auto biography.

An autobiography is the story or an account of one's life written by oneself. The centre of interest in the auto biography is the self... The writing of autobiography entails the reconstruction of the movement of life, in the actual circumstances in which it was lived.

The fact that an autobiography reflects a life as it was and it is lived is important in this study. It holds the truth. In any case the fact that truth is told in an autobiography can shed light on the way women live their lives as mothers. Rasnah Warah in *Tripple Heritage* (1993) has described the state of Kenyan Asian women as mothers in her autobiography. In this autobiography, Warah has revealed how planned early marriages in this closed community affect the women in totality. She writes of restrictions that bar the Asian women from progress. The girl child in this community occupies a lower place in family circles and in the society. Lucky to be educated and

to have moved out of Kenya, Warah writes that she discovered her identity as a Kenyan Asian, and also as an Asian woman. She reveals that hers was a lifelong struggle. She writes:

She knew that her value in the eyes of the society was considerably lower than that of boys. Being “good” entailed nurturing the male ego and preserving the family “reputation” p. 42

Rasnah Warah informs that, in this community the burial ceremony is conducted by the male members of the society. For instance, a woman is not allowed to light the funeral pyre in the ceremony of cremation. A son or a male family member does this. Rasnah Warah broke the life long tradition by lighting the funeral pyre in her father’s funeral of cremation. Since her mother had only daughters, Warah decided to break the taboo, to the amazement of the mourners present. Warah exposes what Kenyan Asian mothers go through as they are disposed into early marriages. Their future is controlled by their husbands and his male relatives. Their motherhood, she states, is oppressive especially when the woman fails to get a son.

In her autobiographical epistle, *A Letter to Mariama Ba*, Kabira (2005) captures a phase of her life as a little girl, growing in the colonial central Kenya. She observes women as mothers and as widows who had been left with the burden of raising their own children and orphans and also caring for men, who were mentally challenged in the society. The widowhood, she states, had been a result of the British colonial subjugation of the Mau Mau Political Movement. Men had died in the war of liberation leaving women as widows. According to Muchiri (2010),

...Kabira’s letter is a request to Ba to find out why women go through the difficult experiences they do p. 33

Ngcobo, Laureta, (1986) in her essay “African motherhood myth and Reality” argues that marriage is a relationship between two groups, not two people. That marriages

benefit communities. It is then arguable that, in African context, marriage between two people is a union that benefits the society. She argues that there should be a change in the way women are portrayed in African writing. It is such a change that this study wishes to ignite.

This study cannot be complete without the inclusion of literary writing that have included women as mothers in their causes. I have decided to include literary writings because my research is based on literary texts *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The River and the Source* as mentioned

The short story genre has been used by authors to communicate their ideas more urgently than the novel. Kiberia (1988) in *Anthology of East African Short Stories*, states that writers of short stories prefer the genre because of its brevity. That the episodes in a short story are selectively arranged with the major characters being at the centre of the activities there in. minor characters, she states, are always at the periphery, but still play a role in developing the major character. Generally, the short story's scope is too brief to allow of too complex a plot or of more than a single major plot. The focus is upon a particular situation rather than a chain of events. P.9.

In this context therefore, a writer like Grace Ogot has used the short story genre to describe the predicament of a woman as a mother in her story "The Bamboo Hut" in the anthology called *When The Sun Goes Down*. "The Bamboo Hut" tells of how an African king, Mboga continually cries to God to give him a son, as a symbol of covering his nakedness. Chief Mboga was polygamous and had six girls who he loved. Although he loved them, he considered them as "birds of the air who at the appropriate season migrate to other lands" p. 154. Chief Mboga voices the image of girls in this Luo community, and in other African communities. The girls 'migration'

would land them to their husbands home, where in turn they would become mothers, (My emphasis). Lack of a male child symbolized nakedness. Chief Mboga is said to have built a beautiful bamboo hut at the centre of his homestead which would only be occupied by the wife who would provide him with a son for his lineage. It is said that two months after going to the sacred hill to pray, one of his wives, Achieng, delivers a baby girl when she went to draw water from the river. The long nursed desire to bear a son for her husband turned her heart was against the baby, and she wept bitterly. She did not know how she would deliver the news about the birth of another girl. The king would not stand it. But then she felt a pain again and she delivered another child, this time a boy. Love hate and happiness intermingled. The chief had waited for a son for twelve years.

She made a grass basket, put the baby girl in it and went home with the boy. This effort to make her man happy makes Achieng's life sad and unbearable. Although chief Mboga was very excited by the arrival of a boy child in his home, Achieng's life became a lifelong misery. She occupied the bamboo hut of course, but the thought of the baby girl she left by the river side never left her in peace. This indicates the lengths to which a woman could go to seek her definition: that of a mother and in particular, a mother of a son in the African society. It is the demand of the male, I posit, that makes a woman like Achieng hate herself for not being able to deliver a son. When the twin baby son is delivered, she hates her own sex by leaving the baby girl by the river. Grace Ogot in this story is, perhaps voicing the challenges that women of Africa face in the demand of their sexuality to fulfill the males' ego.

Short stories address contemporary issues in the society. Fatmatah Conteh, in her story “letter to my sisters” in the anthology *Half a Day and Other Stories* discloses what a mother in a Muslim cultural context is expected to go through. Fatmatah Conteh informs how the woman in this community has been placed at the periphery by both the religion and the society. Through the main character, N’damba, who is a young female doctor that has received education from England, the writer exposes the challenges that the girls, whether educated or not, go through into the process of motherhood. On arriving home to Ethiopia, the father restricts her on the clothes to wear. She should not put on trousers. Her younger boys’ siblings have the mandate of checking the sisters’ wardrobes at will and report to the father about any love letter they find. The adult boys she says, can have children out of wedlock, and the father just smiles. Girls on the other hand, die while aborting, because if they are discovered, they are punished brutally. When N’damba wears trousers after coming from England, the father threatens to disown her and scolds the mother for having given birth to somebody like her. He curses both the daughter and the mother to burn in hell’s fire. The mother here, I posit, is at the receiving end due to the children she has born.

Fatmata continues to state that, any exposure to progress like the influence of western education is not a welcome idea as a liberator of the Ethiopian girls. Father regrets that this girl N’damba, should not have gone to college in the first place; that she should have been like her mother who accepted that she was born to serve her husband, whoever it would have been P 58. This resignation to chauvinism, definitely, is oppressive to women as mothers. In the story, the main reason why N’damba takes her life is that the father had planned a marriage between her and the head of an

Islamic school, who, apart from being ugly, had two more wives who he used to mistreat and abuse. If she rebelled, the father would disown her. The mother of N'damba had been so psychologically brainwashed that she too was in favour of the marriage, reason being that she too had to obey the husband's decision. By taking her life, N'damba states that it would be a step in liberating herself, and her sisters in future. It can be noted here that the negation of motherhood is shrouded in the culture in which the woman finds herself in.

A Somali woman is assumed to contemplate the onset of motherhood with horror. Herzi (2004) writes a story titled "Against The Pleasure Principle" in *Half a Day and Other Stories*. In this, she narrates the predicament of girls in their preparation for motherhood. A Somali girl, she writes, has to undergo circumcision. After the operation, the mutilated part is then sewn up, leaving only a small passage to pass water through. The girl is expected to remain thus until marriage day when the sewn part would be cut open to allow consummation of the marriage. After conception, the Somali girl's first child is expected to be delivered of by Somali traditional midwives, to avoid complications during delivery. The woman would then be sewn up again, she writes. This is a challenge that do date, frustrates Somali mothers some ending in hospital beds. The writer of this short story, I posit, aims at the enquiry of F.G.M, a vice that has been detrimental to many women in communities that practise it. A research conducted by WHO (World Health Organization) 1996 states that female genital mutilation involves the partial or total removal of the external genitalia or other injury to the female organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. This practice poses a risk to the health and well being of girls and women and as a

violation of internationally accepted human rights. I posit that, there are several challenges that impede women as human persons.

1.8 Research Methodology

This research was conducted by close reading of the two texts: *The joys of motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta and *The River and the source* by Margaret Ogola. We tried to unravel the choice of the titles in relation to motherhood. We also used the narrative technique in order to realize the authors' depiction of characters and their usage in developing the plot and the urgency that the two authors seem to portray in addressing women predicament in the wider society. We also employed the literary features there in, to realize the content and their interpretation. Such included metaphors, symbols, irony, paradox and the structural patterns that were in the texts. The characters' depiction also assisted us in unraveling the authors' standpoint in matters relating to motherhood. We also used other genres of literature like proverbs and songs to contextualize the discussion of motherhood within the society. The topic of motherhood being important, we tried to get into scholarly journals to this effect. We used library research to get secondary materials and access online databases to get scholarly journals.

Chapter outline

Chapter one includes introduction to the thesis, the statement of the problem, objectives, hypothesis, justification, literature review, theoretical framework and methodology. Chapter two investigated the challenges of motherhood as depicted by the two authors. Chapter three analyzed the stylistic choices used by the authors that

lead to the understanding of what their position on motherhood is. Chapter four explored reflections of images of motherhood in the society and conclusion.

1.9 Conclusion

As it can be noted in the literature review, the topic of motherhood needs more study. In Africa, motherhood challenges cannot be taken for granted because, as part of the component of the society, motherhood, if nurtured, can be a source of economic stability and social change.

Motherhood, being the foundation of a future generation, can contribute also to the study of the human person in a woman. Maybe the challenges raised by the many researchers could click a light to proper evaluation of a woman as a mother. Our intention was to invite further study in this area.

CHAPTER TWO

THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF MOTHERHOOD

2.0 Introduction

In Africa, a woman is ratified or evaluated by motherhood. The very idea of being a mother makes her to be accepted in the society. Since motherhood defines womanhood therefore, it can be expected that motherhood accomplishes a woman's joy. Motherhood in most cases is achieved through the marriage institution as we shall discuss.

This chapter looks at the presentation of joys and challenges of motherhood in Africa. Reading Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* and Margaret Ogola's *The River and the Source* the study examines the intriguing aspects relating to the woman as a member of the society and the social forces that enhance and facilitate joy and these forces at the same time, portraying the hurdles which can impede the woman's growth as a human person. Motherhood is an entity that is expected to be valued and enhanced. It is out of motherhood that a family comes into being. In fact, through motherhood, a nation is born. In the African context, motherhood seems to be much cherished because it is out of it that a lineage and roots are claimed. Among some communities, for instance the Agikuyu of central Kenya, a clan traces its roots from matrilineal set up. Motherhood in Africa, actually defines womanhood. In her study, Filomina Chioma Steady states that this womanhood is defined or evaluated by the capacity to bear children. However, it is actually Florence Stratton adds that although motherhood has joys it also has challenges. I intend to discuss these joys and

challenges by reviewing *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta and *The River and the Source* by Margaret Ogola.

2.1 The Joys of Motherhood

The marriage is assumed to bring joy in a woman as a mother.

2.1.1 The Marriage Institution

Girls in Africa are expected, to be happy since they are assumed to receive special treatment from parents, relatives and the community at large. From a tender age, a girl is made to understand that she is different from her boy counterpart in relation to sex. The sex of a child is an important aspect in Africa's child birth. This is realized in the way the children are received by the community at birth. Among the Agikuyu, for instance, a baby girl is received with four ululations while her boy counterpart is received with five ululations. From as early as birth, the sex of a child matters due to their expected future roles. Muleka (2011) in *Portrayal of Girl Character in Selected Children's Books in Kenya* quotes A. Oakley's (1972) description of sex who says:

“Sex” refers to the state, the quality of being male or female and to the biological features that accompany being male or female. Sex thus implies a natural division between the most basic physiological differences of males and females, these differences being genetically determined; largely universal, and generally constant.

Apart from the biological difference in sex between boys and girls, the society has further differentiated the girl from the boy using gender. Romaine (1994) in *Language in Society: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, defines gender as the socio-cultural dimensions of the division of humans into male and female persons. P.101. The socio-cultural dimension of gender design, however, seems to assign girls a lower status than that of the boy. The girl according to the social construction, therefore, is

expected to be protected by the males of the society because she is assumed to be the weaker and the more vulnerable. This may be the notion that Muleka (2011) tries to explain. He states that:

The assumed vulnerability of the female is perhaps what is often used to justify the societal view that women or girls always need the physical protection of the men or the boys. p.34

The girls hence learn from a tender age that they are destined to marriage for protection. Their parents would receive wealth in form of the dowry. The marriage would also forge their families with the in-laws hence extending friendship. Perhaps it is the expectation of marriage that brings joy to the growing girl.

2.1.2 The Expected Joys of Marriage

The expected joys of motherhood starts with marriage. Girls are happy to be married and they look forward to it. Akoko in *The River and the Source* for instance is eager to get married to Chief Owuor Kembo. Through marriage she would acquire status of a *mikai* or first wife, and have children to gladden her heart. Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* arrives at her first husband's home with pomp. She too is eager to be married and become the senior wife. This is a position given to the first wife in a man's home according to culture.

Hence, a girl of child bearing age is expected by the society to get married and bear children. It is my view that girls actually look forward to this. To many girls, marriage gives them the hope of acquiring a home to call their own. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Idayi notices the restlessness in girl Nnu Ego as she reached puberty. Nnu Ego continually forgets what her father sent her to do. Idayi advises her father like this:

Your daughter's mind is not here. She dreams of her man and her own home. Don't let her dream in vain. P.28

In *The River and the Source*, a similar anticipation of marriage is voiced by Akoko when her father proved to be so inconsiderate of her need for marriage. He had sent away thirteen prospective suitors, all from dignified families. It is said this of her:

As she approached her nineteenth season and her thirteenth suitor, Akoko was resigned to the fact that 'Were' with all his bountifulness had forgotten to create a man good enough for her. P.17

So, it can be argued that, girls look forward to the joys of a marriage union away from their parents. Perhaps the girls are happy when parents release them for marriage, for this defines their future. Perhaps it is the dowry paid for the girls that make them feel valuable. Akoko, for instance, is priced at thirty head of cattle. This amount, according to the Luo culture then, was two and a half the standard dowry expected to be paid for a single girl.

The fact that marriage ceremonies bring people together make the girls happy. In *The River and the Source*, the girls to be married are expected to be brought forward to the suitors' people, to be seen and evaluated. It is assumed that though these girls demonstrate shyness in front of those men, their presentation to their would-be future husbands bring them joy, in my view. This is because they are described to be eagerly waiting for the suitors. In *The River and the Source*, the girls are said to be impatient when the suitors are turned away by their fathers. It seems logical to conclude that, in essence, fathers mind very much about their daughters' future. They tend to select that suitor that would make a good husband. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Chief Nwokocha Agbadi comments the following about her daughter's choice of a suitor:

This time he wanted a man who would value his daughter enough to understand her. A man who would take trouble to make her happy.....he refused all the very handsome men. P. 35.

The marriage rituals and ceremonies are expected to perpetuate cultural norms and values of a community. This can be expected to bring joy to the girls as they fulfill the society's expectations of them. The dowry paid for them would be used to pay for the families' more wives for the male relatives. This would perhaps be expected to make the girls feel worthy. The reception of the new bride by the in-laws is assumed to make her happy. In *The River and the Source*, Akoko arrives at her husband's home gracefully. Everybody wanted to see with his own eyes this bride who had cost the Chief thirty head of cattle. P.28. They all comment on her physical beauty and strength of body. In my view, positive comments on a person raises her self esteem. Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* arrives at her husband's home with pomp and colour. She was received with joy. The following day her father was sent six full kegs of palm wine to announce that she was found to be an unspoiled virgin. P 29. This, can be expected to give the new wife joy and pride in herself.

The position of the first wife is what many wives-to-be aspire for. She becomes the senior wife in a polygamous family. She is endowed with cultural titles. In *The River and the Source*, such a wife is referred to as a 'mikai'. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, she is referred to as 'the senior wife'. A senior wife has several privileges. In *The River and the Source*, her hut is built strategically and symbolically next to the husband's hut, facing the gate. This indicates that her position in the marriage is superior to any other that would later join the family.

The senior wife enjoys several privileges. She is expected to be wise. She would be the custodian of all her husband's property. She would be expected to work hard and create wealth for her husband. A senior wife has the duty to regulate the conduct of the future younger wives. It is she who would stand for her husband even when he was in the wrong. She is expected to welcome her husband's new wives. A man's 'mikai' is the greatest jewel that adorns his compound. Her position is protected by taboos imposed by ways of *chik*. To lose one's *mikai* is to lose one's right hand. P.38.

She is not expected to be a stumbling block to bar her husband from getting married to anyone else. Akoko in *The River and the Source* demonstrates this when she tells her mother-in-law- Nyar Asembo that she did not bar her husband from getting married. In the context of the two texts, monogamy is not encouraged. So the senior wife has the duty to facilitate future marriages of her husband and be able to control his wives. This is perhaps why the death of Agunwa, the senior wife to Chief Agbadi in *The Joys of Motherhood* is expressed as such a great loss in the homestead.

2.1.3 A Child in Marriage

Perhaps, children are the main reason why people get married in the African context. A child is the key, so to say, to motherhood. In *The River and the Source*, Margaret Ogola presents the crowd as approving Professor Wandia for having a family. She comments that in Africa the greatest accolade is still the possession of children. P. 301. A child gives a woman identity. When a woman bears a child, she is identified as a mother. A child seals the marriage. The woman is happy to be called the mother of so and so. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Mama Abby addresses Nnu Ego as 'Mama Oshia' which is said to be the customary manner for addressing a woman with a male

child. This makes her happy. P.115. Before she had given birth to Oshia, she was plainly addressed as Nnu Ego. Before Nnu Ego had married Nnaife her current husband, she had been married to Amatokwu, a marriage that did not bring forth a child. Nnu Ego had been branded as a barren woman. With her second husband, she was happy to gain a respected identity by bearing children. This may perhaps explain why she wanted to end her life when her first born infant boy Ngozi died. She said of herself

But I am not a woman anymore. The child is there dead on the mat.
P.65

This is echoed by a woman who listened to her. She informed the crowd that Nnu Ego was not mad; that she had lost a child that told the whole world that she was not barren.

In *The River and the Source*, the importance of children for identity is demonstrated by Nyabera. After her husband died, a male relative was got to inherit her. His work would be to sire children for his dead brother. Nyabera withstood to stay with this man in order to have children and retain her identity as a married woman. The same can be said of Alando who left her one son with her mother in law Akoko to go and, maybe get more with a new husband after she was widowed.

It seems logical to conclude that children make a woman to be accepted in the community. This may explain why the community celebrates marriages. When for instance, Akoko in *The River and the Source* was delivered of her first born son, people sighed with relief. They said that was a good omen. They together with Akoko's mother in-law would push Owuor Kembo to go for another wife in order to

add more children in the household. Children are important in the community because they would be the ones to perpetuate the norms and values of the community when the older generation passes on. The community therefore is expected to, honour women who bring forth children. Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* is rejected by Amatokwu's people when she could not bring forth a child. Her husband told her the following;

My father is desperate...I cannot fail my people. P.30

Women, are accepted in the community due to their capacity and capability to have children as purported by Filomina Steady. Failure to get children makes women desperate. A woman without a child, in *The Joys of Motherhood*, was termed as a failed woman. p.65

A lineage of a people has its base from children. Another reason that may make people to hope to get a child is the legacy they would leave behind. They would like to be survived by children of their blood line. The men in the context of the two texts seem to emphasize on having as many children as possible. Otieno Kembo in *The River and the Source* for instance marries two more wives after his brother married Akoko. It seemed as if he was competing to get children out of jealousy of his brother. He already had six sons. The children would continue the lineage.

Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* inherits his brother's two wives who add more children to the already large family. He also marries the little girl Okpo who bears more children for Nnaife's line. Emphasis on children for continuation of the lineage is evident when Chief Obi Umunna denies his daughter Ona to marry. He demanded

that Ona stay in his home and bear at least a son for him, who would continue his lineage.

A child tends to confirm a man's manhood. Impotence among men, as we know is intimidating. It can stigmatize a man greatly. Perhaps this is why the Ameru keeps a man's impotence as a secret. The study done by Muthoni (1997) indicates that men hide their fellow men's impotence by getting him a wife who would be secretly instructed never to reveal the man's condition. The woman would then get children with other men and the impotent husband raises them as his own. This idea of getting children is meant to conceal his manhood status. It is apparent that, it is the children that are used to give the man, who would otherwise be stigmatized, status. One could argue that a woman who is able to give birth has joy for proving to the people that the man is not impotent.

