

**NARRATOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF THE NARRATEE IN
CHRISTOPHER OKEMWA'S *SABINA AND THE MYSTERY OF THE OGRE*
AND *SABINA THE RAIN GIRL*.**

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for the award of a degree.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Madam Evelyn Mumbo, one by whom I was taught to hold a pen, and to read by singing. Madam, you may not have seen my entire staircase, but what matters most is that you set me off.

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ABSTRACT

This study set out to examine the narratee in Christopher Okemwa's *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl*. The study analyses the narratee notion focusing on its definition, its signals and identification. This, the study does from a narratological perspective. It also takes keener interest in the nature, role and function of a narratee in a literary narrative.

The study examines the narratee as an essential notion in his or her relay role between the narrator and the reader(s). Examination of the narratee enables us to pay attention to the notional addressee of the narrator, readers and the people the narrative is addressed to. Available studies show that unlike the narrator, the narratee has not received much attention from literary scholars yet it is critical for the understanding of any narrative. Literally, most elements of a narrative: plot, characterization and themes are better understood through the narratee. Besides constituting a relay between the narrator and the reader, the narratee aids in establishment and development of the narrative. He or she serves an important role in characterizing the narrator in addition to emphasizing certain themes. The narratee thus contributes to plot development and helps bring out the values the narrative sets out to impart.

The study focuses on the two literary narrative texts by Christopher Okemwa's in its examination of the narratee besides other sampled texts. Three main approaches to the literary criticism are adopted by this study: narratology, reader-response and Feminist criticism. The study also embraces textual analysis from a close reading of the texts. Narratology directs our conceptualization and examination of the narratee by drawing attention to the details of the genre. Feminist criticism draws attention to the gender issues raised against the cultural background presented in the narrative texts. Reader-response criticism refocuses criticism on the reader(s) and the reading process. They help examine the author's attitude towards their readers, the kinds of readers various texts seem to imply, the role of actual readers in the determination of meaning, the relation of reading conventions to textual interpretation and the status of the reader's self. Finally, the textual analysis lays emphasis on the text and helps us discuss the narrative strategies employed by the author so as to realize the intended agency. The study then draws its conclusions from the two literary narrative texts under this study.

The study finds out that the narratee is fundamental for conveying information from the narrator to the reader in any narrative process. As a result of this, he/she helps drive home the projected agency in a narrative and induces a conversation about the issues addressed.

The study recommends further research on the different types of narratees, their inscription in various literary narratives and the distinctive roles they uniquely play in achievement of the narration process.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Narratology

Gerald Prince defines narratology as the “Science of narrative.”

According to Mieke Bal it as a theory of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, cultural artifacts that tell a story.

Feminist Narratology

Feminist narratology as David Herman defines it is a branch of narratology that concerns itself with exploring the manner in which construction and understanding of narratives is affected by the subject of gender. It explores differences in the sorts of agency available to male versus female characters and narrators.

Narratee

‘Narratee’ according to David Herman is the audience of the narrator. He or she is found within the text, just as the narrator. In this study, alternative terms have been used for it. They include inscribed, encoded or postulated reader.

Chris Baldick on the other hand defines the naratee as a fictitious notion that a narrator speaks to in a narrative text.

The Narrator

The narrator has been defined by Chris Baldick as one who tells or is assumed to be telling a story. He or she is the imagined voice transmitting the story.

Narrative

A narrative is defined by Chris Baldick as a telling of some true or fictitious event or connected sequence of events, recounted by a narrator to a narratee.

Agency

According to Laura M. Ahearn in her journal “Agency” (1999), the term agency has been used scholarly to mean, the human capacity to act.

Kevin Mosigisi (2015) defines **female agency** as the ability of the female characters to have control to make decisions over the course of their lives economically, politically and culturally. From this definition, **agency** is therefore the ability to have control to make decisions over the course of one’s lives.