In *The River and the Source*, people started to count the days and the moons since Akoko arrived to find out if Akoko would get pregnant. This could be expected to be an act of trying to find out whether Owuor Kembo was up to the task of siring a child. Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* is upon himself with delight when Nnu Ego informs him that she is pregnant. He says;

Of course I am happy to know that I am a man, yes, that I can make a woman pregnant. P.52

Apart from confirming a man's manhood, a child makes a man proclaim his status in the society. After his second born boy was delivered, Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* seemed to feel more confident with himself. He would be seen walking with the two boys and introducing them to friends proudly. In my view, this is a

gesture of fulfillment. The society would now be expected to respect him. In *The River and the Source*, Chief Odero Gogni is beside himself with joy when he heard baby Akoko cry. He thought the baby was a boy, who to him would indicate strength of his manhood and status. He thought proudly “another rock for my sling”. P.11. It can therefore be argued that children born to a man confirm his manhood.

It can be argued that, the arrival of a child in a marriage guarantees a woman’s security. She would be at ease with the in-laws, who expect children from their son. The arrival of a child seals her marriage. She is protected from the ridicule the society seems to associate with a barren woman. In most communities, the woman is sent back to her people when she proves that she cannot bear children. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego is taken back to her father’s home after failing to give birth. In her second husband’s home, she seems secure because she is able to bear several children.

2.1.4 The Special Joy of a Boy Child

Birth of a child in the African context is very important as we have discussed. Of greater importance, however, is the birth of a boy child.

The view of some people is that a boy child is superior to the girl child. Romaine (1994) in *Languages and Society* quotes John Stuart Mill when he wrote the following about a boy child:

What it is to be a boy, to grow in the belief that without any merit or exertion of his own, by the mere fact of being born a male he is by right the superior of all of an entire half of the human race. P.102

Perhaps it is such a notion of the society that makes the boy child to be preferred by women. In the African context as demonstrated by the two texts, the boy child makes the mother to enjoy several privileges.

Mother of a boy child is given recognition in the society. She is given legitimacy in the home she is married into. In some communities, only the woman that has given birth to a boy can be addressed with the title of mother of so and so. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe (1959) writes that only the wife who had given birth to a boy was accorded the respectable title of mother of someone. Among the several wives of Okonkwo, only the mother of Nwoye was addressed as so. The others who had given birth to only girls were addressed by their maiden names. In my view, this recognition is a privilege. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego could be addressed as Mama Oshia by Mama Abby, which delighted her.

A child can be said to give a woman both psychological and physical security. When Nnu Ego arrived at Amatokwu's home at the first months she was appreciated. The husband loved her and this is described in their love making. Once a child failed to come by, Nnu Ego is threatened. She was made to work in the farm to harvest yam. She was ridiculed. She no longer feels secure in her husband's home. She is ejected from the home when her wish of getting a child makes her to suckle her co-wife baby boy. She is intimidated and even beaten. This of course is due to the fact that she had no child. Her co-wife is secure in the marriage because she managed to have children. Children secure inheritance of their parents. A woman who has sons is expected to stay on in the matrimonial home and inherit her husband's property through her sons. Adankwo in *The Joys of Motherhood* stayed on after their husband died because he

had grown up sons. Her position was secure. Her younger co-wife had to leave the home because she did not have children after all. P. 206. Akoko in *The River and the Source* leaves her husband's home because she only had a girl child, and no son. She felt insecure. Chief Odera Gogni proclaimed in his thought that the child that was born was another rock for his sling. In other words, children give parents security and more so, a woman. It is also described that Chief Agbadi Nwokocha in *The Joys of Motherhood* ordered a big cow to be sent to the people of his wife to report her death because she had grown up sons. It can be concluded that boy children do give a sense of security in marriage.

A boy gives the mother security. The mother of a boy is entitled to stay on their husband's homestead. Through her son, the mother has the right to share her husband's property. When a woman does not have a son, she feels insecure because even her own property can be taken by the other members of the family. A son has the right and power, as demonstrated, to claim that which belongs to his mother. Perhaps this can explain why Akoko in *The River and the Source* decided to go back to her brother's home since she was sonless. Her brother-in-law as is implied, wanted to take her wealth and inheritance after her husband's death.

A son entitles a woman to social partiality of justice. This is evident when we look at Adaku's case against Nnu Ego, her co-wife in *The Joys of Motherhood*. Though it was Nnu Ego who was in the wrong, the men of Ibuza ruled the case in favour of her. Adaku was even fined. The men said plainly why they judged the case that way. It was because Adaku's position in the Uwulum's family had not been ratified. She had no son.

'The men had been unfair in their judgment. She Nnu Ego had been wrong all the way, but of course they had made it seem that she was innocent just because she was the mother of sons. P.187

Although this judgment was unfair, in my view the mother of sons seems to feel confident when it comes to cases against her. The society protects her because she has a son. A similar case of social partial justice is experienced in *The River and the Source*. Akoko does not expect to win the case against her brother-in-law. She reasons this way

She knew that as a woman, a widow and a sonless mother, the only male in her direct line being a little baby, she was greatly disadvantaged. P 73

Rituals in some communities are expected to be performed by sons. Rasna Warah in her autobiography titled *The Tripple Heritage* explains how a son is important in the family rituals of the Kenyan-Asian community. It is the son who should light the pyre during a father's cremation ceremony. If there is no son, a male member should light the pyre. It is a taboo for a daughter to do so. A boy child seems to be enshrined in taboos in order to protect him. He is very important to the mother. Perhaps this can explain why Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* visits a *dibia* in order to shield her son from harm.

A boy child is hoped to look after the parents in old age because he stays on when the girls get married. He is also expected to assist them. In my view, a boy child seems to be preferred to a girl child. He gives legitimacy to his mother. He gives the mother the right to be buried in her husband's homestead. In some communities, the body of a woman who does not give birth to a boy is sent back to her own people to bury. It is only logical that, a human being is important even in death. Perhaps this is why

Adaku in *The Joys of Motherhood* seeks to be inherited by her husband's brother Nnaife, to try and get a baby boy. That way she would acquire legitimacy in the Uwulum's family. It can also be stated that a boy makes her mother to stay on in the family, even after the husband passes on.

2.2 The Challenges of Motherhood

Although motherhood is expected to give joy to a woman, it has its own challenges. There are several hurdles that make motherhood to have challenges, as we shall discuss. In the previous section we have discussed how adult girls anticipate marriage as indicators of their future happy life. Marriage gives the girls a home to call their own. Children cement interactive relationship among the community, especially where the girls get married. However, the assumptions that motherhood brings joy to the women are sometimes debatable because in essence, motherhood is accompanied by challenges. In this section we are going to evaluate some of these challenges and how these challenges can impede a woman's social growth, in line with what Florence Stratton (1994) in *Contemporary Literature and Politics of Gender* has observed. One of these challenges is the bride price that has to be paid so that the man and his people can receive the girl for marriage.

2.2.1 Dowry Payment

Although dowry payment perhaps makes the girls to feel worthy, it has challenges. The dowry is set by the fathers of the girls. It is expected to be paid so that it can be used to facilitate her family members to get new wives. Although it is a good thing because it makes the girl to feel that she is valuable, sometimes the dowry is set too

high for the suitors to negotiate, hence frustrating the anticipating girls. This is demonstrated by the fear that the girls express when one suitor after another is turned away when they cannot meet the set bride price. In *The River and the Source*, some girls reach their thirtieth birthday without getting married.

In a way we can argue that the dowry, though appreciated, does have psychological effect on the girls. When the suitors are turned away, it appears that the girls' destiny is in the hands of their fathers. It is important to note that in most communities, mothers are not involved or consulted in matters relating to dowry. Men in the community are actually the price setters, as is evident of Akoko's bride price in *The River and the Source*.

According to culture, bride price is set according to the physical beauty and physical strength of the girl and also by the love bond that the fathers feel for their daughters. The men go a field to look for a friend's future wife. When found she is assessed and evaluated. When they recommend her suitability as a wife who would mother children, the dowry is paid. In *The River and the Source*, for instance, Akoko is described as:

A young woman with impeccable antecedents who could be expected not only to nurture children but to build a real home p.17.

Such a description is echoed by Idayi in *The Joys of Motherhood*. He says the following about Nnu Ego:

When a woman is virtuous, it is easy for her to conceive.p.29

In descriptions, in my view, it is evident that the human person about the woman is not regarded as a virtue, but her evaluated capacity to bear children. Bride price in my

view, evaluates a woman as a commodity. Sometimes bride price becomes a trigger of disagreement among people of a community. It is equated to the capacity of children that the woman can give birth to. It can perhaps trigger jealousy and 'talk'. Otieno Kembo in *The River and the Source* triggers such a disagreement due to the bride price paid for Akoko, which was thirty head of cattle. Because the suitor, Owuor Kembo struck a liking of his would-be bride, he announced, that he was ready to pay the amount. According to the Luo culture then, thirty head of cattle was equivalent to about three wives. It is this equating of the woman to the quantity of the dowry paid for her that would later create conflict. Otieno Kembo suggests that the amount could be paid for other wives, which Owuor Kembo disputes. The argument between them brings out the society's evaluation of a woman. He states that greater dowry should not be paid for a particular woman than the others because after all, women are all the same. This flat rating of a woman in my view is in itself demeaning. Obviously, people are not the same, so when women are labeled as being all the same, this is outright incorrect valuation and oppressive.

Bride price at the same time entitles the man to the full ownership of the woman according to the culture. Raymond Williams in *The Analysis of Culture* (2006), analyses culture as a set of regulations and beliefs that binds people together. Because dowry is part of culture, when paid it has repercussions to the woman.

It is only when the dowry is paid that a woman is expected to be legitimately married. Ona in *The Joys of Motherhood* remains 'unmarried' as a wife in Agbadi's home because no dowry was paid for her. The marriage has a price. When the woman fails to get a child, it is mandatory that the dowry should be returned to the husband and

the woman taken back to her father. He can use it to get himself another wife. We can argue that this is inconsiderate because, although the woman fails to get a child for the man, it is evident that the woman had been changed with the time after she had stayed in the childless marriage. Nnu Ego, in *The Joys of Motherhood* for instance, had become thin and dry. Before she was married to Amatokwu, she was beautiful and radiant. When the unexpected happens, and that is, absence of a child in the marriage, it is the return of the bride price which in essence we can argue can demean a woman's personality. She loses value. It also appears that anything else about her, including her economic contribution is neither appreciated nor valued.

The culture of bride price payment has many implications. We can see that when one does not get as many children as expected to equate the dowry paid for her, the in-laws reject her. Akoko, in *The River and the Source* for instance, is expected to bear several children for her husband Owuor Kembo, because a lot of dowry was paid for her and that she could demonstrate fertility for her husband since he was a Chief. Her mother-in-law Nyar Asembo proclaimed her disappointment in Akoko and in her son. Akoko was not giving birth sequentially. Her son had remained monogamous, hence no children were filling the homestead.

This chauvinistic outlook, of the bride price apparently makes the women's sexuality to be misinterpreted. The women who Chief Nwokocha Agbadi abducts in *The Joys of Motherhood* as mistresses are made to stay in the polygamous marriage hence shattering their dreams and no dowry is paid for them. P.34. Legitimate wives are dictated by the idea that bride price was paid for them. They do not have the liberty of

leaving their acquired homestead, unless they are mandated to do so by their relatives. They are bound by the customary expectations and regulations relating to bride price.

A woman whose dowry has been paid is expected to stay on even when a husband dies. She belongs to the deceased husband's relatives. Like any other property belonging to the deceased husband, the widow is to be inherited by one of the male members of the family. It is an obligation. Negation to this obligation lenders the woman to be intimidated. Ridiculing tags are embedded on the woman's personality. In case she goes back to her parents home to negate being inherited her social space is restricted. Akoko, in *The River and the Source* for instance, decides to withstand the tag of *migogo*. This label can be expected to discourage women from attempting to go back to their parents' home. It impedes her freedom. The social space is echoed by Linda McDowel (1999) when she writes in her text –*Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* that:

Assumptions about the correct place for embodied women are drawn on to justify and to challenge systems of patriarchal domination in which women are excluded from the particular spatial arenas and restricted to other.

In some communities, a woman who refuses to be inherited and goes back to her father's home is not expected to mix freely with the other members of the society except in funerals. She can only sing dirges. Akoko in *The River and the Source* breaks away from this tradition by going back to her brother's home after her husband's death, but with consequences. This, tends to tether women to oppressive family relationships. It can be argued that dowry destabilizes the woman and restricts her even in exclusive marriage.

Dowry can be a contentious issue when the fathers of the girls are greedy. Instead of taking into account the need for the girls to get married and start their future lives, some fathers will only consider those suitors who would be able to raise the demanded amount of dowry. These fathers do not consider the feelings of their daughters and their future life. The case where Chief Nwokocha Agbadi in *The Joys of Motherhood* accepts dowry for his daughter Nnu Ego to be married to a person who he himself had never set eyes on is a challenge to the girl. She expresses this by flashing out a painful look on her face but according to culture fathers had to be respected. Her human person can be expected to be obviously affected. Her human person is not considered. As we shall see, the man she was taken to after a long journey was not appealing to her person, but since bride price had been paid, she had to stay on. Bride price seems to hinder a woman's freedom. Bride price as we can see is oppressive to women and can be a stumbling block even to the very motherhood that society seems to value a woman for, actually perhaps the whole measure of value of a woman.

2.2.2 Women and Childbirth

The previous section discusses the challenges brought about by the dowry payment. In this section we are going to look at the very challenges brought about by child birth process. At the beginning of this chapter it is evident that the main reason that makes people marry is to get children and hence start a family independent from their parents. The new life is expected to give joy especially when the marriage is sealed by the arrival of a child. But sometimes, the woman fails to give birth to as many children as her dowry expectation as is evident in the case of Akoko. It can be remembered that she could not give birth in succession, and that the last child birth

almost killed her due to hemorrhage. Child bearing process is depicted as dangerous to women by the two authors. The child bearing process impedes women's physical and mental well being. In essence, some women have it easier with child birth while others do not manage so easily. Akoko in *The River and the Source* experienced an almost fatal child birth process with the second born child, although it was not easy with the first born either. The following process is what she went through;

This particular delivery had been a nightmare. The baby had lain badly and was trapped. She lay there gripped in agony as the midwives tried to turn the baby. The baby arrived blue and puffy with the cord round its neck...p.32.

Of course this anticipation can take toll on the mother. The problems however sometimes do not end with the arrival of a child. A mother's life can still be at risk as Akoko's was after delivery.

And then the mother began to hemorrhage. The midwives struggled with her... For a while there, it looked as if both mother and daughter were goners. P.46.

This near death experience, in the effort of giving birth does as expected, impede a woman's health.

Induction of artificial labour pain is applied to a woman so that she may be delivered of a child due to life threatening conditions during pregnancy. This is after a mother-to-be is hospitalized for quite a while. This as can be expected, has economical implications. The woman for such a period would have left her economic activities in order to be hospitalized, and this impedes her economic performance. Artificially induced labour pain is expressed as being more painful than normal child births.

Elizabeth, in *The River and the Source* who had six more children before experiences this pain with her last born child. It is said;

Anyone who has had induction of labour will tell you that natural labour is much easier. The pain is insistent and unremitting, building up to a crescendo of continuous agony. P.194.

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego is said to have agonized for hours before she was delivered of her first born child. P.55.

Loss of a child can be expected to be traumatizing to the mother. When children born are diagnosed with disability and terminal illnesses, we all can agree that such can psychologically affect a mother. In *The River and the Source*, Wandia's child Daniel had been diagnosed with Down's Syndrome, and five years later, Wandia still remembered the shock, the pain p.283. Later the boy would develop Leukemia and this of course would psychologically affect any mother. He later died leaving Wandia devastated.

The much anticipated child birth frustrates a mother when a child dies. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego was saved from a suicide attempt when her four weeks boy infant died. Adaku went into depression when she lost the baby boy she got with Nnaife after being inherited. The suicide attempt and the depression the women in question express as can be expected, do impede their growth and well being.

Mothers sometimes find themselves in difficult situations when no one is around to assist in the birth process. Of course no one for sure can predict the exact hour of the birth of a baby. Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* delivers herself a baby girl in old

age. She must have passed out in the process because when she woke up the baby was dead. Such a situation, as a challenge, can be traumatizing. It is said of her:

Nnu Ego stared at the picture she made with her dead daughter in horror. She felt like crying...p.218

Child loss through death has a toll on mothers. They are physically and psychologically impeded. In *The River and the Source*, Nyabera depicts such suffering after losing both her sons to a ferocious outbreak of measles. It is said of her:

She was pregnant again but so downcast and depressed that she stayed in her house, rarely going out and hardly eating. P.74.

Perhaps it is the hope to heal the wound caused by the death of her children with her husband before he died that makes Nyabera to go to the man who had lost a wife to be his wife. Out of the relationship a son was born and soon died. This affected Nyabera physically. As she went back to her mother, Nyabera arrived at the doorstep looking quite thin and quite haggard. Definitely in my view a child's death has a toll on the mother.

Another challenge of motherhood is loss of life. A mothers' life is definitely constantly in danger once she becomes pregnant. As we have discussed, no one knows the exact time a baby can arrive. The wait for the hour can be elusive and sometimes, mothers that deliver alone die. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Ngboyele, whose husband was working at a dock died in the process of giving birth when her husband was away:

She had her first baby in the night, and she never stopped bleeding until she died. P. 53.

Death of a woman during child birth is a great loss. May be this is why the Kenyan first lady Margaret Kenyatta has embarked on “Beyond Zero Campaign” to try and reclaim the Kenyan woman from child bearing challenges. In my view, could it be known in advance that child birth would lead to death of a woman, a better alternative could be sought. Life, as we know, is precious.

A sensitive challenge to motherhood is sexual abandonment. Although children are expected to bring joy, the sexual abandonment they experience from their husbands can be expected to stigmatize them. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nwokocha Agbadi would chase the best women in the Ibuza community for wives. Once these women were domesticated by motherhood, Nwokocha would get bored and go afield for some more other difficult ones. The women were abandoned until they gave birth and only came to mate them again after several years. It can be argued that marriage is expected for each other’s company, love and care. A woman, as can be expected, does not require food only. Agbadi would leave the families with one yam a day. A woman, of course needs intimate love.

Once a child arrives, this love seems to be denied her. She is expected to concentrate in rearing the child and forget her sexual desires. On the other hand, Nwokocha Agbadi would enjoy the company of his mistresses when the wives got pregnant. This we can agree cannot be called happy life for women. Her sexuality is compromised by the arrival of children.

Child bearing has effects. According to the society, a woman is expected to change her world view once motherhood sets in. The child bearing affects a woman’s health.

Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* notes that her husband Nnaife looked younger than before after they got their second boy while she herself looked aged. This in my view, can be attributed to child birth and due to the hustle of child nurturing. Nnu Ego was looking and feeling very old after the birth of only three children. P. 187. This notwithstanding she felt proud to parade the two boys to the friends. Children bring joy and pride to the family while on the other hand children are viewed as handicap to the women as can be realized by Chief Nwokocha Agbadi's women.

According to the society, a woman seems to be expected to change her world view once motherhood sets in. Her treatment by the society changes. She is expected to behave differently. She is expected then to think like a woman, not like a man. In other words, her social status and behavior is expected to be changed by the child she is carrying. When Ona becomes pregnant, for example, she says that if the baby she is carrying would be a boy, it would belong to her father, while if it be a girl, it would belong to her lover Agbadi. This idea is challenged by Agbadi himself who patronizes her as follows in *The Joys of Motherhood*:

You are already in the first week of motherhood and all you can do is to think like a man, raising male issue for your father.p.22

It can be argued that children weaken women's personality. This as we can see, dictates them to a social place only defined by their male counterparts. The onset of motherhood suppresses a woman's joy and freedom. Children domesticates women. Before Ona became pregnant for example, Agbadi would come and stay with her for days. Once the pregnancy sets in, Agbadi ceased to visit her. She experiences loneliness due to the onset of child bearing. Child birth, as can be seen, dehumanizes a woman.

There are double standards of motherhood. Children as we have discussed are viewed as a source of wealth and prestige by the society. Children continue a man's lineage. The society view many children as a source of prestige. This is perhaps why in *The River and the Source* it is stated that a monogamous man was an unknown animal and every man worth his salt tried to marry at least two wives p.30. The children are needed so that they may inherit the property of their parents. But again we find that some members of the family go against the inheritance procedure. Otieno Kembo, for instance, in *The River and the Source* grabs the inheritance of his brother because the boy that his brother's son had left behind before he died was only a toddler. The society's view of children has double standards. This can stigmatize women.

The fact that the society privileges a boy to a girl makes the women suffer. Nyabera, for instance, in *The River and the Source* is torn between two royalties. Her new Christian religion restricts or denounces wife inheritance on the one hand while on the other hand she needs children of her own after the ones she got died of a mysterious disease. She needed children in her life. She goes back to the inheritor in the hope of getting a baby boy because a baby boy defines a woman according to the society. When these baby boys are born and then they die, women suffer psychologically. When Nyabera's boy died she was much affected. It is said;

Nyabera had been thrown to an abyss in the quest or in the struggle to reassure herself of motherhood. She needed children. The baby boy's death makes life meaningless p.124.

Because the society's view of children is gender biased, the woman as demonstrated can go to any length to have a boy. Adaku in *The Joys of Motherhood* travels from Ibuza to Lagos when her husband dies in order to get inherited by Nnaife and may be

sire her a boy. When the boy dies, Adaku degenerates in to depression. The society advise her to visit a '*dibia*'; to enquire why her '*chi*' refuses to give her male children. Nnu Ego was saved from a suicidal attempt by the members of the society when her infant baby boy of four weeks died. She cried that that boy was the only thing that defined her. This sexist view of children, as is evident, oppresses women. As is demonstrated, they can do anything to have one. Nnu Ego, for instance, visits a '*dibia*' who would give her charms to protect her son Oshia from harm.

This sexist view of children demeans the girl child. In my view, as they watch their boys' counterparts being favored, they lose self esteem. The girls that Nnu Ego and Nnaife get are not taken to quality school while the boys are taken. They assist their mother to collect and sell firewood for their brothers' school fees. It is the society, I can posit, that constructs this gender imbalance. While the brothers learn and travel abroad, the girls remain to await somebody to marry them.

In *The River and the Source*, however, Margaret Ogola has demonstrated an alternative motherhood and view of children. The girl child, Awiti , is allowed to grow and scale the heights of her education amid misgivings from the society. She does continue Akoko's lineage in a contemporary and progressive style.

2.2.3 Assessment of a Childless Woman

We have discussed that children define a woman. The fact that children are important in the society is viewed differently by women themselves. There are those who do not

see children as their security. Alando, the widow of Owino Sino, in *The River and the Source*, for instance, leaves her son at the mercy of her mother-in-law when the boy was just a toddler never to return. It can be argued that such mothers fail to have any maternal instincts that can emotionally bind them to children. Children to them are meaningless.

Another mother who seems to have no maternal instinct is Becky. Although she gets married to John Courtney, a Canadian pilot who adorns her with all she requires in life, Becky, in *The River and the Source* is never there for their two children. She goes out of their marriage and ends up contracting HIV/AIDS. In such a case, children seem to have no possible impact on their parents, and it is arguable that, to some parents, children are not a priority. Such people lack motherly instincts, and to them childlessness, can be preferred.

Some women just decide not to have children. Vera, in *The River and the Source* demystifies motherhood by deciding not to have any by joining Opus Dei, a Catholic Church group that does not get involved in marriage. Hers is an expression of self will and freedom, but not barrenness.

Barrenness is a situation that stigmatizes women themselves. After marriage, a woman expects children. When this fails to happen, the woman seems to be despised by the society. We have seen that in such cases where a woman has no child to show for her dowry, she is sent back to her father's home and dowry is returned. A barren woman is viewed as worthless in the society. The husband has the liberty of physically abusing her. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, the childless Iyawo Itsekiri had

become pathetic by constant beatings from her husband. Nnu Ego on the other hand could not be beaten by her husband Nnaife. According to the culture in such a case, she was shielded by the fact that she was a mother of sons. She was the recipient of stinging attacks from the members of the society when she was barren.

A barren woman is voiceless. Her social space therefore, is that of intimidation. She is segregated. Her position in the husband's home is taken over by his other wives as is in the case of Nnu Ego and Amatokwu in *The Joys of Motherhood*. Although she was the first wife of Amatokwu, her expected privileged position is ignored when the second wife arrives and becomes pregnant and bears Amatokwu a son. She is reduced to a farm worker.

Motherhood being so important in Africa communities, a woman of child bearing age in most communities is expected to demonstrate the need to have a child by all means. Girls do not want to stay in their fathers houses until their thirtieth birthday. In *The River and the Source* Akoko worries that *Were* had forgotten to create a man good enough for her. P. 17 as suitors totaling up to thirteen are sent away by her father. Idayi in *The Joys of Motherhood* advises Agbadi to look for a man to marry his daughter for she was 'ripe'. He advices:

Let someone marry this girl. She has long passed the age of puberty p.27.

your daughter's mind is not here. She dreams of her man and her own home. Don't let her dream in vain. After all her age mates are already having their first and second babies. Stop rejecting young men. P. 28.

When a child cannot come by with the first husband, the woman is expected to be re-married and try her luck with the other husband. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego remarries.

It can be remembered that as we had discussed in the previous section, her dowry should in this case be returned to the former husband. Her relatives empathize as is the case with Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood*. Lack of a child stigmatizes the woman when she is taken back to her people's homestead. Everything possible is attempted to try and assist the woman to get at least a pregnancy. When Nnu Ego in the *Joys of Motherhood* re-marries Nnaife after being rejected by her former husband for being barren, her father chief Nwokocha Agbadi performs expensive sacrifices to Nnu Ego's 'chi' through the advice of the 'dibia' so that she could get pregnant. When the baby infant that Nnu Ego bore died, the news of its death did not in the real sense surprise Agbadi. He was then happy to learn that at least her daughter was not barren. Barrenness, as demonstrated, seems to be abhorred.

2.2.4 Assessment of Polygamy and Motherhood

Perhaps, polygamy suppresses the women's self esteem. In *The River and the Source*, Ogoma Kwach's wife is abandoned when he inherits Nyabera. It is stated that he intends to sire a boy with her so that he may inherit her wealth which she had been given by her mother. Once married into a polygamous marriage the women are silenced. Instead of engaging in progressive activities they tend to compete with each other to win their husband's favor as is the case with Adaku and Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood*. Their sexual needs are suppressed.

Polygamy can be said to perpetuate patriarchy. Once he becomes polygamous, the man tends to have freedom to do what even his traditions forbid. Nwokocha Agbadi in *The Joys of Motherhood* for instance, makes sure everybody in his compound hears as he makes love to his mistress in his senior wife's compound, which is disrespectful. The privileges of the first wife tend to be over-looked once new wives join the polygamous families. According to the tradition context of the two texts, the first wife is expected to be consulted before a new wife is added into the fold of the man's homestead. But as demonstrated by the two authors, the men in question tend to embed chauvinism into otherwise stratified traditional system, hence rendering the women powerless and voiceless.

As in the case of Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood*, polygamy demeans motherhood. As more children are added into the family, the responsibility of rearing the children shifts from the man to the woman. They then are termed as the women's children. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego's love and duty for her children were like her chain of slavery. 209. In such cases it becomes very difficult to empower the children with contemporary formal education successfully, let alone feeding and clothing them. Ngugi wa Thiongo in his autobiography titled '*Childhood Dreams in a Time of War*' describes how he and his brothers faced hunger and poverty as his mother struggled to bring them up in a polygamous marriage.

Polygamy sometimes hinders women entrepreneurship. This is because everything in the home belongs to the man. Apart from land, even what a woman may venture to get in trade belongs to a man too according to traditions. What Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* get from cigarettes and matches trade is used by her husband and

friends to celebrate the birth of their boy children. Nyambara had got wealth in cattle in the *River and the Source* is almost grabbed by Ogoma Kwach when her husband dies. The only obstacle for him to do so is his failure to sire a boy child for Nyambara. Nnu Ego stops to trade in the cigarette and matches altogether due to enlargement of her family and the additional children of her husband's other wives. The women stall in entrepreneurship due to motherhood. This, I posit, impedes their economic growth.

Polygamy would increase the children in the homestead and enlarge the family. At the same time it can be argued that polygamy brought about poverty, especially when the man is the sole breadwinner of the family. Nnaife's case in *The Joys of Motherhood* can demonstrate this. His meager income is divided between his first wife Nnu Ego and his other two wives he had inherited from his dead brother, and later with girl Okpo, who is got for him when he goes to visit the senior widow of his brother. Because he cannot manage to support them, he takes to drinking palm wine. Therefore, although the society view children as benefiting a man, when they are too many, they can become a source of frustration to the very people that in the first place craved for them.

In *The River and the Source*, polygamy is emphasized. It is said that a monogamous man is an unknown animal. Through polygamy, a man would receive honour and prestige in the traditional society. The lineage would be greater. Polygamy as is evident perpetuates patriarchy. The women, in the effort of winning their husbands, create subordination for themselves.

The present day polygamy is viewed with a difference by the society. The changing culture seems to imply that though polygamy adds children to the family, with it

comes responsibilities. Where the father is able, a polygamous family becomes the envy of the society. There is a pride of belonging and owning. But where the family struggles for the meager resources, the polygamous family can experience poverty. Even where the family is rich, there is sometimes conflict as the property is divided after the father's death. The conflict impedes women as mothers. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego and her co-wife Adaku share meager money sent to them by their husband. The situation is poor. Nnu Ego cannot afford good sleeping place perhaps due to the meager resource of their husband and the numerous children. It is said of her:

She crawled further into the urine stained mats on her bug-ridden bed, enjoying the knowledge of her motherhood P.189.

When her husband brought in yet another wife it can be expected that poverty in the family did deteriorate and hence impeded the wives as mothers who would bear the burden of fending for the family.

Motherhood seems to perpetuate patriarchy. The joys and challenges of motherhood have their beginning from the views on motherhood. The joy and challenges of motherhood cannot be fully discussed without the inclusion of men and their contribution to motherhood joys and challenges as the members of the society. From the very beginning of this chapter, men can be seen to play a very vital role in motherhood. They form the greater part of socializing the society to motherhood. A man seems to regulate and act upon motherhood as demonstrated. Girls as had been discussed, are from a very tender age, made to realize that the expectation of the society is for them to grow and mature for motherhood. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, for instance, the elderly men socialize the girls to motherhood through greetings.

When a girl in the Ibuza community is greeted by an adult elder who is the age of her father, she is expected to reply; “He who roars like a lion”. The elder would then reply

My daughter, you will grow to rock your children’s children. P.27.

This can be said to prepare her for her future role in the society, that of motherhood.

Margret Odera Gogni, father of girl Akoko says the following about girl children;

*A home without daughters can never prosper but is faced
with eventual poverty and lack of friendship forged in marriage. P.15*

Such reflections of the expectations of motherhood, therefore, is viewed highly by men. It is by motherhood that men redefine themselves. Although motherhood is assumed to depict men who have children as important, there are however different views of motherhood by men as demonstrated by the two authors, Chief Nwokocha Agbadi in *The Joys of Motherhood* for instance is viewed to be skeptical about motherhood. He is depicted as going far and wide in search of the tall beautiful arrogant girls. He uses insults in the process of winning them. Apart from the legally married wives, it is learnt that Agbadi has several mistresses and slaves for sexual lust. An important thing to note about his views on motherhood is that, once this women were under his power and were domesticated by motherhood, he was bored by them; and then he would leave them for years and only come back to mate them. He would then go afield for more women. It is said that Agbadi had a soft spot for those women from big houses of chiefs and rich men. He was captivated by their arrogance and their confidence even in their captivity. He did not like the timid and quiet; it is said’

*Most of the women Nwokocha Agbadi chose as his wives and even
slaves were those who could match his arrogance, the biting sarcasm,
his painful jokes and also when the mood called, his human tenderness. P.5*

It is evident that polygamy oppresses women and perpetuates patriarchy. The views of motherhood to the likes of Agbadi are evidently degrading a woman. Motherhood is not welcoming news. When the mistress he very much loved became pregnant, Agbadi enjoyed her regrets and ridiculed her. This is a challenge.

Agbadi, seems to, pretend to honor motherhood. When his senior wife Agunwa died he sent a big cow to her people to announce her death. He also conducted a dramatized funeral. The only thing he would miss her for is her duty of managing his household for him. He wonders who would regulate the behavior of the younger wives for him. Since his wife Agunwa had grown up sons and daughters, and that she was resilient, he declared her a complete woman. In short, therefore, the motherhood is expected to nurture the man's world, that of perpetuating patriarchy.

Once motherhood sets in, Agbadi blocked communication with the wives. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, the women become voiceless. The talk between him and his wives changed greatly. He had the leisure to bring his mistress to sleep with him in his court yard while his wives pined and bit their nails for a word with him. p 36. It can be argued that motherhood can be used by men to suppress women. This may explain why Agbadi does not blame Amatokwu for beating his daughter Nnu Ego after failing to get become pregnant in her marriage. Violence against women perhaps has its roots in motherhood.

Since men can be said to define motherhood, women on their part try by all means to meet the standard set by men for ideal motherhood. In *The River Between* for instance, Ngugi wa Thiong'o designs Muthoni, who goes against her Christian

doctrine imposed by her father and seeks female circumcision. The reason she gives is that by so doing, she would then be viable to get a husband for her bed. The very physical appearance for ideal motherhood is set by men. This is evident in *The River and the Source* when those sent to look for a wife for Chief Owuor Kembo to marry describes Akoko using terms of the standards they approve for motherhood. On the side of virtue, Idayi in *The Joys of Motherhood* recommends that when a woman is virtuous, it is easy for her to get pregnant. Virtue of a woman and not of a man so to say, is expected to stigmatize women and impede their growth

Men are the ones that come with the recommendation of the 'ripe' age for the girl to marry as is evident for Akoko in *The River and the Source*, and for Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood*. When women fail to get children, they go to a 'dibia' who is normally a man to seek for advice. Men of Ibuza *The Joys of Motherhood* advise Adaku to consult a 'dibia' to enquire why her 'chi' has refused her to get a baby boy. Again here it can be said that, it is men that prescribe sexist birth in the society. They lay down the importance of children for the continuation of their lineage. This is so when Amatokwu in *The Joy of Motherhood* tells Nnu Ego that his father is pressing him to give him children, and that he was looking for another wife for him. So men, do play a very big part in motherhood. In *The River and the source*, Ogoma Kwach will try all means to give Nyabera a son no matter what. By so doing he would inherit her wealth. The need to inherit family's widows by men translates to challenges of motherhood resulting to patriarchy.

Although men have different views on motherhood, many aspects of their views are that they value motherhood for their own gain. It is through the motherhood that

men's lineage is expected to be continued. This can explain why the men are ready to pay the dowry as required by their community's culture. It is men that set up the yard stick regarding motherhood. They recommend those women who show physical strength to mother and nurture children and also to take care of the home. The capacity to bear children, as Filomina Chioma Steady (1981) in *The Black Woman cross culturally* states is the yard stick laid down by the African society for evaluation of womanhood. African society being patriarchal, the standards set for an ideal woman can be expected to be oppressive.

Virtuousness is a value that men desire in a woman. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, a girl who is found to be a virgin by the husband she marries is shown appreciation by her people being sent full kegs of beer. The people of those that have been found otherwise receive half kegs fulls of beer to indicate that their daughter was not virtuous. Women that are first married in a polygamous marriage are privileged to be the caretakers of their husband's property. They are the ones responsible for the behavior of the younger wives and are expected to shield their husbands from any unbecoming gossip in the homestead. They are expected to side with their husbands. This can be said to be a scapegoat to perpetuate chauvinism. This is evident when Agunwa the senior wife of Chief Nwokocha Agbadi in *The Joys of Motherhood* blames Ona his mistress, for resisting to let him have her in the sexual orgy in her own compound. Instead she blasts Ona as a bad woman for refusing to give herself to a man they all loved. In such a case we can conclude that, men use women to perpetuate patriarchy.

Men are assumed to trust their wives. Men expect their wives to be contented when they give birth to boys. Perhaps a woman who gives birth to both boys and girls is expected to be a complete woman. She is apparently honored even in death. In most African communities, she is buried in her husband's compound. Since most men have the view that bearing several children makes a woman happy, they then expect women to reciprocate dowry with creating wealth after they are married. Akoko in *The River and the Source* claimed that she had created more wealth than that which was paid for her dowry.

Some men, as we have seen, have the view that all women are the same and that equal amount of wealth should be paid for all women of a cultural community. This is the view by males like Otieno Kembo in *The River and the Source*. In other words, a woman is evaluated just like an object that should bear a price tag. Her human person is compromised.

A view that can be assumed not being favourable to women is that of the sexist birth of children. Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* depicts women going to any length to have baby boys. Nnu Ego, for instance, has to put up with a marriage to an ugly man, Nnaife, with the hope to have boys with him. Men demonstrate that they are proud when they sire boys. Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* for instance is said to have started behaving as if he was the head of the family when the second boy arrived. The couple started changing cloth wears three times a day, to demonstrate to the society that they were indeed happy and contented for getting boys. Nnaife would display the boys to friends. The sexist birth can be expected to exclude women who do not give birth to baby boys.

The naming ceremonies of the boy children is exalted more than that of girl children, ending with men celebrating by drinking palm wine. When the second pair of girl twins arrived however, Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood*, was disgusted and only named them unceremoniously in passing after his wife having insisted on their naming for months. A boy, being exalted more than a girl, can perpetuate patriarchy.

In *The River and the Source*, however, a different view of motherhood is demonstrated by Chief Owuor Kembo. He empathizes with his wife's difficult deliveries and wishes that no more children should be born in his homestead. This is against his mother's wish, who prods Akoko to get more children and quickly. Owuor Kembo on the other hand remains monogamous. To the views of such men, it is evident that motherhood to them is a treasured entity. It is a view that cares for the human person in a woman. By insisting her son to be polygamous, Akoko's mother-in-law seems to support the '*status quo*' of patriarchy.

Religious beliefs as part of people's culture have impacts on motherhood. In traditional religion, the medicine men and women play an important part in people's philosophy of the life they tend to live. In most cases these medicine persons are consulted in matters relating to the family relationships. They tend to control the society through motherhood. A woman who fails to get children, for instance, is expected to consult a medicine man in order to be advised on how to get one. Nnu Ego in the *Joys of Motherhood* for instance, visits one *dibia* and another in order to reassure herself in connection to motherhood. Even those mothers who failed to get male children for instance, Adaku, are advised to seek help from the *dibia*. By relying on medicine men for motherhood it is arguably that traditional religious beliefs do

indeed affect motherhood physically and psychologically. The new Christian religion, however, came with a new teaching.

Christianity is depicted as binding different ethnic communities together. They are taught to be one and that they forget their traditional beliefs and move forward in life. In *The River and the Source* Akoko and her daughter Nyambera, both widowed, find solace in the new Christian faith. They start a new progressive life. The only male surviving in their lineage does not interest himself in the chieftaincy inheritance of his grandfather Owour Kembo. He instead breaks away from the traditional beliefs and joins priesthood. Awiti demystifies the traditional belief on girl children and venture into formal education successfully. She becomes the one to continue the lineage of her grandfather Owour Kembo. In essence therefore, religious beliefs do have impact on motherhood negatively or positively as we have discussed. Akoko and Nyabera chose Christian way of life perhaps because the traditional one was oppressive, as is evident in their previous predicament after being widowed.

2.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, motherhood in Africa has its joys and at the same time do have hurdles that impede a woman's growth. It is evident that the woman as a human person is encountered with joys and at the same time with great challenges as she strives to meet the standards of ideal motherhood set by the society. The challenges as we have discussed earlier in this section tend to emanate from the society's images of motherhood. It is actually these images that need to be addressed because they have implications on the woman's lives as depicted by the two authors. Culture seems to dictate a woman's challenges and perpetuate her exclusion due to its constructions on

women. In the next chapter we can look at these stylistics choices used by the two authors to deliberate on their vision of motherhood.