Teenage or Young Adult Literature

Chris Crowe defines Young Adult Literature as the literature meant to be read by young adults.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Why, when we study novels, do we take such pains to discriminate between the various kinds of narrator (Omniscient, unreliable, implied author etc.), but never ask questions about the different kinds of person to whom the narrator addresses the discourse. (Gerald Prince 48)

The art of narration is arguably as old as human existence. It involves reflecting on possible happenings in words. Whatever the language, stories have been and continue to be told world over by all generations. Oral rendition of these narratives is undeniably the most indigenous practice; preceding any forms of storage that have characterized preservation of narrative texts in the recent past. In the contemporary literary age, narratives are predominantly stored in books, though focus is largely shifting towards digital media storage. It is fulfilling to tell one's own story, stories of other people and about the(ir) environment. Narratives, as Gerald Prince posits in *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (1982), are processed to represent "at least two events in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other." (4) This is Prince's idea of a narrative. In this study, focus is on examining one of the constituents of a narrative known as the narratee and the role he or she plays in a literary narrative to help achieve the narration process.

Narratives in the two texts chosen for this study introduce the reader to the aspects of culture that seem to occupy a special place among the Abagusii community. A conflict between traditional demands of a people amidst a culturally dynamic world is at play. Traditional forces stand up for their cultural sensibilities to the bone. Uncompromisingly, they do not yield to the ‘progressive’ forces that seem to subvert their ‘relevant’ existence. It is in this limbo that most teenage tales find themselves engulfed. Teenagers seek a platform of their own to tell their stories. Their voice is important during the telling of these stories from their perspective. In this study, prominence is given to the narration itself with attention on the narrator’s manipulation of narratological tools and notions to concretize experiences of the teenage girl in their struggle to emancipate themselves from socio-cultural and economic challenges. Consequently, this helps in relaying agency to the inscribed or postulated reader otherwise referred to as the narratee.

Like Christopher Okemwa, Henry Ole Kulet has employed use of the teenage voice in narrating teenage girl experiences among the Maa community. In *Blossoms of the Savannah*, (2008), there is a clash in the cultural demands between the conservatives and the new generation represented by Resian and Taiyo. Newly introduced to their culture as children of the Maa community, they suffer from culture shock. Distinguished from the rest of the girls in the community, they resort to stand up for their rights, opposing whatever rite that seems to compromise them. Kulet’s choice of Resian as the protagonist whose voice spearheads the conflict in the text is meant to help articulate teenage girl issues from their perspective. An attempt to stir up conversation about the cultural rite and its perpetuation is evident through the text. Resian, though younger than Taiyo, is

more assertive and uncompromising for what she stands up for. She is also determined and unwaveringly resilient. It is this character that Ole Kulet chooses to ensure that the intended agency is driven home from the narrative process. The narratee of this very text appears to be a progressive force that seeks to embrace change from what can be perceived as archaic cultural practices. This is successfully relayed to all readers of *Blossoms of the Savannah* through the narratee. The author thus makes an appeal to the readers to embrace girl child education and empower her in all possible ways for her to contribute effectively to development. Like Christopher Okemwa's literary narratives, Kulet's narrative ends on an optimistic note. Moral values are driven home. Agency is achieved.

The narrative is not so different in Ngugi wa Thiongo's *The River Between* (1965) where Ngugi *designates* a teenage protagonist to tell the story of teenage girls in society. Although he assumes a progressive and liberal approach in handling the conflict in his narrative, his employment of the teenage voice is more pronounced. From a third person omniscient narrator's stance, we witness a clash of interests in two teenage siblings over their loyalty to cultural practices that characterised a rite of passage. In this narrative Ngugi appears to be torn between traditional values and desire to embrace change occasioned by the advent of the Christian religion. Through Muthoni and Nyambura, the narrator appears to demonstrate the effects of disobedience of one's own parents at the expense of the cultural demands. Muthoni does not get healed after her initiation into womanhood. As implied, it is a retribution for rebelling against her father's opposition to the practice. She bleeds to death. But even at the point of her death, she remains

unbowed. Through complaints, indictment and censuring, the narrator awakens the consciousness of those who may be out to pursue a better life and a better community through the choices they make in life. A strong case of determination among teenagers is also demonstrated here through the protagonist's voice.

While on her deathbed, Muthoni sends Waiyaki to tell Nyambura that she was still a woman traditionally but a Christian as well. "Tell Nyambura I see Jesus. And I am a woman, beautiful in the tribe..." (51) Muthoni helps reveal a new perspective about being true and faithful to one's heritage. She is not held back by a wave of change that seems to sweep everybody in her community including her parents towards a particular direction. It is however ironic that even in her disobedience, Muthoni dies seeing Jesus despite having engaged in an activity outlawed by the faith she confesses. By emphasizing the plight of this teenage girl, the omniscient narrator whose voice we hear seems to be directly involved in the fate of his or her character. It is however predictive of future transformations and re-evaluation of cultural practices. However, as implied in the narrative, I dare say that people could still embrace new ways of life but still honour their cultural heritage. As relayed by the narratee to the readers, the narrator in the *River Between* appears to be cautiously advancing a strong case in favour of the contentious subject matter even as he gives possible consequences of outright disobedience.

Through the narrator's voice in *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), Alice Walker, demonstrates progress in the narrator's voice, creating an illusion of cultural freedom and diversity unfettered by determination. Tashi sets off to honour her Olinkan heritage and

no digression seems to be integrated into her goal since the text handles the question of culture clash where she falls victim. Using her voice, Tashi seeks accommodation of her cultural demands from her gender's perspective. She regains cultural emancipation after several years of feeling incomplete. However, she grows mad after being initiated into a woman according to her culture. Clearly, she is a woman torn between two cultures, Olinkan, her heritage, and Western, where she is married. Tashi's elder sister, Dura, had bled to death. Nothing was done to rescue her. Tashi watched it all happen. Despite that image of her sister's death from the practice, she is not scared from facing it herself. The narratee appears to relay a very strong message to the reader about the value of traditional rites in the Olinkan community. Like Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*, there seems to exist a strong connection between people and their cultural heritage. But from the suffering that Tashi goes through that completely changes the course of her life; the narrator and the narratee imply the need to rethink some traditional rites of passage that affect women and the entire community. The struggle witnessed in Tashi's mind is occasioned by anxiety reflected in the female narrator's discourse.

Waris Dirie's autobiographical narrative, *Desert Flower* (1998), is a feminist account that demonstrates through her voice, the resistance that a woman could exhibit in defense of her rights and in pursuit for change. The tone she assumes is evidence for what the suffering Somali women she represents in her writing go through. She has to literally flee from her community in a way that endangers her existence. For her initiation, she is taken to seclusion in the heart of the desert. This disengagement from the rest of the society is meant to prevent initiates from being heard in case they cried during the

process. It was taboo of great gravity for that to happen. From her tone, she suffers greatly, but remains still and silent. The pain she goes through causes her to faint. She is stitched using an acacia thorn. Her legs are then bound to each other. She takes too long before recovering. Consequently, she remains in her bound state for long. Some hapless Somali girls never recovered from such an operation. Dirie says that she was lucky to have successfully pulled through. Her sister had died on the rock. Surprisingly, her mother supports the practice because she doesn't know anything else. The narratee in Dirie's case is meant to relay to the reader the challenges Somali girls go through to become women. From her perspective, she intends to cause a change in the traditional cultural practices that continue to dehumanize women in her society. She provides remarkable insight about the power of narrative voice in a society that should experience a revolutionary moment in its value system and its views on gender perspectives. From her narrative, Dirie gains an extensive audience for her compelling story about her struggle in a traditionally patriarchal society.

Varying accounts of teenage protagonist voices in narratives have been presented by different authors. For teenage girls, their issues are related. As revealed in reading Okemwa's prose fiction, a teenage girl's voice is appropriate in presenting their plight through teenage protagonists and telling the story of their demographic. Okemwa succeeds in building a new sublime in education, an alternative for traditional focus through initiation. He manages to construct a trajectory for an intriguing discussion of his works and even for that reason alone, his books are worth reading. There exists tantalizing intimations through the texts that point at the fictional addressee as African,

East African and most probably Kenyan. As demonstrated, achievement of transcendence and agency is propelled by bravery, self-sacrifice and resilience. Nevertheless, our study steers clear of other underlying issues presented in the chosen texts and seeks to establish the fictitious and imagined being addressed by the narrator through Okemwa's narration.

Teenagers face many more challenges that need to be narrated to other 'worlds' so as to relay challenges about them to their demographic. Achievement of this is made possible through the choice of voice that articulates their concerns. They should be able to relate with issues presented to them. Their involvement needs to be shared amongst themselves to arouse consciousness about their mutual challenges and be able to trade lessons. The power of the voice is therefore appropriate to challenge existing phenomena and cause a change from status quo.