CHAPTER THREE

STRATEGIES USED BY OGOLA AND EMECHETA TO PRESENT THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF MOTHERHOOD

3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we addressed the joys and challenges of motherhood as portrayed by Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* and Margaret Ogola in *The River and the Source*. This chapter attempts to discuss some of the stylistic strategies used by the two authors that may lead to understanding what their position on motherhood is. Meyer (2002) in his text titled *The Bedford Introduction to Literature, Reading, Thinking, and Writing* explains what style is as:

Style refers to the distinctive manner in which a writer arranges words to achieve particular effect. That arrangement includes word choices and matters such as sentences, their structures and tone and the use of irony.p. 220

Going by this definition, style is perhaps all it takes prolific writers to deliberate on the issues they intend to disseminate to the reader. Through style, the writer is able to create the plot convincingly. In this chapter, we primarily look at how the two authors have used diction, setting and characterization and narration as styles to deliberate their vision. In this section we shall address stylistic strategies as demonstrated in each text. The stylistic strategies will be restricted to joys and challenges of motherhood.

3.1 Use of Diction

One of the strategies Buchi Emecheta and Margaret Ogola have used is diction. This is the choice of words to cause effect. Buchi Emecheta has carefully and selectively used words to arouse the reader's curiosity. It starts with the title "The Joys of Motherhood". This choice of words can be expected to be sarcastic since, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the motherhood has more challenges than joys as depicted by the author.

Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* has used diction to weave her work with Igbo's religious beliefs which tend to control the community's activities. The beliefs also seem to control people at personal level. She uses the community's words like *chi* and *dibia*. It seems that by using these words, it suggests the impact or the magnitude of their meanings to the people of this community. The use of them instead of their English equivalent is deliberate. By so doing, Buchi Emecheta succeeds to invite the reader into the Igbo divinity. As we had discussed earlier, *chi* means one's personal representative in the spirit world according to the Igbo community. The *chi* is believed to control one's activities in the real world. The fact that the community believes in the *chi* as the controller of one's life, this then translates into the resignation of one to his or her *chi's* assumed dictation. By using the symbol of *chi* Buchi Emecheta succeeds in the creating of characters such as Nnu Ego who is resigned to believe and act as her *chi* is assumed to dictate. This makes Nnu Ego to feel restricted to any other form of free life. From this point of departure, Nnu Ego's life as we have seen is that of conformity to the community's expectation in connection with her *chi*.

The use of the word *dibia* has the same magnitude as the *chi*. As we had discussed earlier, *dibia* is the medicineman who is consulted when things do not work as expected by the community members. Like the *chi* in the spirit world, the *dibia* controls the community's life in the real world. It appears as if he is expected to connect people with the spirit world. When baby Nnu Ego develops the painful lump on her head, it is the *dibia* who, after being consulted, declares that this baby was the slave woman reborn. So, in essence, this choice of words deliberately used has great impact on creating of the plot.

Similar words are used by Margaret Ogola in *The River and the Source*. The very title appears to be symbolic and metamorphical. Perhaps Margaret Ogola intends to mean that the 'River' is the generation of Akoko while the 'Source' is actually Akoko herself. These words tend to create image in the minds of a critical reader. A river, as we know, begins with a stream with only little water trickling down, but as it continues with its flow to the sea, more streams join it, and it can also branch out. The river transverses different landscapes before it can slow down by meandering. So, this aspect or choice of the words in the title has symbolic implications and a lot to do with the characters given roles in the text. Akoko, for instance alludes to such river, which encounters hurdles before it can settle.

Margaret Ogola has used non English words like *mikai*, *jodongo* and *chik*. Like we have discussed in Buchi Emecheta's *dibia* and *chi*, the writer seems to amplify their meaning when told in the only language that the community can understand. Her target seems to be the Luo cultural community and its impact on people's life as has been discussed earlier. The choice of *mikai* reflects the importance of the position of the senior wife and its implications and complications. Among the Luo community, the position seems to define great responsibility. Margaret Ogola creates the *mikai* perhaps to indicate the bondage this position has for a woman as a wife and as a mother. She is bound also by the tradition or *chik*. As we had discussed earlier, the *jodongo* or the council of elders rules cases at communal level. But again, it can be remembered that the *jodongo* at times was partial. It could not rule a case of a sonless widow fairly as we learnt in the case of Akoko, who had to go and seek justice from

the colonial government. *Jodongo* has been ironically selected to depict the situation of social injustice.

Diction has also been used in definition of characters. Words are used to describe Akoko as a strong progressive character *vis a vis* that of her brother-in-law, who is weak, greedy and foolish. Margaret Ogola has used words to describe characters in order to fit in their designed role in *The River and the Source*. Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* has used diction to describe characters very vividly. One of interest is the words used to describe Nnaife, the washerman who was to be Nnu Ego's husband. This implied ugly looking man, as stated by Nnu Ego, is defined using positive words when he makes Nnu Ego pregnant. This paradox used by Buchi Emecheta to describe one character perhaps succeeds in changing the view the reader may have on the physical looks of the character. At the end of the novel, he is modeled in such a way that he would enjoy a better accommodative old age with a young wife, Okpo, by the words of Nnu Ego herself.

In *The River and the Source*, diction is used to depict the diverse dynamism of characters of Akoko's generation as they deviate from the revered cultural system. Vera, for instance is described as very clever and dynamic, who chooses her own destiny by deciding not to get married, but to serve God all her life. Vera is juxtaposed with her twin sister Becky, who is depicted as possessing very different social world view from that of her sister.

3.1.1 Diction used in Setting

The different settings in the two texts are described through diction. Buchi Emecheta uses words to describe a strong cultural setting where man like Agbadi depicts the

cultural order. In *The River and the Source* Margaret Ogola depicts a rural setting where the culture dictates the women to marriage and being inherited. In the two settings, communal village life is respected by the people for instance the payment of bride price process. The urban setting in *The Joys of Motherhood* is described vividly as people's lives are affected by the colonial era. Culture of the people is seen as changing due to the interaction with the European culture. When the two interact, it is described that the African traditional culture is changed. Nnu Ego for instance, is described to have accepted old clothes from her husband's white employer because they felt so soft and comfortable. This may allude to the foreign culture which the African's tended to adapt, neglecting their own around that time. This is done using diction. Even where the African men, are described as being slaves of the white man, Buchi Emecheta chooses words to be said by a woman. Cordelia's husband Ubani was a white man's cook. She described that their men stopped being men long ago. That the white man's money had taken away their manhood.

Through diction, the reader is able to evaluate the predicament of the African man, which in turn affects his wife as a mother. She ridicules the society which is in pursuit of the white man's money where in the process, the society's virtues are watered down. Nnaife is given the name of washerman and Ubani a cook, of the white man, jobs that they could do in their cultural roles. Those as we know, are expected to be women's jobs in traditional African communities. Sarcasm as diction has been used to imply this.

3.1.2 Diction used in the Expected Joys of Motherhood

Diction is used to the effect of expecting that motherhood is all joys. From a tender age, a girl child, who will of course grow to become a mother, is cherished and

protected. In the case of Akoko in *The River and the Source*, this girl is almost spoilt with love from her father Chief Odera Gogni and her seven brothers. The writer uses diction to the effect that the little girl from a tender age surprises everyone when she spoke her first Luo words and said *dwaro mara* which translated means 'I want mine'. This perhaps implies the self liberation she endeavored later in life. Akoko enjoys being a cherished girl and an envied adult. Her marriage ceremony to Chief Owuor Kerubo is demonstrated with words that perhaps could bring joy to any girl. This perhaps symbolizes expectations to marriages by African girl adults.

Akoko's joy is also captured in motherhood using words. Her first child, son Obura, is received with joy by the community. The words to describe the situation are 'good omen'. This is expected to give a mother joy. Women are expected to enjoy the places they call their own homes. Expectation of such a situation is created by Buchi Emecheta when she uses Idayi's words. Nnu Ego adolescent jumpiness is translated to mean that she dreamt of only her future husband and a home. It can be assumed that the society translates marriage to happiness.

Motherhood is expected to give a woman identity as we have discussed earlier. The two authors have used diction to portray the expected joys. Nnu Ego, in *The Joys of Motherhood* cannot stop telling the world how happy she was to be a mother of several sons. The society is described to accord a mother with privileges of societal values. Through diction, negation of motherhood seems to be abhorred. Through the words of Amatokuwu to Nnu Ego, he ridicules the situation of a barren woman.

The expected joys of motherhood come with the expectation of happy old age. Through the words of Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood*, a woman is seen working very hard in order to bring up her children with good education. The woman through Nnu Ego, does this without complaining. Her joy, she says, is to see her children grow, who would in turn take care of her in old age.

The Joys of a woman is portrayed in being able to conceive. Diction is used to describe Nnu Ego, telling her husband that she was pregnant. Her husband proclaimed that he had found out that he was a real man who could make a woman pregnancy. The society perhaps is expected to identify such a woman as a happy one. Joy that a woman is expected to experience is thus communicated using diction.

3.1.3 Diction used in Challenges of Motherhood

In *The River and the Source* colonial era is captured too. With it, death of youth is described. Akoko's son Obura dies in the colonial war. Its effect is described using diction. The reader perhaps is expected to realize the loss of Obura through Nyabera's rhetorical questions. The words are carefully chosen. She asks "What has she done to deserve this? Why does *Were* give children only to strike them dead at the threshold of life? What has mother ever done to deserve this?" p. 71. The diction by Nyabera can be expected to be the words of the wider society against untimely death and its effects on a parent. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta uses rhetorical questions too in many instances. A case to consider is which Nnu Ego gave birth to yet another set of girl twins and Nnaife was not very pleased with the outcome. He wished them to have been boys. Nnu Ego is said to have been praying using the following rhetorical questions:

God, when will you create a woman who will be fulfilled in herself, a full human being, not anybody's appendage?

These choice of words are perhaps used to allude to women's exclusion. The double standards of motherhood is described through words by Buchi Emecheta. As we have seen earlier in the last chapter that girls and boys received different socialization. Through language, the adults specify the special importance of the boy child from quite a tender age. The girl receives her due of inferiority at a similar age. Nnu Ego uses words that describe her sons as those who will assist her in old age. She uses words to stratify her girl children into motherhood and into small trader. Hence, repeating or perpetuating the predicament of inferiority to the future woman. The double standards of motherhood are realized differently by Margaret Ogola. Akoko is said to have her grandson like a hawk, being the only surviving male member of her family. This implies that perhaps this boy would have been destroyed by his uncle Otieno Kembo due to inheritance of chieftaincy. Through diction, it is perhaps implied that Akoko in her case was not interested in the chieftaincy after all. As we learn later in the novel, this only surviving male chooses priesthood with the blessing of Akoko herself. Through diction, Margaret Ogola creates a strong character in Awiti to depict the vision in the girl child and waters down the obsession of the male child by the society.

Diction is used by the two authors to highlight the importance of children in the society. The issue of a barren woman brought about Buchi Emecheta through a man's view. *Amatokwu* likens her barrenness to a desert. The diction he uses depicts the society's image of a barren woman. His view is contrasted with that of Agbadi Nwokocha who says he has a low opinion of those men who mistreat women because

they cannot give birth. His preference for an old chief for his daughter instead of a young man who cannot love can be expected yet to affect the young girl. The diction here depicts challenges of women.

When people are challenged for physical conditions they have no control of, it can be expected to challenge them psychologically. In *The River and the Source*, Margaret Ogola has used words to perhaps correct society's world view of children. Akoko was not able to get several children as expected as we have described earlier. Through her own statement, she corrects her mother-in-law who demanded more children. She says:

Children are a gift from Were both to the deserving and undeserving. Do not even murders, witches and sluggards who cannot even feed themselves have children? P. 35

This choice of words seems to imply that Akoko is deeply hurt by the mother-in-law. She had been insinuated as having used witchcraft on her husband in order to bar him from getting another wife.

In conclusion, the witty use of diction by the authors has defined their vision of women as mothers. Words that indicate paradox, irony and tone of the two authors have been used to narrate their plots. Diction therefore makes the work by the two authors appealing and hence readable and memorable.

3.1.4 Diction and Authorial View

Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* has used diction to comment on the predicament of motherhood conception. She has used subtitles to prepare the reader. She seems to satirize women themselves by setting difficult standards for themselves. She engages dialogue that depict the characters either conforming to the *status quo* or

breaking away from the cultural yardstick set up by the society. In her conversation with Nnu Ego, Mama Abbey comes out well as one who decided to have only a son who she educates and she is portrayed as very comfortable and enviable. Through dialogue, Adaku who says words to the effect that she was not ready to conform to the cultural norms any more. She refuses to visit a *dibia* who would be expected to intervene for her to let her *chi* allow her to get a baby boy.

Through dialogue, Nnu Ego is ridiculed for conforming to traditional standards of the demanding community. Her poverty is explained empathetically. Diction is used to describe the plight of a childless woman. Iyawo Itsekiri for instance is described using diction that depicts how irrational the society seems to treat a childless woman.

The word 'curse' for instance to translate children can be expected to have negative effect on the so desired motherhood. It can be remembered that Nnaife earlier on had treasured her boys very much. When they did not give back after maturity, he proclaimed that they were a 'curse'. This in itself can ignite the debate on the relevance of motherhood in the society any way. One can be persuaded to question the rationale of motherhood in the view of a man, who so wanted them to prove his manhood in the first place. Using diction, Buchi Emecheta seems to question the complacency of women in their effort for motherhood. Nnu Ego becomes too busy in bearing children to the detriment of her own human person. This is accomplished using diction.

Margaret Ogola in *The River and the Source* has used subtitles to divide her work using diction that seems to be intended to prepare the reader to what to expect. These subtitles almost bring out the central ideas in the portions. Although the diction used in these subtitles tends to prepare the reader, they on the other hand tend to restrict the

reader from analyzing the portion of reading in a free manner except that prescribed by the author. She rather tends to restrict the reader to her authorial view.

Ogola uses diction to create a platform whereby the woman always emerges the better of her man counterpart. Akoko for instance is created in diction that can perhaps make the reader imagine that such a character is too good to be true. She for instance leaves the wealth of cattle she had in her brother's home and decides to go and live a life of uncertainty in the Mission. Using diction, Wandia's story seems to intrigue the text. The fact that she is depicted to surpass her husband doctor Aoro, tend to contradict the challenges of parenting that at times intrigue a woman as a mother. The diction Ogola uses can bring up the argument whether she is actually a feminist.

3.2 Characterization

3.2.1 Characterization and Joys of Motherhood

Emecheta and Ogola communicate to us through the characters. The expected joys of motherhood are expressed through characterization. It is demonstrated by the male characters that a woman's life desire, is to get married. Idayi represents this thought. He advises Agdadi to get a husband for his daughter because he had noted the restlessness in the girl. Idayi, in the *Joys of Motherhood* seems to represent, the perpetuation of the marriage tradition. Being a man and an elder at that, he checks the growing girls and gives recommendation for their marriage time. Perhaps knowingly or unknowingly, Idayi's endeavor to prepare girl Nnu Ego for marriage may, to him, be a rightful duty as an elder of the Igbo community. The growing girl's interest in life is assumed to be marriage. All that is thought of her is a happy life in marriage to whoever person chosen for her. The same idea of arresting Nnu Ego's restlessness is accomplished by

the character of her father Nwokocha Agbadi who almost immediately summons the Amatokwu's family who had hinted a liking for Nnu Ego to come for bride price negotiation. The male dominance over women is depicted through hypocrisy by Idayi, that the young girl is restless because she needs a husband. A husband according to men in this context is assumed to make the girl to realize her joy in life.

In *The River and the Source*, the character of Odera Gogni tries to look for the best husband for his daughter among the flocking suitors. He would not accept bride price from a poor person. In the discussion involved in the dowry procession, the males from the suitors' side make it clear that the bride would be going to the land of plenty. This confirmation perhaps is expected to make the girl hopeful of a joyous married life. Male characters set the bride prices. Perhaps they take it that by raising the bar in bride price negotiations, the girl would be expected to feel worthy and valuable hence generate joy. Akoko in *The River and the Source* is priced at thirty head of cattle which could normally be paid for two more wives according to the Luo culture. Then she later remembers this with joy in her song before Awiti's marriage. Male characters are assumed to facilitate joy to their new wives. It can be concluded that marriage is expected to be a happy union where each would enjoy the company of the other. Amatokwu gives Nnu Ego joy and satisfaction. The two are said to have had great love until that time that Nnu Ego failed to have a baby for him.

The senior wife position is implied to be coveted by any girl that wishes to get married due its prestige. The expected joy of the senior wife is demonstrated by the senior wife Agunwa in *The Joys of Motherhood*. She is said to have the privilege of watching over the other wives of her husband Agbadi. She has been used to

perpetuate male domination over the women. She blames Ona for not allowing her husband Agbadi to have sexual lust with her, when she concludes Ona to be a bad woman. The character of Agunwa seems to perpetuate women subordination that whatever a man does to a woman, bad or otherwise, should be accepted as right. It can be concluded that Agunwa is a symbol of women's bondage. The first wife is made to believe that her position is privileged while in essence the position tethers her to male domination while at the same time subordinates her.

In *The River and the Source*, a senior wife is bestowed with privileges according to the *chik* or tradition. She is referred to as a man's "right hand" Akoko experiences such privilege but the mother-in-law Nyar Asembo is not happy with her for failing to produce more children. Nyar Asembo can be said to imply how women can be enemies of themselves. Through description, she could not, for example, empathise with Akoko's almost fatal child bearing experiences. She is used to depict egocentrism and lack of reason in relation to joys of having children. It is ironical that she herself is a woman too. In her effort to give her son Owour Kembo prestige as a chief by trying to prod him to get another wife, she is on the other hand oppressing her fellow woman Akoko. Nyar Asembo perhaps symbolizes the conservative culture. A culture that lay too much emphasis on children and marriage.

The senior wife has been bestowed the privilege of welcoming new wives for her husband. This is expected to perpetuate patriarchy through women themselves. It can be viewed as way of keeping the very woman in her matrimony. In *The Joys of Motherhood* the senior wife is ironically depicted through the character of Agunwa. When Agunwa died her husband Nwokocha Agbadi sent a big cow to her people to

announce her death because, as he put it, she was a “complete woman.” She had grown up sons and also she was quiet. Agbadi says that his senior wife was a good woman since she was so unobtrusive and so quiet P.19.

This is expected to imply that, a good senior wife should have the quality of quietness and resilience. This may be translated to mean that she should not fight for her rights. She should be satisfied with the *status quo*. It is hypocritical for Agbadi to have pretended to respect Agunwa because as we have seen, earlier he had behaved unpleasantly by making love to his mistress in the ear shot of all the people in the compound. Ironically, the act itself does not make Agunwa react to her husband Agbadi, but to Ona his mistress. Her resilience is misinterpreted as “mature” Pg 19. It can be concluded that Emecheta has used this ironical situation to ridiculer the position of a senior wife which on the other hand is expected to give a woman joy.

Joys of motherhood is brought about by children. Children importance in marriage is demonstrated by use of several characters. The two authors have used stream of consciousness technique to depict the women’s desire to have children. When she failed to have children with her first husband, Nnu Ego is engulfed in a stream of consciousness. Meyer (2002) describes this as:

This is a technique that takes a reader inside the character’s mind to reveal perceptions, thoughts and feelings on a conscious or unconscious level. A stream of consciousness suggests the flow of thought as well as its content. Pg 174

Buchi Emecheta has used the character of Nnu Ego. In this context Nnu Ego is engaged in such a thought when praying to her *chi* to allow her to conceive. When she suckles her co-wife’s baby boy, it is a reflection of her wish of joy that only a child

would bring her. She had been denied the joy of motherhood by her state of motherhood by being barren. It can be argued that only a child could give her joy as a woman. In *The river and the source* Mark Sigu and his wife are said to show the joy of couples when they are informed of a child's expectations. It is said that they walked home walking on air. P. 161

A child seals marriage, as we have discussed earlier. The character of Nnu Ego in *The joys of motherhood* is used to demonstrate the expectation of marriage. She is a senior wife when she married Amatokwu. When she does not bear a child, this marriage is not sealed. She loses her identity as the senior wife. Perhaps the character of Amatokwu explains the importance of a child for identity. Being the first man in Nnu Ego's life, Amatokwu symbolizes first love of a woman. It is narrated that he makes Nnu Ego happy especially in love making. He is remembered for his love with her second husband who she describes as clumsy and never loving. Amatokwu is used to bring out the society's view on marriage. It is through him that the bride price he had paid for Nnu Ego is paid back. He can be said to be a symbol of humiliation and intimidation. He uses his second wife to ridicule the state of child bearing. The fact that he tells Nnu Ego that she cannot give birth while his younger wife can depicts the ignorance the society has in relation to the ability of child bearing. The society seems to blame a woman for a relationship that does not bring forth a child.