Narratological approach suits analysis of this quest for agency through the narrator and the narratee. Identity crisis, vulnerability to social conscience, growth and development issues and different world views faced by teenagers can be addressed amicably through narration of issues that they relate with. Since their quest to discover the self and their world is realized through experimentation and emulating what they see and hear, sharing their experiences through narration play a pivotal role in their learning. Teen age is the best time to expose individuals to moral values as done by narratees of the narratives they interact with. Through this notion, readers are able to make out the attitude of the author and the narrator towards the narrated concerns.

Although many authors have attempted narrating stories of teenagers to provide agency on issues they contend with, this study restricts itself to examining a notion that makes possible the narration process. The study also seeks to examine the narrative techniques employed by the author in his prose fiction to help reconstruct the female teenage voice in a contemporary narrative context. It is appropriate to examine how teenagers are made to speak to the world about their concerns. Analysis of narratives about them using the theory of the narrative relevant for ensuring this is done. Appropriate tools for the analysis are thus provided by the approach.

Henry Indangasi in *Rethinking Literature: My Personal Essays on a Troubled Discipline*, (2018) asserts that teenagers can be the most intellectually passionate and the most open-minded of human beings. In a way, Indangasi hails teenagers' ability to be influenced to behave in a given way. They are therefore easily receptacle for agency. He further notes that:

It is as teenagers that we wonder why birds fly and other animals can't. It is as teenagers that we seek to know why an apple falls down rather than up. It is as teenagers that we ask: why zero is called a number if it signifies nothing. It is as teenagers that we wonder why we have nothing to eat in our home while our neighbours have more food than they need. ... It is as teenagers that we start asking the all-important question: Who am I? It is when we are teenagers that our worst socially-induced personality traits can transform us into demons. But it is also as teenagers that our finest feelings solidify into enduring moral values. We are what we are because of what we were as teenagers. The outlines of our moral persona were drawn at that stage in our lives. (48)

Emphasis is laid on identifying and developing literature that is relevant for the teenage demographic considering its influence on them. Literary narration has a fundamental role in determining the future of the nation morally, critically and even philosophically through its agency from the narratives they present. As a characteristic that runs across texts that fall under this genre, they end on a moral note. Ideally, this moral development is made possible through the narratee as she or he serves to convey the moral of the narrative besides performing other functions. It is against this background that this study considers examination of the narratee as an invaluable practice in helping evaluate the communication strategies authors employ to reach out to their audiences on their subject matter.

As an author, Okemwa has written and continues to write across many genres: novels, short stories, poetry, plays and oral literature texts. He has written a number of poetry and oral literature texts such as *Toxic Love* (2004), *The Gong* (2010), *Purgatorius Ignis* (2016), and *Ominous Clouds* (2018). His published works also feature oral literature pieces. *Otenyo* (2016) is the title for his legendary play, written in praise of a heroic figure that existed among the Abagusii people. His anthology of short stories is titled, *Chubot, the Cursed One and Other Stories* (2011). Okemwa has also written and published children's books. About the folktales of Abagusii people, he has five published texts to his name.

Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre bagged the highly contested Burt Award for African Literature prize in Kenya in 2015 for its strong theme on issues that affect teenage girls in

the society. *Sabina the Rain Girl* (2019) is a sequel to it. They are narratives about Sabina, fourteen years old in the former text and fifteen in the latter. In both novellas, Sabina is the exemplar of teenage girls' struggle against teenage girl circumcision among other cultural challenges. She is the protagonist used by the narrator to relay agency to the narratee about contentious cultural issues in her community that she contends with.

Acknowledging the importance of the Burt Award for African Literature as an invaluable contribution to the readership of teenagers in countries where the annual fete is held, Indangasi hails its contribution to teenage literature. The award encourages writing, rewards writers and awards the reader. Indangasi then emphasizes the need to invest in this crucial national resource – teenagers. In his concluding tone he says, “If we want to create a thinking nation, a caring nation, a nation whose citizens will have acquired durable life skills, we have to promote reading and writing among our young people.” (54) Our study nevertheless does not focus on teenage literature genre par excellence, but narrows down on how the teenage voice imparts the narratological exploration of the narratee in Okemwa's texts under our study. Both texts have teenage protagonists. Their narratives explore issues affecting the teenage girl demographic among the Abagusii community. They are representations of the plight of the teenage girl in Africa and beyond.