3.2.2 Characterization and Challenges of Motherhood

Amatokwu is also used by Budhi Emecheta to portray patriarchy. The subordination of women by patriarchy is embedded by the very rules and regulations that govern the society. Amatokwu breaks the rules at will. He spends a whole night and in fact all

nights with the younger wife without consulting Nnu Ego as the culture requires. Amatokwu is used by the author to demonstrate the predicament of a childless marriage and the joy denied to the woman. His taking of another wife while Nnu Ego is still his wife is intended to humiliate and stigmatize the condition of a childless woman. He uses his new wife to replace Nnu Ego's identity as senior wife. It is he who recommends farm work for Nnu Ego since she cannot provide him with a child. Buchi Emecheta seems to use Amatokwu to portray chauvinism. It can be concluded that it is he who instills the psychological state that we find Nnu Ego in when she loses her first born with her second husband. He is used to depict a woman's impediment in a childless marriage. His younger wife is described as enjoying life, as she is preferred to Nnu Ego, the very reason being the fact that she was able to bear a child.

Although she is not fully developed, Ona is perhaps the core of all the activities of the other characters in the novel. She demonstrates the selfishness of men towards women. She is forbidden not marry by her father so that she might bear a son for him. He refuses any bride price for her. She ends up being just a mistress for Agbadi. She is used to demonstrate the predicament of women as mistresses. Agbadi frustrates his wives by using Ona. He would leave them for years and go to live with this woman. Such a woman can be expected to be destabilized. A mistress could be expected to enjoy life since she was not bound by tradition like a legally married wife. She can be said to be impeded because her self-esteem has been interrupted by both her father and her lover. Ironically, not even giving birth claims her identity in her lover's homestead. When she dies she is buried without the honour accorded to wives. Her

early death perhaps would signify her liberation from manipulation in form of a mistress.

Nnu Ego is an important character in *The Joys of Motherhood*. Buchi Emecheta has used this one woman to juxtapose both the condition of childlessness and a condition where several children are born. When she was said to be barren she used to pray to her *chi* and wished for happiness that a woman with children was expected to have. Although she later becomes a mother of several children of both sexes, this, according to her, does not fulfill her identity. Through her Emecheta seems to satirize the joys of motherhood by use of a stream of consciousness technique. She writes:

Nnu Ego has allowed herself to wonder where she had gone wrong. She had been brought up to believe that children made a woman. She had nine in all...still how was she to know that by the time her children grew the values of her country, her people and her tribe would have changed so drastically, to the extent where a woman with many children could face a lonely old age p247.

The character of Nnu Ego can be argued to conclude the very aspect of evaluation of motherhood by the society that children are a source of joy and identity. One of the challenges of motherhood discussed is the bride price. In *The River and the Source*, the importance of bride price is downplayed using dialogue. Margaret Ogola uses of the character of Otieno Kembo to portray the society's ignorance of a woman as a human being. He says that all women are the same, and that no single woman should have her dowry paid higher than that of the other women. Owuor Kembo in his part is struck by Akoko's physical beauty. One of the aspects that is pointed out is her navel: It is described like this: She also had a long hooked navel on which two whole rings of beads could fit p. 23. It was said that this was one of the aspects of feminine beauty much valued among the Luo community. It seems however, this that

description of physical beauty is of course not in line with the woman's intelligence or psychological being. Through the description, the woman faces the challenges of triviality. However, it is the physical beauty that justifies the amount of the bride price to be paid. This standpoint is ridiculed using the characters of Nyar Asembo and Otieno Kembo who demanded more children from Akoko with the reason that a lot of bride price was paid for her.

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, a similar description is meted against women. When baby Nnu Ego is born, her father uses dialogue to name and price her. Her name suggests twenty bags of cowrie's p23. Later in life, the character of Idayi is used to comment on girls' virtue and conception. Buchi Emecheta perhaps ridicules this idea with the use of paradox. Nnu Ego, though virtuous failed to conceive with her first husband Amatakwu. She uses contrast to portray the ignorance of the society in matters regarding to sexuality and motherhood.

Traditional beliefs have been used by the two authors to portray challenges of motherhood. When for instance, baby Akoko in *The river and the source* developed bouts of colic, the worried members of the family called the grandmother. She symbolizes the traditional wisdom, perhaps. Through her, description of the cultural order is narrated. Traditional beliefs are evoked as she tried to question who among the departed ancestors and relatives would be behind this colic. She describes how she buried her husband with dignity, after accepting him without question according to *Chik*. She narrates the role of mothers in the families and in the society, and the challenges of keeping the social fabric intact. She describes how her sister called Akoko came to live with her, gave her to her husband, but was not blessed with

motherhood. She asks if it was her fault that she died without an issue. p13. Immediately the name of her departed sister was mentioned, the child stopped crying. According to the traditional belief, the dead sister was demanding to be named, since she died without being mother herself. The challenge here is that mothers as members of the society have to perpetuate the traditional beliefs, some of which are burdening. The necessity of women to be mothers is depicted through the use of the late Akoko. In a similar situation, baby Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* is born with a lump on her head. Like Akoko's bouts of colic, Nnu Ego's lump began to be very painful. Buchi Emecheta describes how a *dibia* was immediately summoned. He represents the society's wisdom and knowledge. He informs that Nnu Ego herself is the slave woman who was beaten into Agunwa's grave. She had promised to come back, and that, she did in Nnu Ego. These descriptions of traditional beliefs make the women as mothers to fear from living out of the tradition. It can be argued that, this fear tethers mothers to what perhaps are exclusive traditions.

The culture of the bride price payment as we have seen seems to be satirized by the two authors. Through Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* it is demonstrated how the bride price can ruin lives of otherwise enlightened parents. When he heard that his daughter Kehinde had gone to her Yoruba boyfriend, it is described that he moved out of the house, ran and scared whoever was around with a cutting object. In fact, he injured a Yoruba youth badly. His behavior is described as that of real madness. Perhaps, Buchi Emecheta puts Nnaife in a ridiculous situation whereby he actually agrees in court that all that drama was due to the bride price. He had used the pretence of ethnicity. He is sentenced to five years imprisonment. This disintegration of parents' life due to the bride price greed is used by Buchi Emecheta to imply the

retrogression of the society. Kehinde can be said to symbolize the break away from the retrogressive culture. Bride price can be expected to impede a woman's freedom. According to the culture in the two texts the bride price seems obligatory to any marriage. Buchi Emecheta uses the issue of the bride price perhaps to indicate how women have been trivialized in the society. The assumed loved daughters are 'sold off' to foreigners. Chief Agbadi in *The Joys of Motherhood* for instance, is used to portray the society's view of daughters, their only worth being to get married and bear children. It is evident that, once the bride price is paid, the girl cannot be expected to go back to her parents' home in Igbo society as demonstrated by Buchi Emecheta. In a stream of consciousness Nnu Ego is in a dilemma, whether to stay married to Nnaife, or go back home to her rich father, but culture forbids such a move. This implies she was not happy in the marriage.

In *The River and the Source*, Margaret Ogola is perhaps being skeptical on how the society has constructed the demeaning label of *migogo*. This translated means a widow who refuses to be inherited and has gone back to her people. The demeaning label is perhaps aimed at keeping a woman tethered to the cultural social order. Through this *migogo* Margaret Ogola has deliberated developed a spring of another generation and another culture. Akoko, the *migogo*, breaks away from the constructs of the society and liberates herself and her future generation. Margaret Ogola seems to downplay the issue of the bride price using irony.

The ironical situation created by Margaret Ogola is where Awiti's suitor came for her hand in marriage. Her father's brother Oyange Silwal had been requested by Akoko to preside over the bride price discussion according to *chik*. Oyange is described as

ready to ask a huge bride price since the girl was both beautiful and educated. In an ironical twist, Akoko just requested for a token. It is said of Oyange that he was very angry with Akoko and Maria for insisting that the bride price be a mere token. He himself would have set it twice the normal amount if not more. It was a waste P. 148. Margaret Ogola, has perhaps used the character of Oyange Silwal to ridicule the expectation of bride the price to equate a girl's human person. He can also be said to have been used to depict irresponsibility. According to *chik* he should have taken care of Awiti after her father died. Akoko is used to remind the society their unfulfilled role, yet they prepare to demand for a hefty bride price.

Characterization is used to portray the use of the bride price to foster male chauvinism. Through Nnaife, Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* satirizes a man's ego in the bride price payment. After coming from fighting the colonial war, Nnaife found Adaku had left his house and that he heard it that she was doing very well without him. To portray his masculinity, he travels to Ibuza to see his dead brother's senior wife. Through Nnaife, Buchi Emecheta seems to ridicule the society's misconception of women's sexuality. He announces he must go and see that nice woman Adankwo in Ibuza. That she must be longing for a man since she had stayed for five years without one P.205. This seems to imply the society's misconception of women, that of not being able to survive without men.

This dialogue puts in place the selfishness of the male members of the society. Perhaps due to the rumour that Adaku was doing well without him, Nnaife goes ahead and gets a sixteen year old girl for a wife. This notwithstanding, the amount of the bride price paid for her surprises the people of Ibuza. It is said of him that he paid thirty pounds for his woman instead of the usual twenty pounds stipulated by Ibuza

custom. p 206-7 . This perhaps, is a projection of Nnaife's manhood. It is described that he returned to Lagos with his new wife and his new confidence. After this, he could even beat up Nnu Ego, which he could not do before. It can be expected that the dowry paid boosts the man's ego, while it excludes the wives as mothers. Adankwo was left pregnant with her menopausal child when Nnaife went back to Lagos with his new got wife. It is narrated that poverty escalated in his congested house. As it can be expected, old Adankwo would have challenges of rearing a child in her menopausal stage of life.

As it has been demonstrated in this discussion, the African society view children as very vital. They continue a people's lineage. They are expected to appreciate their importance in the society and in turn continue the lineage. The society's view of children is portrayed through various stylistic choices. Using the character of Nnu Ego, in *The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta describes the yearning for a child from a woman who has failed to get one. She uses the dream motif. In the dreams Nnu Ego experienced interaction with her *Chi*, the slave woman. The two dreams are about children which she desperately needed to have. A dream seems to express our wishes or fears in life. Sigmund Freud (1900) in his text titled *The Interpretation of Dreams* is quoted by Barry (2007) as asserting the following about a dream:

The unconscious expresses its suppressed wishes and desires. Even though the conscious mind has repressed these desires and has forced them into the unconscious, such wishes may be too hard for the conscious psyche to handle without producing feelings of self hatred and rage. The unconscious then redirects and reshapes these concealed wishes into acceptable social activities, presenting them in the form of images or symbols... in the process the psyche creates a window to the id by allowing these softened and socially accepted desires to seep into the conscious state.

It can be argued that dreams are therefore experienced due to unfulfilled wishes. Nnu Ego would pay any price to be a mother. Her father chief Agbadi is said to have

performed expensive sacrifices for her to get pregnant after being advised by the *dibia*. The very idea of consulting a *dibia* in order to be directed on how to get a child in itself portrays the importance of children in a marriage. Nnu Ego too had consulted a *dibia* several times in the first marriage in order to get pregnant.

In *The River and the Source*, Nyabera too dreams after losing two of her children in a mysterious disease. She dreamt when pregnant and we can see the wish she had to have a baby that would live. The two authors have used characters that are performing traditional rituals to save born children. Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* is in fear of losing her son Oshia to the assumed jealousy of her husband's inherited wife. Akoko and Nyabera perform a ritual for baby Awiti to prevent her from dying like her other siblings before her. These activities seem to reflect the society's view of children. The society dictates the role of women in marriage and obviously, it is that they have to give birth to children among other duties.

Dialogue is used by characters to portray the view of children in *The River and the source*. The dialogue between Nyar Asembo and his sons indicated the disappointment of the society with the chief. The society wanted him to be polygamous in order to supply numerous children to the homestead. It is said of children:

A monogamous man was an unknown animal and every man worth his salt tried to marry at least two wives. p. 31

Children are needed to be heirs. The council of elders or the *jodongo* is used by the author to voice the society's view of children. The *jodongo* is described as advising the chief in the following manner in order for him to agree to get himself another wife.

Consider the welfare of the people...if not for yourself at least get another wife for their sake so that you are assured of enough heirs to guide them in future.p.39.

It can be argued that, the children seem to belong to the society and that a man's duty is to supply the society with as many children as possible. The same view is echoed by Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* about the children Nnaife has sired. Buchi Emecheta uses sarcasm by pointing at some vices that the society voice as a view of children. Nnaife had inherited the three wives of his brother and impregnated them. His first wife Nnu Ego had several children to add to the number. The author perhaps uses Nnu Ego to interrogate the selfishness of one man to sire many children. She sarcastically asks her husband. Sarcastic

Have you gone mad? We only have one room to share with my five children, and I'm expecting another two, yet you have brought another person. Have you been commissioned by the white people you fought for to replace all those that died during the war? p. 207.

In this excerpt, it is obvious that the society through the character Nnu Ego is being ridiculed in their view of children; that although children are important, in essence it does not add up when one person has too many to care for. The society's view of children's worth is however demystified by the use of the character of Akoko in *The River and the Source*. Her two sons had died. Her daughter's sons had also died leaving only one daughter, Awiti. Akoko advises her daughter through dialogue that lack of children should not bother her so much. She deliberates to divinity or to God. She says he gives to all men both wicked and good from his great bounty according to his wisdom and mercy. Doesn't she see the world is changing p.132.This underscores the society's view of children. The society being dynamic, the view of children too is expected to change.

3.3 Narration and description

The child bearing process as we have discussed earlier affects the mother. It has been narrated through description. The character of Akoko in *The River and the Source* is used to depict the predicament of near -death experience in child birth. Paradoxically, her mother in-law Nyar Asembo down plays this experience by demanding Akoko to continue bearing more children because as she put it, great amount of the bride price had been paid for her. The hemorrhage could have killed Akoko.

Another character used to narrate the childbirth challenge is Elizabeth Awiti. She narrates the induced artificial labour as having no comparison with normal labour pains. She terms it as a nightmare p. 194. The choice of words apparently indicates the seriousness of the hurdles of child birth which a woman has to go through in order to acquire motherhood.

Margaret Ogola has used a male doctor intern to tell the obstetric history of a mother in labor pain. Through narration and choice of words he says:

This is Helen Kituku, twenty nine year old female who has a bad obstetric history. She has one living child and has lost four pregnancies at about six months. She is now twenty eight weeks pregnant and was admitted with lower abdominal pain of four hours-duration. p. 252

This can be expected to portray the hurdles and challenges mothers can go through all in the name of having children. Such a mother's physical and psychological health can obviously be impeded. The many pregnancies lost is a reflection of the society's view of children. It seems women in such a situation have to keep on trying to get life children even if it killed them. Perhaps it is the demand of the society of a woman that Margaret Ogola seems to ridicule and its effects on motherhood.

We have discussed here how some of the child births can be challenging and even can impede on a woman's human self. When a child is got in such circumstances, and then that child dies, the woman in fact has nothing to celebrate, so to say. The two authors have used vivid description of the emotional states that mothers go through after a child loss. When Akoko in *The River and the Source* received the news of the death of her first born son Obura, it is said that above and between the sound of wailers an eerie sound was heard once again. It was the keening mourn of the bereft mother.p.61.

Margaret Ogola has used colonial era war to show its effect on the colonial subjects by depicting the death of Obura which affects the mother drastically. She has also used diseases like measles and Leukemia that killed Nyabera's children. She has used medical terms to indicate the case of Wandia and Aoro's child, Daniel, who had a condition of Down's syndrome. Through this child born to two medical doctors, Margaret Ogola perhaps want to demystify death that it can and does occur even to the very enlightened in our society. But one thing is clear-that Wandia as a mother is devastated. Though Wandia as a doctor knew for sure that such a child could not live long, the effects of his death portrays the emotional effect death can have on a mother. Using soliloquy as a device, Margaret Ogola uses the character of Nyabera to question death. She uses rhetorical questions to imply the impediment of a child's death on a mother. She says the following when her young brother Owour Sino died after chocking over a fish meal.

Does it not pay to lead an upright life? Why does 'Were' give children only to strike them dead at the threshold of life? What has she ever done to deserve this p. 71.

This soliloquy by Nyabera definitely reveals the pain of her brother's death as she empathizes with her mother Akoko. Perhaps death of a child is viewed as a punishment of *Were* by the society, which has effect on women as mothers.

Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* seems to use polygamy as a tool to depict women being abandoned after giving birth. Through the character of Agbadi she narrates how this chief would abandon his married wives and even his mistress when they gave birth. She narrates that he married a few women in the traditional sense, but as he watched each of them sink into domesticity and motherhood he was soon bored and would go further afield for some other exciting, tall and proud female.p.5. Even the more loved mistress, Ona, was abandoned when she became pregnant. This perhaps can affect a mother's sexuality.

Nnu Ego experienced a similar situation when Nnaife inherited Adaku as his second wife. Nnaife would abandon Nnu Ego and would demonstrate much lust towards Adaku. This, of course, can be expected to affect Nnu Ego as the first wife. Polygamy dehumanizing the two women as they soon began to win this one man each to her favour. As we have seen, the family degenerated into poverty due to the polygamous practice.

Amatokwu would abandon Nnu Ego when he became polygamous. Ironically, he preferred the second wife who had given birth to Nnu Ego. Child birth itself has been used to demonstrate chauvinism and lack of reason. In *The River and the Source* Elizabeth Awiti had to be moved to Aluor or to the country side while her husband

remained in town. Within the period of only six months, the husband had almost forgotten his family. He had got involved with a girlfriend already, and only dismissed her when she declared she was pregnant. It appears that Elizabeth had been abandoned sexually because of motherhood. The girlfriend had been dismissed because she declared she was expecting to be a mother. This sexual abandonment can be expected to bother women.

The two authors have used narration to portray double standards of motherhood. Buchi Emecheta described how the society has double standards of motherhood by use of sex. The boy child as we have seen is exalted for the multi roles he is expected to fulfill as a future member of the family and of the society. The girl child is put at the periphery by the society itself. From the very tender age, the girl is socialized through language to fit her future roles as a 'cook' and a wife. Margaret Ogola in *The River and the Source* narrates how traditionally, the girl child was not to be paid attention to. She was inferior. She used the character of Chief Odera Gorni to comment. That a man and a chief at that should even take notice of a girl child was unusual and that after all a son meant continuity and a girl would only depart to go and 'cook' for some other clan...p.15.

The fact that girl children could not be reckoned in the same view as boy children is demonstrated in the very greetings in *The Joys of Motherhood*. The elders while greeting boy children would say:

"My sons, you will all grow to be kings among men".

While the girl children would be greeted as

"My daughters, you will all grow to rock your children's children p. 27

Through this defining language, the boys are made to realize that they are superior to girls while the latter would be expected to be humbled to the work of rearing children. This perhaps can be the root of gender discrimination in the society.

3.3.1 Narration and Double Standards of Motherhood

Women themselves to create these double standards between boy child and girl child. Nnu Ego takes his two sons, Oshia and Adim, to school when her husband is in the war. The twin girls are left behind. She says that the twins would have to leave and help her in running the house and in trade.p.194. Nnu Ego brings down her daughters' effort. She is a symbol of society's expectation of a mother. She is complacent and uses her situation to perpetuate gender discrimination. Buchi Emecheta uses the character of Taiwo, Nnu Ego's daughter as a voice against this discrimination. When she said that the boys had to go to their lesson, and that Taiwo should stop mourning since she was a girl. It is evident that, mothers themselves set these gender inequalities in the society. Hence, the girls grow expecting to occupy the inferior marginalized sphere in the society.

Although motherhood is appreciated, the men on the other hand also bring about male chauvinism in their boy children, hence marginalizing their wives as mothers. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, when Nnaife once wanted to talk to his son, he dismissed their mother Nnu Ego. He tells her the following in front of her sons:

Woman, why don't you go to your cooking place and let me talk to my son.p.225

This address would be expected to marginalize the mother, at the same time perpetuating chauvinism in the young man. It can be argued that, both fathers and

mothers perpetuate gender imbalance in the society. The woman as a mother hence continues to be impeded. The two authors have used dialogues and descriptions to indicate the double standards of motherhood. As the boy child is facilitated to take up leadership roles, his girl counterpart is made to prepare for future husband, who defines her identity.

Margaret Ogala in *The River and the Source* states that in Africa the greatest accolade is still the possession of children.p301 Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* comments that a woman without a child is a failed woman p.65. The society in essence perhaps view a childless woman in various ways. This is demonstrated by characterization. Idayi in *The Joys of Motherhood*, in my view, is used to represent the traditional society. When he says that a virtuous woman gets pregnant easily, he perhaps implies that a woman who cannot bear children or barren, is not virtuous. The same idea is echoed by Margaret Ogala in *The River and the Source*. The character of Elizabeth Awiti's mother in-law travelled from the country side to Nakuru town where her son and wife were staying to demand why, after three years of marriage, had no child to show. He insinuates that may be Elizabeth's party refused to receive the dowry because they hid something about their daughter. She concluded that Elizabeth Awiti must be barren.

A childless woman in African society is viewed as useless. Schipper (1991) in *Source of All Evil African Proverbs and Sayings on Women* has indicated so in a Ganda proverb that says:

A useless person is like a woman both lazy and barren p.71.

This concept of a childless woman is echoed by the character of Amatokwu in *The Joys of Motherhood*. He ridicules his seemingly barren wife by telling her that at least she could work in the farm because she has no worth of a motherhood. A childless woman is not accepted in the home she is married in some communities Buchi Emecheta demonstrates this using Amatokwu's report of his people. He says that his father and his people demand a child from him. These people can be said to represent the wider society's world view about a childless woman.

A childless woman is depicted as voiceless. Buchi Emecheta conveys this by using comparison. The barren Nnu ego is compared to her young co-wife. The younger wife is accorded all the privileges in the homestead because she has given birth to a son while the barren Nnu Ego is insulted and in fact physically abused. Another depiction of the society's view of a childless woman is through the character of Iyawo Itsekiri in *The Joys of Motherhood*. She too is physically abused by her husband and affected. She is described in the following manner as having been mellowed by the constant beating of her husband, and that she had become apathetic p.117. Barrenness in African society is perhaps viewed to be caused by divine intervention. Nnu Ego in her first marriage would pray to her *chi* with a ritual of keeping an egg in front of her. She needed her *chi* to intervene and allow her to get children. Her father Agbadi Nwokocha is described to have performed expensive sacrifices through the medicine men's advice to the spirit world so that her daughter could become pregnant. Agbadi Nwokocha can be said to represent the traditional people's worldview on barrenness.

When Nnu Ego got her first baby that died while still an infant, her father was overjoyed. He said at least now people knew Nnu Ego was not barren. Childlessness by choice is not understood by the society. In *The River and the Source*, Mark Sigu

cannot comprehend how his daughter Vera has chosen not to marry and give birth to children. He symbolizes the society's world view of a childless woman. It is only his great love for his daughter, and her great education that makes him to accept the situation. A woman with no child is treated with suspicion. As we had discussed, Mark Sigu's mother in *The River and the Source* had been suspicious of Elizabeth Awiti, her daughter in law. She had stayed three years in marriage and nothing to show. Through omniscient narrator, the mother in-law thinks that a woman who was educated was an object of suspicion, but perhaps, the very suspicion is expected to be connected with lack of a child, not with the education.

It can be argued that motherhood perpetuates patriarchy. The very idea of bearing children to continue a man's lineage is of course continuing patriarchy. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, we have seen women trying by all means to get children for their husbands. Nnu Ego's first baby boy, for instance, gives her immense joy, because, as she puts it, she has born her husband a male child, not a girl child. Through sexist motherhood, Buchi Emecheta has demonstrated that women themselves are the ones that create impossible standards about themselves and by so doing perpetuate the male dominance. In their discussion, the women are portrayed as preferring the birth of male children to that of female children. When Adaku's male child died, for instance, she said she wished that God took her baby girl child. She falls into depression. Nnu Ego is used by the author to demonstrate this sexist notion of birth too. The death of her first boy makes her crazy. The death of her last born daughter however was not received with such shock by her. It is described that since it was a girl had lessened her sense of loss. p.219.

Buchi Emecheta uses Nnu Ego in a stream of consciousness to deliberate the society's sexist ideology and its effects on women as mothers at the same time how the sexist birth of children perpetuate patriarchy. Dialogue is also used to convey the society's view of sexiest motherhood. Mothers themselves socialize the children of both sexes according to society's view of them. The dialogue between the two co-wives Adaku and Nnu Ego, exalts the boy child. That was when Adaku's boy infant died. She asked God why he did not take one of the girls, while Nnu Ego reassures her that she would still get another male child when their husband came. Boy Oshia told her she still had the girl child in the following conversation. Oshia said:

*"But you still have Dumbi" Adaku answered,
"You are worth more than ten Dumbis" p.142.*

Buchi Emecheta comments that from that time Oshia realized that he and his brother Adimu were rare commodities, and he being the older was rarer still p.142. It is evident that these boy children had then been socialized that they are special. Patriarchy is perpetuated through them by their own mothers. The protection of boy children by being taken two a 'dibia' is demonstrated by Nnu Ego. She takes her son Oshia to dibia.

"You must protect your sons against the jealousy of the younger wife. ... I shall prepare a charm for your sons to wear..." p 144.

From this conversation it is obvious that the boy child establishes his importance in the society. The girls were not taken to the *dibia*. It is assumed that they needed no protection since they were not very important. This perpetuates male domination from an early age. The boys, Oshia and Adimu are also given quality education by their mothers while their own sisters are made to operate small trade to assist in the boys' school fees. The family of Nnu Ego can be said to be used to portray gender

discrimination by the mothers themselves at family level socialization. It is pointer to the wider society's worldview on gender inequality.

The naming ceremonies are also implicit of patriarchy. Adim and Oshia in *The Joys of Motherhood* are given names that have symbolic meanings according to culture. It was followed by men drinking palm wine to celebrate. The author uses the naming of the girl twins to indicate gender inequality. Taiwo and Kehinde's, the girl twins are given names that indicate positions. That one came first while the other one came second. No palm wine was drunk. This can be expected to stigmatize motherhood according to gender lines. In *The River and the Source* boy children too are given preference. When Akoko gave birth to her first born boy, people are described to have sighed with relief. They said it was a good omen, for the boy would continue his father's chieftaincy. Description indicates that the boy child was favoured for leadership roles, which the girl, according to the tradition, could not be accorded.

Through characterization, it can be assessed that the two authors have demonstrated that polygamy affects motherhood. In *The River and the Source*, the society views polygamy as the yard stick for continuing traditional set up using the mother of Owuor Kembo, to symbolize the voice of the society, Margaret Ogola amplifies the society's need for polygamy. She uses irony to indicate that it is women themselves who set standards for fellow women. Nyar Asembo seems to be used as a symbol of women stigmatization. She stigmatizes not only her daughter-in-law Akoko but also her own son, Owuor Kembo. It seems she does not empathise with Akoko's near death child labours. Nyar Asembo is perhaps a symbol of materialism too when she demands more children from Akoko as much dowry was paid for her. She demands

that many children be supplied to her son Owuor Kembo through polygamy. She is also used to create a situation of suspicion and traditional beliefs. She accuses her daughter in-law of applying witchcraft to Owuor Kembo in order that he might not realize the need for another wife. She is used as a character to set the ground for the bride price discussion. Perhaps, through her, Margaret Ogola ridicules the ignorance of the society on a woman's sexuality. The fact that her son almost slaps her on hearing that she insinuates his wife of witchcraft is perhaps an eye open to the change that should take place in the dynamic society. She herself is for polygamy while her son is against it. Through her intimidation though, Akoko reassures herself in a monogamous marriage.

Polygamous situation is cited using Otieno Kembo. He is the other son of Nyar Asembo. He marries many wives in succession who then give birth as rapidly as possible. He treats his wives as sluts. There is poverty in his home. Perhaps the author uses him to compare polygamous and monogamous situations. His monogamous brother does well, it is wealthy; Otieno's homestead is projected as being poor. He is depicted as foolish and lacks reason. He is also greedy. He grabs his brother's cattle after the latter died, and also took his widow's wealth almost immediately. Then apparently he is used as a symbol of patriarchy. The 'Jodongo' who are expected to judge cases with impartiality does not question him. He is used to portray the injustice the traditional judicial system can impart on a helpless women, helpless in that they are widows and sonless.

Margaret Ogola in *The River and the Source* uses Otieno Kembo to demonstrate wife inheritance. He very much wanted to inherit Akoko because she was very

hardworking and she was able to create wealth. She is said to be very brave. Through her, Otieno Kembo is explained as lazy and foolish. Perhaps she is used to question the very idea of wife inheritance and its repercussions on women.

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, the effect of polygamy and motherhood is demonstrated using description, characterization and comparison. Before Nanife's situation became polygamous, he could tolerate his wife's insults and whining. As we had discussed earlier, Nnu Ego did not like this husband who was chosen for her by her father. To her, he was very ugly, unlike the men from Ibuza who she describes as lean, straight and witty. Her life with the new husband had been described as boring. But when Adaku came to be inherited Nnu Ego was silenced. She would then try to even win the 'ugly' husband to her side. Using the character of Okpo, the young girl that Nnaife pays huge dowry for, Nnaife is described as having renewed his confidence. On going back to Lagos, he could no longer tolerate his senior wife's insults. It is explained that he could even beat her up. Polygamy apparently reduces women's self esteem. It can also be said to perpetuate patriarchy. In a stream of consciousness, Nnu Ego realizes how right her husband had been for taking the young girl Okpo to be his wife. She thinks that for once, Nnaife had done the right thing and that the girl would see him through old age p.221. In essence therefore, polygamy seems to reassure the male members of the society while on the other hand it curtails the female members' self esteem. Nnaife retires to the country side with Okpo while Nnu Ego goes back to her people to encounter a lonely old age and finally death. Not even her male children for whom she had slaved for their education could relieve her from her predicament.

Polygamy seems to burden mothers with the responsibilities of rearing the children. Before Nnaife was polygamous, they would decide on the house keeping needs together with his wife Nnu Ego. Buchi Emecheta uses comparison to indicate that things changed once Nnaife became polygamous. He turned to be a spend thrift and took to drinking when the too many children in his house were unbearable to fend. The burden of rearing them lay squarely on the mothers' shoulders. The effect is seen in Nnu Ego who is described as carrying firewood as a carrier p.225 in her old age to fend for the family. She grows very weak and this can be expected to impede her.

Through narration, the two authors have described how religious beliefs affect motherhood. Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of motherhood* uses the traditional religious beliefs to ridicule the society's purported faith. In the traditional beliefs, there are double standards. A *dibia* who is expected to have divine knowledge and power, gives false conclusion on motherhood. He recommends some charms for Oshia and says that the younger co-wife might be jealous and hurt the boy since she did not have one. These traditional beliefs tend to favour male members of the society. Of course it is ironical for the *dibia* to have prescribed charms for Oshia, since, the reader is aware that there was no ghost in Nnaife's guitar. Oshia too knew that *dibia* was not sincere. It was Oshia himself who had strung the guitar strings. But the *dibia* due to his position as the divine go-between of the society had the audacity to manipulate Nnu Ego as a mother through payment and through the psychological effect he had on her.

Perhaps Buchi Emecheta uses the character of Adaku to ridicule the traditional religious beliefs. The society prescribes that she visits a *dibia* who would in turn contact her *chi* to know why the *chi* denied her male children. Ironically she defies the prescription. This can be a gesture to liberate herself from a culture which intensifies the importance of male child. After this, she is described as having prospered in trade and in self actualization. She becomes rich and very comfortable as compared to Nnu Ego who is described as miserable and still tethered to traditional beliefs. In *The River and the source*, the new Christian religion is described as giving widows and orphans solace. Margaret Ogola uses biblical allusion to describe the departure of the two women – Nyabera and Akoko from Yimbo to Aluor Mission. The journey is described as:

*Like the children of Israel, they left the flesh pots of Egypt for
uncertainties of Canaan p.112*

Perhaps, the two women did not for sure understand the new religion, but, it can be argued that the traditional religion was oppressive. It seems that their journey to Aluor Mission was a gesture to liberate themselves from traditional set up. The only male surviving in Owuor Kembo's lineage is Peter Owuor. He is perhaps used by the author to illustrate the changing times in the society. Instead of going for his grandfather's stool as chief, this character chooses to become a priest with the blessing of Akoko. Akoko remembers her husband's uprightness using a song. In it she expresses his virtue, his love and his freedom from cultural disciplines.

3.4 Setting

The two authors have used several characters. These characters have crossed several settings. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta has used Nnu Ego in different

settings. After leaving Amatokwu's home she is married off yet again to a man unknown to both her and her father. Nnu Ego represents the predicament of women in what can be said to be forced marriage. It is implied that she did not want to go from Ibuza to Lagos but again a girl had no say for her future life. She is used to indicate the power of the patriarchal society she finds herself in. At one time she is in the village of Ibuza and at another time she is in Lagos. The two environments are not conducive to women's growth as depicted by Buchi Emecheta. In *The River and the Source*, Akoko also transverses rural setting. Her grandchild and great grand children move to urban areas.

3.4.1 The Urban Setting and Motherhood

The characters in Lagos portray greater challenges of motherhood. Nnu Ego *In the joys of motherhood* is psychologically affected by the impact of her second husband Nnaife in Lagos. He is described as follows:-

He had a belly like a pregnant cow. He was short. The belly made him look like a barrel. His head had a lot of hair, which made him look like a woman mourning for her husband. His cheeks were puffy and looked as if he had pieces of hot yam inside them and they seemed to have pushed his mouth into a smaller size above his weak jaws p.43

Perhaps it is the urban environment and the work he did in the city that had made him grow like that. It is obvious that this husband chosen for Nnu Ego was not pleasing in looks, yet Nnu Ego was expected to stay on with him and try to get children. She is ashamed of him as a husband. It can be said that, Nnu Ego is used by her father as a commodity, not as a person with feelings. This would obviously be expected to impede a woman's psychological well being.

In *The River and the Source*, Margaret Ogola demonstrates the urban setting as one that propels a woman to claim her place. Awiti, Becky, Vera and Wandia are such women. They are able to overcome stereotypes about ethnic groups. They pronounce their sexual freedom by their personal independent choices. Margaret Ogola seems to use these women characters to prescribe to the society the need and effort for women to be emancipated- sexually, psychologically and economically. These women experience the urban cosmopolitan lifestyle which they adopt and liberate themselves from cultural stereotypes. Kehinde in *The joys of motherhood* is used to illustrate self determination for her future married life by defying her father. Her father wanted her to get married to a man of his choice who was expected to pay much bride price. Her character seems to satirize the effort that men indulge in as they try to check women's liberation. Ironically her liberation is her father's downfall. As she succeeds marrying the man of her choice from the Yoruba ethnic group her father is sentenced in a court of law for assaulting the Yoruba youth as he was trying to retrieve Kehinde from marrying a Yoruba. She is also the cause of her parents' separation. Because of her defiant choice, her father sees no value for children. In fact he states that his children are a curse. It can be argued that the road to women emancipation has consequences.

Nnu Ego gets a bevy of children with Nnaife. She is to contrast life in urban areas and life in the rural village. Although women in the rural areas have not been depicted as very comfortable, one thing is evident: their men support their families' livelihoods. The polygamous Agbadi, for instance is said to be making sure that his wives were provided with one yam daily. He also hunted wild game for meat for his family. In Lagos, however women are depicted as taking over the role of providing for their families. Nnu Ego is used by the author, perhaps, to portray the predicament of a

woman as a mother in urban setting. She is reduced into a slave. She has to work very hard in order to feed and clothe her family, as well as paying the rent of their one room dwelling place. She has to put up with the husband who degenerated to drinking palm wine when life became unbearable. Urban setting has been juxtaposed with its rural counterpart. It has challenges on women demonstrated by Nnu Ego.

In Lagos, Nnu Ego realized the importance of formal education for her boys. It is described that every Ibo man in Lagos gave his sons education. Nnu Ego is also used to perpetuate patriarchal order. Through her, the boy child is more elevated than the girl child. Her boys are given quality education while she uses her girl children to carry firewood and sell in order to get cash to pay for the boys' school fees. It is evident that, Nnu Ego is used to depict a perpetuation of women's servitude. Her girl children would be expected to end up like her. They are not empowered. As a character, Nnu Ego does not grow. She is a flat character. She can be said to symbolize the conservatism in the society.

Nnu Ego is used to facilitate polygamy. When Adaku arrives at Lagos to be inherited by Nnaife, Nnu Ego stays on. She competes with Adaku to win Nnaife to herself. It appears, the man who at first she so much detested becomes someone to fight for with the arrival of another woman. It can be expected that this gesture facilitates the man more power over his women due to the urban setting. Nnu Ego sinks further into self pity. The traditional role prescribed to women changes when in Lagos burdening them with the role of fending for their families. The family had degenerated to poverty.

It is in urban setting that Nnu Ego's motherhood sets in. Nnu Ego is used to allude to a slave woman who was her "*chi*". She is perhaps used symbolically to define motherhood in the text. The slave woman that was buried alive with Agbadi's wife Agunwa, who was to be declared as Nnu Ego's *chi* has not been given a name. Nnu Ego's life of motherhood has suffering like that of the slave woman. The only difference between the slave woman and Nnu Ego was that the slave woman was buried in a shallow grave with Agunwa while Nnu Ego was built a shrine to signify that she was an important mother. Nnu Ego died at the road side with no child to hold her hand after degenerate into madness. A condition like this, is regrettable, owing to the fact that it has been brought about by the very fact that is expected to give a woman identity and that is motherhood. It appears that the author uses her to ridicule the state of glorifying motherhood.

In *The River and the Source*, the character of Akoko alludes to a river. A river begins as a small stream, meandering through hills and valleys before settling down into the sea. This appears to allude to the challenges the characters like Akoko encounters as a mother before she can really settle and progress. In essence, Akoko's character is seen to transverse diverse geographical settings. Her grandchild Awiti and her grand children benefit from the urban life. As we have discussed earlier, the urban setting exposes these characters to cosmopolitan interaction. The cosmopolitan population brings with it diverse cultural and ethnic merging. Ethnic stereotypes are downplayed as ethnic groups intermarry. Wandia and Aoro have been used to demonstrate this.

The other character that Buchi Emecheta uses in comparison to Nnu Ego is Adaku. Perhaps she is used to imply the perpetuation of cultural order. Her husband dies

leaving her with a girl and no boy. The culture recommended that in such a case, the widow could be inherited by the next brother in line in order to continue the dead brother's lineage. She does not hide her desire to be inherited by Nnaife. She gets a baby boy with him that soon dies. She degenerates into depression. Through her we learn that according to Ibo culture, a woman without a son is never ratified as a complete wife. She has no identity. If she died, her body would be sent back to her people. In my view, she can be said to be used by the author to contrast the conservative traditional culture with the progressive cosmopolitan one.

Adaku is used to contrast Nnu Ego. She defies the cultural order. She refuses to visit a *dibia* as advised by the men of Ibo to seek why her *chi* refused to give her a baby boy. She later breaks away from all the traditional barriers. She leaves Nnaife's home, engages in prostitution, and then settles down to a profitable trade in clothes and materials. Adaku as can be noted educates her girl children. She becomes rich and enviable. It is apparent that, she is no longer tethered to the oppressive traditional system. Although she first engages in a degrading practice of prostitution, she soon realizes that this too is oppressive. Her character demonstrates women's emancipation and also indicates the progress one can cultivate for herself through making a self decision. This takes place in Lagos.

Buchi Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* however, uses the character of Adaku to comment on the demands of the society for child bearing. According to the Ibo culture, she would not be properly buried as we have already seen since has been used by the author to speak out for women who would find themselves in such predicament. Adaku says;

The way they go on about it one would think I know where sons are made and have been neglectful about taking one for my husband.... Yet the more I think about it the more I realize that we women set, impossible standards for ourselves p. 189.