Teenage literature generally covers a number of thematic concerns ranging from sexuality, drugs and substance abuse, identity crisis, relationships and growth and development. As can be observed in the sampled texts, most teenage narratives that deal

with female teenage issues seem to converge at addressing gender based issues and a general violation of their rights. Notorious among the addressed are culturally inclined concerns such as female circumcision and early or forced girl marriages. In his presentation of teenage issues, Okemwa appears to be a prototypical of a modern writer that handles changing gender discourses. He employs varying narrative voices; at one point certain, at yet another point tentative or even questioning. His choice of narrator mirrors his personal commitment to provide a voice to the gendered subaltern, providing an alternative for the traditional magisterial that may not speak for a society in histrionic alteration between ancient and postmodern ways of understanding gender.

Jeffrey S Kaplan in the Journal “Recent Research in Young Adult Literature: Three Predominant Strands of Study” (2007), identifies a number of strands in the study of teenage literature. According to him, it is meant to influence young adults to think and behave in a certain way. It is also meant to expose and solve mysteries experienced by young adults. Besides, it serves to reflect cultural dynamics in societies and align young adults to embrace or challenge them. As observed by Malowa Malowa in *Heat Mark* (2016) this kind of literature is meant to impart moral values in society.

In *Youth and Music: The Hidden Truth*, (2016) Joseph Odingo Njaga explores the effect music has on the teenagers. In his introductory notes, Ondigo submits’ “... music transmits a never-ending gamut of feelings and sensations. Its power is contained in its ability to by-pass reason, penetrating straight into the soul, into the subconscious and manipulate a person’s feelings” (viii). Alluding to Shu Ching’s saying in the 6th Century,

Ondigo adds that music is the best tool for cultural and behavior change. He further sees music as a means of expressing protest and outrage in regards to a timely issue as well as expressing and shaping the values of culture. (10) For this study however, focus is not on music as a means of narrating one's experiences, but on literary narratives and how their study can help influence teenagers' behaviour. Like music, literary narratives have the power to change readers' mannerisms and alter their way of life. It also offers a platform for their self-expression against cultures that are 'oppressive' and 'archaic' in a constantly changing society.

Generally, the concerns of a narrative have an impact on the knowledge and perception of the reader(s), causing behavior change or action. It can stimulate or deter intended revolutionary thoughts and actions. Although bureaucratic and conservative cultures may be intolerant to threats on their cultural sensibilities, a platform for narration set in literary texts ensure agency is achieved and relayed. That notwithstanding, appropriateness of the gender issues raised by Kulet, Okemwa, Dirie, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Fauziya Hassindja, Kuwana Hausley and Alice Walker affecting women attract some considerable attention.

Responding to the question of culture, Kulet, in an interview by Abenea Ndago on January 28th, 2018 on issues in *Blossoms of the Savannah*, confesses that "All cultures are dynamic and Maa culture is no exception." He says that over time cultures shed off certain aspects that become moribund or are overtaken by time. However, he asserts that there are certain critical aspects of culture which when lost, the entire culture suffers

irreparably. It is on such a delicate balance that the conflict in our texts in this study hangs. It steers clear the debate on the subject matter and focuses on the narratological aspects of the chosen literary narratives.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study examines the narratee of *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and that of *Sabina the Rain Girl* using narratology. Focus is on painting the portrait of the encoded reader in the two texts and comparing their analyses in order to reveal the narratees. By comparing the two texts, the study examines the author's consistency in appealing to an African audience to consider revisiting appropriateness of their traditional and cultural practices in the face of changing times. This is made possible by a deliberate choice of the narrator and the narratee in the narrative through whom the author's message is relayed to the reader. The narratee is the agent of this relay. He or she ensures communication between the author and the reader or between the narrator and the reader.

According to Gerald Prince in "Introduction to the Study of the Narratee" *Reader-Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-Structuralism*. Ed. Jane P. Tompkins (1980), an investigation of the narratee "may provide a tool for useful critical distinctions and for a more precise typology of the narrative genre and a greater understanding of its evolution." (24) Examining the narratee of Christopher Okemwa's selected literary narratives provides us an opportunity to focus on the postulated, inscribed or encoded reader. Through their protagonist's voice, teenage girls' plight is exposed and agency pursued.