It appears that the author has used this dialogue to challenge the society for its views on children and motherhood. It is clear that the women are impeded by the very fact of creating life.

3.4.2 Historical Transition

The two authors have used the colonial era to set their texts. Buchi Emecheta uses characters to depict challenges of women as mothers in urban setting during this era. Their husbands work for meager pay in white men's houses, while others work in the docks. Ubani, for instance is a white man's cook, while Nnaife is a washerman for a white lady. The men are degraded in their places of work. Since the meager pay is not enough for housekeeping, the women find themselves forced to operate small trades to make ends meet. Nnu Ego, for instance had to buy and carry firewood to sell in order to make a small profit. These in my view impede a woman as a mother.

Characters are used by Buchi Emecheta to illustrate the predicament of the lives of both men and women during colonial time. This era impedes on people's social cultural and economic life. Those in urban areas are depicted as greatly affected by the European culture. This culture degrades the African man, who in turn releases it to the wife. The man working in white man's homes do degrading jobs. Nnaife, for instance works as a washerman as we have seen. He washes even the white lady's underwears. He is overworked and only has half a day off on Sundays. Interestingly, other whites borrow this servant from his employer to go and wash for them since, as the employer puts it, he knew all about clothes. This recommendation, in my view, is

sarcastic. The manipulation of the African man reduces him to a slave. In the process, their wives as mothers suffer. The African man also changed his traditional identity when he arrived to work in the town. Through the character Cordelia wife of Ubani, Emecheta described these men in the following manner.

They stopped being men long ago. Now they are machines p56.

Cordelia continues to comment on the situation of the Ibuza men and their performance as men:

Men here are too busy being white men's servants to be men. We women mind the home. Not our husbands. Their manhood had been taken away from them. The shame of it is that they do not know it. All they see is the money, shining white man's money p53.

It is this predicament that women give birth to children. Having lost their roles as masters of the family, women are left to fend for their families. This in my view impedes them as members of the society.

Buchi Emecheta uses scorn to ridicule the Ibuza man in Lagos. As we have seen, they do not meet their house hold needs. Yet, once their wives give birth, they join as friends to go and celebrate by drinking palm wines. What they use, as we have seen, is most of time the meager savings made by their wives in small entrepreneurship. Perhaps Buchi Emecheta uses the character of Cordelia to comment and ridicule this behaviour. She says that, a man is never woken up from his masculine slumber when his wife is in labour. When the baby is born, the husband's are waken up so that they can:-

Begin their labour pains by drinking palm wine p56

This sarcasm is used to indicate that women as mothers abhor their husband's celebration behavior after their women give birth, in my opinion. When Nnu Ego

delivers her first baby boy, her meager savings from cigarette sale is spent by Nnaife and his male friends for the celebration of the birth. This impedes a woman's entrepreneurship spirit.

The colonial era is demonstrated as reducing the people to poverty. At one time after arriving in Lagos, Nnu Ego is said to have had only one rappa, which she could wash and wait for it to dry before putting it on. This is a condition that she never experienced in Ibuza. As we can remember, Nnu Ego was a daughter of chief. She never lacked in anything. Even in her first husband's home, we are informed that she actually never went hungry. In Lagos however, she had to put up with hunger. When her husband Nnaife was taken to fight in the British colonial war, Nnu Ego and her son Oshia almost starved to death, were it not for a good neighbor. This in my view was an experience brought about by the colonial era. It had effects on women as mothers. The men went to fight a war, much according to Nnaife, Africans had little knowledge of.

Contrast is used to compare living conditions during the colonial era. This historical era did affect people's culture. Through the character of Nnu Ego, we are informed that new born babies in Igbo culture wore new clothes. Only babies born by slaves could wear old clothes. But Nnu Ego accepted the old baby clothes that were given to her by her husband's employer. She was tempted by their softness, and, she had degenerated into poverty, as we have learnt. She receives the baby clothes and uses them confirming to herself that no one would come to know of it. Ibuza was far. This acceptance of the old clothes from the white lady against the tradition, in my view, is

used by the author to express the effect of colonization to African culture which in turn affects women as mothers.

In *The River and the Source* the colonial era does affect women as mothers. Akoko's son Obura dies in the British colonial war in Tanzania. On receiving the news, Akoko is devastated. She groans in the pain of loss. It is assumed that the death of Obura made her father to die. He never recovered from the shocking news of his son's death. Akoko is widowed around this era.

The colonial era brought with it the stratified judicial system, formal education and foreign religion. Akoko was to benefit from the colonial judicial system. She accused her brother-in-law to the colonial district officer who ruled the case in her favour. She retrieved her wealth in cattle, which her brother-in-law Otieno Kembo had grabbed from her. Her brother-in-law lost the traditional chief's stool. Margaret Ogola has used the colonial era to foreground the beginning of women emancipation, in my view. It facilitated the woman to have a voice, unlike in the traditional era. A new judicial system replaces the old. Akoko perhaps act as a transition between the two phases.

The colonial era enlightened woman as mothers. In *The river and the source* Akoko and her daughter are liberated from exclusive traditional bondage by the Christian religion. At first however, they go there as an escape from traditional stigma that accompanied a Luo widow. Akoko defied the tradition by refusing to be inherited by her brother-in-law. It is only in Christian religion, that a *migogo* would be accepted unconditionally. A *migogo* was a widow who refused to be inherited according to the

Luo culture. She was restricted from social gatherings except in funerals where she was expected to sing dirges.

Formal education comes in place during the colonial era it is embraced by the characters in *The River and the Source*. Awiti succeeds to be a teacher among all odds and becomes the source of a very enterprising family. The society's view of a woman's liberation through education is satirized using the character of Awiti. As she strives to read on, labels are tagged on her personality, may be in order to derail her from her course. This could have impeded her liberation were it not for the strong spirit of her grandmother Akoko in her. The patriarchal society, in my view, could wish the woman to remain in the subordinating position that she has always been. The formal education brings forth a different kind of generation of women.

This education emancipates women in the texts. Adaku's girls in *The Joys of Motherhood* also receive formal education. The formal education is used to eradicate ignorance. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego paradoxically only gives the boys education and leave the girls out. Once they were empowered, it is implied that they forgot their parents. Oshia had gone on scholarship to America while Adim had gone to Canada. Their culture changed. Oshia married a white lady. Nnu Ego only heard about them from other people. Her two girls Kehinde and Taiwo came to see her in old age sometimes, but not the then empowered boys. The wealth of the two sons was displayed during Nnu Ego's funeral. They built her a shrine. Buchi Emecheta has used this ridiculous setting to satirize the sexist treatment of boy and girl children, in my view, and their expected roles in the family.

The formal education during this era, acts as a springboard for change. As we have seen, the empowered sons of Nnu Ego do not keep the tradition of taking care of the parent in old age. This is a hope that Nnu Ego expected as she slaved for the sons' education. Contrastingly, the boys took to foreign culture, from Lagos. In *The River and the Source*, cultural change takes place too. Peter Owour, who was expected by the tradition to take up chieftaincy from his grandfather Owour Kembo, chooses to be a Catholic priest. He pursues his education and later becomes a Catholic bishop. The idea of the boy child for security is watered down by the formal education. It is actually Elizabeth Awiti who takes over the role of giving financial security to the two ladies- her mother Nyabera and her grandmother Akoko. Hence, the special joy of a boy child is downplayed. The two authors seem to imply to have hope in the girl child, in my view.

3.5 The use of imagery

In the previous chapters, we have discussed the joys and challenges of motherhood and the strategies used by Buchi Emecheta and Margaret Ogola to perhaps deliberate their vision. In this section, we are going to try and unravel the images that the society has on motherhood. The society being so important, it can be expected to construct images of women in line with the cultural context. These social constructions can be expected to play a great role on women as mothers and as members of the society. Culture, as earlier discussed, encompasses a people's way of life. Whatever is constructed by culture reflects itself in the lives members of the society. Images are the construction of the society. The images of motherhood that we are going to discuss are those that may be expected to cause joy on women as mothers and also those that that can be evaluated as challenges.

Imagery has been used in various genres of literature. Mwanzi (1995) in *Images of women in oral literature* defines image as follows:

An image can be presented to be in a phrase as passage on the face purely deceptive by carrying more than accurate reflection of an external reality. p2.

Muleka (2011) quotes Kabira as saying that when one hears “don’t behave like a girl”, what goes through one’s mind as one thinks of girls after the statement are in fact images. Since motherhood starts with the girl since birth, perhaps we can look at images of a girl as a female, who will later be expected to be a mother.

3.5.1 The Images of the Girl Child

As we have discussed in the previous chapters, the girl child has been perceived to occupy a lower status than that of her boy counterpart. Since birth, the reception of the girl child to the world has been demonstrated to be of less significance than that of a boy child perhaps due to their cultural destined roles in the society. One of the images of a girl child is that of frailty.

As we have learnt earlier, a girl child is assumed to be weak, and therefore, expected to desire protection, due to perhaps their feminine nature. They are expected to be protected awaiting that time that they would depart from home for marriage. It is perhaps the wealth in form of the bride price that make the society to work for the protection of the female child. In *The River and the Source*, Chief Odera Gogni refers to the girl children as those who will at one time leave home to go and “cook” for some clan. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, baby Nnu Ego is so named to mean twenty bags cowries. These images imply that although the girl child is perceived in form of

'weaknesses', the society very much desire her presence and contribution as an important member of the society.

As they grow, the girl children are made to understand that they are not permanent in their parents' homes. Through the socialization in the family and in the society, the girl child learns from a tender age that she does not hold the same important place as her boy counterpart. In comparison, the boy child tends to receive more recognition than the girl child at the family level in most cases. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego discriminates her girl children against her boy children. Taiwo and Kehinde are given hard work to do in order to get school fees for their older brothers Oshia and Adim. Even during their free time, the boys are taken to tuition classes to better their performance in schools. While the two boys are taken to schools that give quality teaching, Taiwo and Kehinde are taken to low grade school, just to learn reading. This disparity in the family can be expected to be a reflection of the wider society. A girl child hence can be expected to resign in this lower inferior position bestowed to her due to her gender. The same can be said of the boys. The mother herself shows them that they are more important than their sisters. This construct of the society can be expected to perpetuate gender inequality in the society, with the woman occupying the receiving end.

The traditional African society demonstrated the image of inequality perhaps through leadership roles. In *The River and the Source*, the daughter of Akoko, Nyabera, could not inherit her father's chief stool, as can be expected, because she was a female. It is her younger brother Owour Sino who was bestowed the chieftaincy. When the latter

died, her mother had to move away from her in-laws, because, being sonless and widow, she was defenseless.

The girl child is depicted by Buchi Emecheta as insignificant. In fact, when her baby boy died, Nnu Ego is seen performing a subversive act of trying to end her life. When later in life she lost a girl child, she said that it was better the child died since it was a girl. Perhaps this was due to Nnaife's behaviour earlier on. It is described that he felt disappointed with twin girl children Nnu Ego had given birth to. He wished them to have been girls. Nnaife can be expected to represent the wider society on images about girls. It can be remembered that he took time to name them and when he did, it was unceremoniously. Any boy that was born in his home was welcomed with rituals and celebrations with palm wine. Perhaps it is because of the boys role of continuing a man's lineage that make the boy to be given the preference.

The girl child seems to affect a mother's destiny. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Adaku has a girl child only. In that case, she was never ratified as a wife of her husband according to culture. A boy, so to say, defined a woman in Ibuza culture. This social construction of girl child can be expected to affect her destiny and the destiny of a mother. What the society does not fulfill is ridiculed by Buchi Emecheta by the use of the character of Adaku. She clarifies that, if women knew where boys were got, they would definitely go for them.

In *The River and the Source*, Nyabera demonstrates that she is not fulfilled as a woman with only one girl child. Awiti. As we have learnt earlier, she keeps on going back to be inherited in order to get a baby boy. Ogoma Kwach her inheritor, is seen

sticking to her and declaring that he had to give her a son even if it killed him. p. 100. Ironically, by so doing he would end up getting Nyabera's wealth as well.

A girl of child bearing age perhaps is expected to get married and leave the parents' home. In the traditional African society, a girl should not lay claim to her parent's property. She is expected to get married to the men chosen for her by the father. She is not expected to reject one chosen for her. Even when the life with the husband is intolerable, the married girl is not expected to go back to her original home. It seems that the bride price paid for her tethers her to the marriage. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego at one time speculated going back to her rich father, but she was pregnant and the tradition did not allow that. A bride price had been paid for her too, which was expected to forge her to her husband.

3.5.2 Images of Women in Marriage

As we have discussed earlier, the girl learns from a tender age that she is predestined to marriage. She is continually reminded of her social future role of marriage through socialization, at family level and in the wider society. A woman is expected to give birth to children in order to continue her husband's family lineage. With motherhood comes the socio-economic factors. In *The River and the Source*, Akoko fits the ideal socio-economic ideal for her husband Owuor Kembo. She creates wealth. Her grand daughter, Awiti, becomes a teacher and contributes to the better socio-economic standard of the family as witnessed in the couple's ability to fund for their children's quality education. Wandia and Aoro are economically well to do, for the two are doctors. It is evident that, marriage in these instances brings forth wealth, respect and conformity when women are treated as equal supporting partners in marriage. They

deviate from cultural dictated norms, which dictates a woman to the cooking place, as Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* tells his wife.

The African traditional cultural seems to deny the African women the right to shape her own culture. In *The River and the Source*, for instance, the women that Otieno Kembo marries are treated like sluts. Perhaps being denied equal performance right in the family results in poverty in comparison to the lifestyle led by his brother Owuor Kembo and his wife Akoko. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego is reduced into a working machine. All that she does is give birth to children to prove her motherhood in the hope of making the society recognize her with the ability of motherhood. The children enslave her. She is not productive economically. Her obsession of motherhood makes her degenerate into poverty, as we have seen. At one time, she even comforts herself that when one is in the process of rearing children, she needs not appear clean. It is said:

Nnu Ego realized that part of the pride of motherhood was to look a little unfashionable and be able to draw with joy p.87

Nnu Ego could not go anywhere or afford another outfit because she said she was nursing her baby boy. This resignation can be expected to be the society's world view on the image of a married woman. This is a way of designing a woman as inert and unintelligent. The assumption that women in marriage should be economically inactive can be expected to lessen a woman's economic participation and can be expected to lower her self esteem. But it can be argued that it is the woman's own backwardness that restricts her to her own self. Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* did not interact resourcefully with friends, resulting in her retrogressive poverty.

Marriage gives a woman identity. She belongs to her husband. In the two texts the authors seem to imply that the bride price paid during the woman's marriage seems to imply that, the woman and her wealth belong to the husband and to his relatives. Perhaps this explains why after the husband died, women get inherited by their husband's relatives. In *The River and the Source*, Nyabera is widowed when she was only twenty six years old. According to culture, a husband had to be got quickly in order to prevent a 'scandal' p.99 to prevent her from wandering from man to man. Her husband's property would go to the inheritor, but the children sired in the relationship would not be the man's responsibility. This image of women can be said to be that of marginalization and oppression once the husband departs. The woman is prevented to wander from man to man, while in absence, it is tethering her to her matrimonial home. The patriarchy takes the role of dictating her life.

3.5.3 Images of Women and Change

We have learnt earlier how the images of women are a result of cultural or social constructions. Yet, it can be argued that women have demonstrated change drastically. In *The River and the Source*, Akoko is seen to deviate from the cultural order by down paying the inheritance need of her brother in-law. She bore the unpleasant term of *Migogo* resiliently and decided to design her destiny. She does not stay in her brother's homestead for long. Together with her only daughter Awiti, they leave for Aluor catholic mission to begin a new life. They two support one another in shaping their destiny. Nyabera decided to be a single parent among criticism from the society. It is evident that by taking their own personal stand, they are able to change the society's view of a woman. Their future generation prospers towards progression of the changing world, leaving no room for the retrogressive culture.

Akoko and Nyabera can be said to have facilitated Peter Owour becoming a bishop. In the traditional setting, he would have gone to claim his legal chieftaincy of his grandfather Owuor Kembo's stool. The two women in his life must have moulded him more to the Catholic faith as opposed to traditionally expected norms. Of course, Peter Owuor had chosen what he so much wanted to do in his life. His nephew becomes a priest too. Vera as we have learnt also chose to join the Opus Dei, a Catholic group whose members do not marry. The two boys would not marry, of course, to continue their grandfather lineage as culture would have expected. This version of people's sexuality and its acceptance can be argued to have come from Akoko and Nyabera's liberal stand. Akoko, as it can be remembered, set the path to negate the bride price. Although a lot of bride price was paid for her herself, she and Nyabera asked for just a token when Awiti was getting married to Mark Sigu. This could be expected to continue in her generation to come.

Sexual liberation is also demonstrated by Adaku in *The Joys of Motherhood*. After her husband died, she came to Lagos in need of being inherited by her husband's brother Nnaife. Her motive, as demonstrated, was to get a baby boy, so that she could be ratified as one of the members of the Uwulum's family according to the tradition. As we have learnt, she was marginalized by the men of Ibuza in Lagos due to lack of a baby child and this is evident when her case against Nnu Ego was judged to favour Nnu Ego because, as they put it, Nnu Ego was the mother of Nnaife's sons. She takes a decision to leave the marriage and change her life. She changes her life and that of her daughters. She engages in productive economic performance. She stabilizes her life, and also makes a change by taking her girl children to school. It can be argued

that hers would be a progressive generation, changed from the traditionally expected one. In *The River and the Source*, Becky too deliberates on sexual liberation. Although her liberation ends in contracting HIV/AIDS, on a better note, she had acquired much property for her two children.

Women have downplayed stereotypes about ethnic tradition in the two texts. This is demonstrated by the two women in *The River and the Source*. Elizabeth Awiti, being a Luo, could not have been expected to accept Wandia, a girl from the Kikuyu community of central Kenya to get married to her son Aoro, the reason being the assumed cultural incompatibility of the two tribes. It can be remembered that Mark Sigu, her husband, was implying that his son Aoro could still find himself a Luo girl to marry if he was a little patient. This can be expected to imply that, he did not approve of his son marrying a Kikuyu girl. But, it is Elizabeth Awiti who corrects him. By Aoro and Wandia successfully getting married, the two women can be said to have demystified stereotypes of ethnicity between the Kikuyu and Luo. The mother of Wandia accepts Aoro as her son in-law. This, we can say is a positive change of the society by women.

Conclusion

The two authors have used several stylistic devices successfully to portray the joys and challenges of motherhood. Through diction characterization, narration and description, it is evident that the two authors are concerned with the predicament of motherhood in the society. Perhaps, it is the challenges that women as mothers face that need to be addressed. Through description, the woman as a mother is described to be impeded by the burden of child bearing and the society's expectations. The

traditional culture tethers her still to situations that check her social economic and psychological growth. Anywhere the culture privileges her for instance the motherhood of male children, we still find the woman as a mother being marginalized even by these sons. Through style of the Buchi Emecheta, for instance, the mother of boys faces a lonely old age, which ironically, should be taken care of by the boys themselves. She has also used the motherhood of girls through the character of Adaku. Perhaps, Buchi Emecheta through style is ridiculing the society for its double standards in motherhood. It can be assumed that, she predicts hope in the girl child and down plays the glorification of the boy child.

In *The River and the Source* Margaret Ogola has demonstrated through style that motherhood can be challenging in the absence of a boy child. But she still depicts some of these males of the society being irresponsible unwise and cowardly. Otieno Kembo and Ogoma Kwach can demonstrate that. In a turn of events, Margaret Ogola portrays to the reader a journey of success through the character of Akoko. Through description, we find Akoko seemingly making a physical and psychological journey. She decides to bear the tag of a *migogo* bravely. She makes a choice of her own life, not one prescribed by the society. It is evident that the new life she chooses liberates her and her future lineage. Her child and grandchildren break away from the dictates of tradition. Religion seems like a springboard to future liberation of her generation. The two authors perhaps have a vision of addressing the images of women as mothers in the society, as we have seen.

CHAPTER FOUR

POSTULATIONS ON MOTHERHOOD AS PORTRAYED IN MARGERET OGOLA'S *THE RIVER AND SOURCE* AND IN BUCHI EMETECHTA'S *THE JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD*

Conclusion

4.0 Introduction

In this study, we set out to investigate the postulations of motherhood in Africa by reviewing two texts by prolific African women writers: Buchi Emecheta and Margaret Ogola. The two texts, *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The River and the Source* attracted our curiosity due to many aspects. One of the aspects is the symbolic titles. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, one would expect to have a list of joys in the content. Ironically, though, the content of the text reveals more challenges of a woman than joys. In *The River and the Source*, again we found it intriguing to learn that it is a woman who is metaphorically presented as a river. The titles seem to project the intentions and visions in conceptualizing the symbolism. We chose the two authors because in essence, though they are geographically apart, one in East Africa and the other in West Africa, their writings about a woman have many similarities. This can be said to be an indicator that women in Africa have commonalities ranging from tradition, to their present predicaments

4.1 Summary

In our statement of the problem, we wanted to find out whether, motherhood, being so important can be wholesomely celebrated. Apart from this, we expected to find out what skeptics of wholesome celebrations of motherhood say. Indeed, Stratton emphasizes that motherhood has particular challenges that can impede the growth of a

woman as a human person. This is an observation that ought to perhaps interest scholarly investigation. Our endeavor was to find out the challenges that Stratton envisages. We wanted to find out, for example what the challenges are, to a concept that many would have otherwise assumed to be all celebration.

This research was intended to investigate these challenges because of the impact they are likely to have on woman's growth. This we have done by reviewing two texts by two leading African women writers. In *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta and *The River and the Source* by Margaret Ogola, we wanted to find out what their views are, that is, the effects that the challenges may have on women as members of the society and as their human persons.

We came up with three objectives: One was to investigate the joys and challenges of motherhood in the two texts. The next objective was to examine the stylistic choices that the authors had used in their texts and how these bring out their vision on motherhood. The last objective was to investigate the image of motherhood and its probable implications on the women's lives as depicted by the two authors.

In our hypothesis, we claimed that that there are joys and challenges of motherhood as depicted by the two authors. We also hypothesized that the stylistic choices used by the two authors would lead to the understanding of what their position of motherhood could be. The next hypothesis was that, literature being a product of the society does reflect its image of motherhood.

In our justification, we addressed the assumption of wholesome or universal celebration of motherhood. It could be expected that motherhood is in the interest of women themselves. However, although motherhood is crucial to human existence, it

has challenges. These challenges have attracted scholars like Florence Stratton. We found the challenges important to investigate since they can impede a woman's growth and inspirations.

The topic of motherhood has also attracted other genres of literature, like proverbs, short stories and oral literature. In their constructions however, the human person in the women has not been exhaustively investigated. The joys and challenges of motherhood in the two texts were therefore justified to be investigated. We felt that the study was academically justified to be carried out.

For the scope and limitation, we concentrated on the critical reading and analysis of the two texts *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta and *The River and the Source* by Margaret Ogola. We also expected to consult scholarly journals that would be related to the study. We expected library research to be of great assistance.

We were to be guided by three theoretical frame works. We utilized Kenneth Burke's sociological literary criticism. Sociological theory analyses how literature works in a society. Burke specifically considers pieces of art and literature as a systematic reflection of society and societal behavior. This is an idea adopted by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1978) in *Writers in Politics* who explains that literature has a function in the society, and that literature has a duty to correct the society. The same is voiced by pBitek (1973) in *Africa's Cultural Revolution* who states that the best literature never fails to make a profound effect on the society. The idea of sociological theory is also reflected by Wanjala(1975) who singles out a writer as a useful citizen of his society, and whose vision for change, should be deliberated through criticism of his society in order to create a better social situation.

Feminist criticism was also found useful to guide our study. Feminist criticism has many branches. Showalter (1979) has divided the criticism into two branches: Feminist critique and gynocentrism. The feminist critique includes the images of women and their stereotypes in literature and omissions and misconceptions about women in criticism. Gynocentrism is concerned with the woman as a writer.

The meaning of the term 'feminism' as used by Ifi Amadiume (1987) in her PhD thesis was also found relevant. The term is used as a political consciousness by women that lead to a strong sense of self awareness, self esteem, female solidarity and consequently the questioning and challenging of gender inequalities in social systems and institutions.

We also expected to use the African feminism proposed by Flomina Steady. After examining the commonalities of experiences and response of African women in Africa and the Diaspora, Steady defined the African feminism in a number of traditional rights and responsibilities of African women. This allowed her to conclude that the African woman is in practice much more a feminist than her European woman counterpart. She states that, true feminism is an abnegation of male protection and a determination to be resourceful and reliant.

Apart from the two theories, we expected to use stylistics. Barry (1995) states that stylistics is a critical approach which uses the methods and findings of the science of linguistics in the analysis of literary texts. 'Linguistics' here would mean the scientific study of language and structure. This was to assist in unraveling the meaning of the language used by the two authors in their texts.

Research methodology was expected to entail close reading of the two texts: *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta and *The River and the Source* by Margaret Ogola . This was to be done by studying the plots of the two texts. The literary features were to be analyzed in order to unravel their meanings. Such would use characterization, words choice and settings. Other genres of literature were expected to be of assistance. Literary genres, if found, would also be used to this effect.

We expected to come up with four chapters. Chapter one was expected to contain introduction to the thesis, the statement of the problem, objectives, hypothesis, justification, literature review, theoretical framework and methodology. Chapter two would investigate the joys and challenges of motherhood as depicted by the two authors. Chapter three would analyse the stylistic choices used by the two authors while chapter four would conclude on the findings.

4.2 Research Findings

In our research, we found out that there are in fact indicators of joy in motherhood. As we had stated in our introduction, we noted that motherhood in Africa defined womanhood. It is therefore expected that motherhood would bring forth joy in a woman. This, we found is realized in the marriage institution which in traditional African society, is recommended for motherhood.

With marriage, children were expected in the two texts. Women who got children in their marriage are redefined. Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* is depicted as being worried in her first marriage when she had no child to define her. When she lost her first baby in her second marriage, she is seen trying to end her life, for she caused definition. But when the same woman later got sons and daughters that lived, she

expresses herself as the happiest woman alive. Akoko *The River and the Source* expresses joy when she gave birth to her son Obura. It is explained that people around sighed with relief.

We found out that children brought joy to both woman and men. They would continue the man's lineage. The woman secured her identity in the home she was married in. In the two texts, the boy child is exemplified as the one to bring joy to the mother through inheritance. He is implied to give both psychological and physical security to the woman, hence completing her joy.

We found out that motherhood confirmed a man's manhood. When he sired children, this was a sure way to indicate that he was a man worth to be respected in the society. Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* said so when his wife Nnu Ego informs him of her pregnancy. Such a woman would be expected to be happy for giving her husband identity.

Motherhood seems to be celebrated by the senior wife. This is the woman who is the first to be married by a man. She is bestowed responsibilities that are guided by rituals in the tradition. A *mikai* in the Luo culture was protected by rituals. This would be expected to instill joy in a woman. If the man married other wives later, it is the duty of the senior wife to control the younger wives' behavior and activities. She was respected. A woman was expected to give birth to children that would continue the husband's lineage. When this was fulfilled, the woman was expected to have joy. She also acquires a home to call her own.

Although motherhood brought joy, to some extent we found out that there were challenges. One of the challenges is the dowry paid for the girl in order to get married

and realize her dream of motherhood. The girl child is made to understand that her father's home is not hers as she grows. She is socialized in such a way that she is expected to dream of her own future home. She is therefore expected to anticipate marriage. Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* is got a husband quickly at the onset of adolescence because elder Idayi recommended that she was dreaming of her husband and future home. Akoko in *The River and the Source* too, anticipates marriage and is not very happy when her suitors are sent away by her father.

Dowry brought about conflict as in the case of Akoko and her husband's relatives. It therefore makes a woman to be taken as a commodity or a vessel, whose worth is to bring forth children. Sometimes the bride price is set too high for suitors to meet, hence frustrating the hopes of the girl to be married. Bride price also brought about the misconception of a woman's sexuality. The physical appearance of a woman, as we know, cannot be expected to match her biological make up. Akoko in *The River and the Source* has such a challenge.

Dowry legitimizes marriage. In the two texts, we found out that, the same is used to tether women in uncomfortable marriage unions. Nnu Ego would have liked very much to go back to her father's house because she hated her implied ugly husband chosen for her, but there was the dowry issue. Dowry made the woman to be oppressed after being widowed. In the two texts, she was expected to comply with the tradition of wife inheritance. This brought physical and psychological challenge. Women became poor and enslaved to their husbands' homes.

Children, though they give identity to a mother we found out that they too can be a challenge. Although at first they are said to belong to the father, when they become needy they are referred to as the women's children. She has to work herself out to

bring them up. Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* is literally enslaved by her children. Then, the society will always blame that woman that leaves the children on their own. Alando in *The River and the Source* leaves the boy child she gets with the mother-in-law Akoko when her husband Owuor Sino dies. Becky is also being blamed for lack of maternal instincts when they divorce with her Canadian husband. So, it is the woman whose responsibility is questioned in a failed marriage and this is a challenge. She is not free.

We also found double standards of motherhood as a challenge. The woman that gives birth to a boy is more recognized than that gives birth to girl. Motherhood, we found out, can be the foundation of gender bias in the society.

The child birth process is a challenge. In it, we found Akoko in *The River and the Source* hemorrhaging almost to death, and her baby being blue. Helen Kituku in the same text is explained as having one miscarriage after another. These can affect a woman's health. Wandia explains the process of induced labour which affects a woman's well-being. Child and maternal mortality is a change that Buchi Emecheta elaborates in the process of giving birth when the husband is away.

Child's death affects a woman's psyche. Nnu Ego tries to end her life when her first infant dies. Adaku breaks to depression after losing her baby boy. In *The River and the Source*, Nyabera becomes emaciated for losing all her sons to a strange disease. These are the challenges:

We found it important to assess the predicament of a childless woman. Her lack of motherhood makes her to be marginalized. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Iyawo is given the label Itsekiri, a name given to a barren woman. She is explained to be always sad.

We also found it important to assess polygamy in connection with challenges of motherhood. Although it does not occur in all marriages, polygamy has been highlighted in the two texts. Since it affects women, polygamy can be said to be a challenge. Where applied, it depicts male chauvinism. Nnaife exercised more authority on Nnu Ego after becoming polygamous.

The joys and challenges of motherhood have been unraveled by study the strategies the two writers have used. One of the strategies is diction. From their book titles to the structure of the two texts, diction has played an effective part to the plot and in the themes.

Characterization has been used to bring out the writers' vision. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego comes out as the main characters. All the activities in the text seem to concentrate on this one woman. She has been used to express the state of barrenness and the condition of bearing too many children. Through her, Emecheta comments on the two conditions. In *The River and the Source* Akoko is used to comment on the issue of motherhood. Through her, alternative motherhood seems to be implied. His lineage is continued by a girl child, Awiti, as all her sons die. Inheritance is watered down by her grandson Peter Owuor who chooses to join priesthood. He has no interest in his grandfather's chieftaincy or land inheritance. Margaret Ogola seems to suggest ways of emancipation of women as members of the society.

Setting as a strategy assisted in trying to discuss how it affected the lives of women as mothers. The two texts capture both rural and urban setting. The urban setting was found to expose characters to a different lifestyle and different values from those in the rural villages. In urban setting, characters interact with diverse cosmopolitan

population ranging from tribe to race. This is evident in the case of Kehinde in *The Joys of Motherhood*. She could not be stopped to marry her Yoruba boyfriend. She being Igbo, her father could not agree to the union. But they got married all the same. Ethnicity is watered down in a court of law.

Becky in *The River and the Source* gets married to a Canadian pilot. She is a Luo. The father has to agree. The two had met in town. Wandia, a Kikuyu girl gets married to Aoro a Luo. The urban setting therefore changed the characters' life and also their world view on ethnicity and racism.

Historical transition was found important to use as a strategy for the way it affected the characters lives. This colonial era, brought men to towns looking for white man's job and his money. In the process, the African man is reduced to a slave. Nnaife, in *The Joys of Motherhood* for instance washes a white couple's clothes, which includes the white lady's underwears. According to the Igbo culture, this was just wrong. His wife Nnu Ego is perhaps used by Emecheta to ask the credibility of the African man during colonial era. The African culture changes at around this time as demonstrated by the two authors. Akoko, in *The River and the Source* , loses her son Obura during the Whiteman's war. This destabilized the family. In a turn of events, though, we find Akoko looking for justice against her brother-in-law using the colonial government. The role of the council of elders or *jodongo* comes to an end around this time. We also looked at imagery as a strategy. The two authors have used imagery to depict the predicament of motherhood as demonstrated.

4.3 Conclusion

The project found out that there are joys in motherhood. All the same, the challenges of motherhood are portrayed as being more than joys. It is evident through our discussion that these challenges impede a woman's growth. The challenges are implied to be both physical and psychological. Challenges that can indeed impede a woman as a member of society were justified to be addressed.

As we had introduced our discussion, it is evident that in African context, motherhood seems to define womanhood. It is therefore the struggle of most women to try and define themselves through motherhood fulfilled in marriage. A child is expected in a marriage union. Where a child arrives, the woman seems to have joy as she is stratified in her husband's family and also in the society at large. This idea of social stratification is guarded by taboos in the society as we have discussed. Failure for motherhood leads a woman to be psychologically and socially excluded as evidenced by the case of Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood*. When motherhood sets in, then there is the challenge of the capacity that seems to be required by the society as in the case of Akoko in *The River and the Source*. Apart from the number of children, the woman is faced with the challenge of sexist birth, where in essence, the boy children are preferred. These challenges impede a woman's freedom and performance.

Although we were not engaged in comparative study of the two authors, a few elements of comparison cannot go unnoticed by the literary scholars. On the issue of motherhood, Ogola in *The River and the Source* seems to create a world without men. By so doing, she seems to give a voice to women unfairly. A case to point out is where the surviving boy children in Akoko's lineage tend to play the second fiddle. Peter Owuor becomes a priest, hence, facing off the traditional order of heritage. The

next great grandson also becomes a priest. Aoro, who qualifies to be a doctor, is created in such a way that his wife Wandia surpasses him and becomes a professor. Ogola seems to overturn the place of man without decorum.

Buch Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* creates hostile men who seem to control women's sexuality from their birth. They are said to be destroyers of dreams. Women suffer under these men. Chief Nwokocha Agbadi for instance goes afield looking for the tall beautiful women to break and domesticate. The women seem to suffer subordination. She creates two sets of motherhood. One set that conforms to cultural order of motherhood and that which breaks away from the tradition. She prescribes that it is women themselves who set difficult standards for themselves, and that, one can always break loose from these shackles and redefine herself. Adaku does so and prospers while Nnu Ego is complacent to the *status quo*. She dies poor, rejected and miserable.

4.4 Recommendations

Having demonstrated the magnitude of challenges of motherhood, perhaps this can invite more study in the area. A question we might ask is what is the girl of the 21st century expecting from motherhood; or, does motherhood really need to be celebrated. We have looked at challenges of motherhood; could a study on challenges of fatherhood be done? This can be recommendations that can bring to the fore other important findings in the study of literature.

Works cited

- Achebe, Chinua: *Things Fall Apart*. Greenwich conn. Fawcett crest. 1959
- Ama Ata Aidoo. *No Sweetness here*. Garden City NY:Doubleday.1971
- Amadiume, I. *Male daughters female husbands. Gender and sex in an African society*
London: Zed books Ltd. 1987
- Barry, Peter: *Beginning theory. An introduction to literary and cultural theory, second edition*. Manchester: Manchester University Press 2002
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of culture*. London: Roughledge, 1994
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Stories on women, Gender and narrative in the post-colonial nation*. New York: Manchester Up.2005.
- Bressler, Charles. *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice Fourth Edition*. London: Pearson Education inc. 2007.
- Chesaina, C. “*The song as a medium of expression of Gender solidarity for Embu and Mbeere Women*” In *contesting social death. Essays on Gender and Culture*. Ed. Kabira et al. Kola. 1997.
- Davis Et al: Ngambika: *Studies of Women in African Literature*. Treton: African world press 1986
- Emecheta, B. *The Joys of Motherhood*. England: Heinemann.
- Frank, K. “*Feminist Criticism and the African Novel in literature today*”, 14. *Insiders and outsiders*. Ed. E.O. Jones, London: Heinemann 1984.

- H.G. Widdoeson. *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*: Longman group ltd. Hongkong.1975
- Indangasi, Henry. *Stylistics*, Nairobi: University Press, 1988
- James Currey Ltd. 1998 Wa Thing'o N. *Home coming*. London: Longman 1972
- Kabira W.: *A letter to Mariama Ba* . Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press. 2005.
- Kabira W. *et al: Delusions: Essays on Social Constructions of Gender* Nairobi FEMNET-1994.
- Kabira, M, et al. *Contesting social death. Essays on Gender and culture*, Kola 1997
- Knotz, J. Toger. *Nyarokais Gift: The writing of Marjorie Oludhee Macgoye*. Nairobi: Mvule Publishers, 2005
- Mabeseoic, Sinisa. *The Sociology of Ethnicity*. London: Sage Publishers, 2004
- Macdowell, Linda. *Gender, Identity and place. Understanding Feminist Geographies*. Mineapolls: university of Minesota. 1999
- Molvaer, K. *Black Lions: The Creative Lives of Modern Ethiopian Literacy Giants and Pioneers*. Print. 1997
- Muchiri, Jennifer *Women's autobiography. Voices from Independent Kenya*. USA. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller. 2010.
- Muleka, J. *Images of women in Abakhayo'Bweya' oral poetry and their social Significance for girl child* University of Nairobi. Diss. 2007
- Muleka, J. *Portrayal of girl characters in selected children's books in Kenya*. Germany: VDM Verlas and company. 2011

- Muthoni, N.S: “*Woman giver of life*” in *contesting social death. Essays on gender and culture*. Koha 1997
- Mwanzi, Helen O “*Gender Equity and control of Resources: A case study of oral Artforms from the Abanyore*”. in. *Contesting social death. Essays on Gender and Culture*. Ed. Kabira, Masinjira and Obote. Nairobi, KOLA. 1997.
- Ntshongwana P. et al *Supporting lone mothers in South Africa. Towards Comprehensive Social Security*. Pretoria: Dept. of social Rev. 2010
- Ntshongwana P. *Social Security Provision for Lone Mothers in South Africa: Dependence, Independence and Dignity*. Unpublished doctorate thesis. University of Oxford 2010
- Obbo, Christine. *African women. their struggle for economic independence*. Zed Books. London. 1980
- Odhiambo, Tom- “writing alternative womanhood in Kenya in Margaret Ogola’s *The River and the Source*” *African Identities* volume 4, number 2. 2006 pg. 235-250
- Ogola, M. *The River and the Source*. Nairobi: Focus Publishers. 1994
- Perrine, Lawrence. *Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense*. Fifth edition. Harcourt Brace Javanovich, INC. United States of America 1986
- Pillay, U. “*Urban policy in post Apartheid South Africa*”. *Urban forum*, 19 (z) 109-132.
- Richard D. Altic et al . *The Art of Literary Research. 4th edition*. wwwnartonand company. New York 1992.

- Richards, Ivor Armstrong: *Principles of Literary Criticism*. London: Routledge. 2001
- Romaine, Suzanne: *Language in society: An introduction to social linguistics*. Oxford University Press. Inc. New York 1994
- Schipper, M. *Source of all evil: African proverbs and sayings on women*. Nairobi: Phoenix publishers. 1985
- Steady, Filomina *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally*, Cambridge, Mass: Schenckman Publishing Company, Inc 1981
- Straton, Florence-*Contemporary Literature and the politics of Gender*. London: Routledge 1994
- Uwakweh, P.A “Curving a niche. Visions of gendered childhood” in *Childhood in African literature*. Oxford.
- Waysl, P. “Types and function’s of inner dialogues”><http://www.plc-psychologicalpl/plccontents/fulltext/11-1-2.pdf>

APPENDIX

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In my study I will be guided by the following questions

1. How does the society view children?
2. How does the society view a childless woman?
3. How do the writers address the view of childlessness?
4. What is the position of women in the society?
5. How is a girl child viewed in the society?
6. What is celebrated as a quality of a woman?
7. Why are the books chosen for study?
8. How do the male members of the society contribute to a woman's definition?