1.3 Objectives

This study pursues the following objectives:

- i) To identify the narratee signals used in our choice of literary narrative texts that help point at the narratee notion.
- ii) To examine the narratee of the texts under study.
- iii) To explore how the narratives manipulate other narratological features in telling the story of teenage girls in society thus helping realize their agency.

1.4 Hypotheses

- i. The two texts contain various narratee signals that can help us identify their respective narratees.
- ii. There exist specific narratee(s) in the narrative texts under study.
- iii. The narrative texts in this study manipulate other narratological features in telling the story of teenage girls in society that help in achievement of agency.

1.5 Justification

Narrating stories about the plight of teenage girls through literary texts is convenient for informing the world about their challenges and advocating for agency on some contestable socio-cultural issues. A carefully chosen narrative persona is a valuable tool for ensuring this is achieved. S/he is tasked with cooperating with the narratee through whom he or she relays the designated agency to the target reader(s). As Gerard Prince posits in “Introduction to the Study of the Narratee” *Reader-Response Criticism from*

Formalism to Post-Structuralism. Ed. Jane Tompkins. (1980), “All narration presupposes not only at least one narrator but also at least one narratee.”(7) Okemwa demonstrates this through his writing of the two narrative texts, qualifying their merit for study under this topic.

The two texts by Okemwa are addressed majorly to the teenagers as they carry content and agency relevant to them. Simplicity that characterizes their use of language and conclusions that are based on moral development attach them more to their genre. Henry Indangasi in *Rethinking Literature: My Personal Essays on the Troubled Discipline* emphasizes the need for teenage literature. He notes that it was not until the mid-twentieth century that the world authors discovered that by and large this important demographic had no literature that mirrored their condition. Indangasi submits that “It is as teenagers that we start asking the all-important question: Who am I?” (48), which points at the teenagers’ quest for self-discovery and identity. Literary scholarship should thus help offer a relevant rejoinder to such issues of this troubled demographic. It is possible for one to get to know themselves through the eyes of other people comparatively by sharing their experiences. A trade in life encounters through literary narratives is thus an ideal practice for their self-expression. It stimulates influence on each other’s perception and a general world view on given challenges.

Since the texts are articulate on critical social and cultural issues experienced by teenage girls among the Abagusii community, they are suitable for this study as it seeks to examine their narratee and his or her role in relaying the implied agency. Henry Ole

Kulet in *Blossoms of the Savannah* (2008) addresses related thematic concerns among his Maasai community. Conflict arises from an attempt to thwart perpetuation of some culturally sacrosanct practices embedded in conservative minds. The two writers almost share in their plot developments that end their narratives on a moral note, giving hope for better days ahead to authorial readers. They resolve their conflicts positively. Through narrators that evidently speak to carefully chosen narratees, the actual reader discerns the advocacy foregrounded by the narratives, calling for particular action to salvage the plight of the teenage girl from their portrayed violation. In both cases, the narratives assert the need for the community to revisit their perception of women in the society and the resultant portraiture.

Writers from diverse cultural and varying religions like Waris Dirie in *Desert Flower* (1998) and *Desert Dawn* (2002) and Alice Walker in *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992) and *Warrior Marks* (1996) present their perspective on issues Christopher Okemwa addresses in *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl*. The texts present related experiences by women albeit in different settings. In a way, issues advanced are experienced by the global teenage girl demographic and women in general. Narrating their stories to the world is therefore made possible through literary narratives and passed on to the readers through the narratee. As earlier mentioned, the narrator and the narratee are responsible for ensuring that the message in narratives get home thus helping achieve the intended agency.

The focus of this study transcends the generalities of teenage literature and its characteristics and narrows down to the narratee notion. Henry Indangasi in the *Preface. Chubot, the Cursed One and Other Stories* (2011), Okemwa's anthology of short stories, describes the author as "a superlatively gifted storyteller." Indangasi observes that Okemwa is skillful in creating suspense and picking out the "interesting detail." Further, he adds that Okemwa's display of "encapsulating moments of epiphany – moments when the essential truth about human experience" is revealed through his narratives. This study nonetheless drifts from the author, and concentrates on the narrative itself and the reader. An investigation of the perceived achievement of the narrative process thanks to this superlative gift of storytelling suggested in Indangasi's appraisal is our focus. The study also analyzes other narratological tools employed by the author in relaying his communication to the target audience through the narratee. Various narrative strategies demonstrated by the narrator that helps him or her relay agency are also examined. Narratology is an invaluable literary resource in this endeavour. Our study thus interrogates the relevance of the choice of narrator's voice in addressing teenage issues in the texts and subsequently, the narratee.

I have chosen *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl* for my study because of their genre compatibility and the fact that they share in the narration of crucial stories of the teenage girl experiences in an indigenous African society. Although the two narrative texts are authored by a person who does not belong to the gender, age and persona of the demographic he writes for, he helps arouse consciousness that leads to anticipated intervention. It is a conscious representation of will that is necessary for

retelling a socio-cultural tale through a different voice that refuses to privilege men's experiences besides acknowledging differences in gender roles. Okemwa on one hand seems to reinforce established assumptions such as male authority even as he strives to deconstruct the very establishment. His interest lies in challenging rather than accepting or reinforcing moribund socio-cultural moves. He employs a powerful voice in doing this. It is therefore critical to analyze how his narrator persona tells this story, and most importantly for this study, to whom exactly the story is told. From the feminist narratologist perspective, it will also be fundamental to examine gender politics interplay in influencing the author's perception of the subject matter. Choice of these two narrative texts as instead of one is further influenced by the fact that the latter is a sequel to the former, hence building more on the issues raised in the initial text.

Examination of the narratee is important in helping contextualize the narrative texts under this study. Although the narrator tells his or her story and the story of the teenage girl in general, knowledge of his/her postulated reader is overbearing. According to Jennifer Muchiri in *The Female Autobiographical Voice in Independent Kenya (2008)* it is the art of narration that holds a piece of literary work together. Narratology hence offers readers an opportunity to study other related narrative aspects of the texts.

Several other writers who have delved into teenage issues among girls in multicultural set-ups exist besides Okemwa. This implies that his literary narratives are important to a wide variety of readers, irrespective of their cultural position. Through them, readers have access to cultural expectations and values of the community they write about. From

the narrator's point of view, we are able to see the community in its postulated colour. Some societal issues are critically delicate and emotive. Authors approach them cautiously. Using various narrative tools available to them, they are able to maneuver through silences or by use of imagery that signify them, or even employ a number of linguistic tools such as irony, sarcasm and satire to talk about them laughingly. The omniscient narrator is then employed to conclude, summarize, integrate, and even reveal the intended agency of the text in conjunction with the narratee. As it is demonstrated in this study, the encoded reader in Okemwa's selected texts plays a significant role in helping relay the agency's realization. For *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl*, the teenage narrator's voice and protagonist is a major organizational force that helps achieve agency.

From investigation, many critics have paid a lot of attention to the study of the narrator and the way he or she is portrayed in literary narratives and even verse. They have also examined the many roles and responsibilities that the narrator bears. Others have gone ahead to discriminate between the various kinds of narrators and the stance they occupy in the narration process. Generally, they have paid much attention to the appreciation of the role and relevance of the narrator in narrative discourses. A shift of focus from the narrator notion to the narratee notion would help understand how the two correlate to achieve a narration process. Whereas many literary scholars easily identify the narrator of the various literary narratives and narrative poetry, they fail to do the same for the narratee. This notion is at times mistaken for being just any other reader of the literary

narrative. The term ‘narratee’ is also rarely used. Our study hence presents a rare chance to engage in some discourse about this person of the narratee.

Gerald Prince says in “Introduction to the study of the Narratee” *Reader-Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-structuralism*. Ed. Jane P.Tompkins (1980) that the narratee is one of the fundamental elements of all narration. Thorough examination of what he represents and the study of narrative work as constituted by a series of signals addressed to him can lead to a more sharply delineated reading and a deeper characterization of the work. (24) This study appreciates this view as it sets out to analyze the narratee signals possibly present in the texts that may lead to the unveiling of the inscribed reader(s) of the narratives covered.

Prince further asserts that “the study of the narratee can lead us to a better understanding not only of the narrative genre but of all acts of communication.” (24) It is therefore necessary to accord it some privilege similar to that of the narrators by various scholars and critics. This is defensible for helping realize the significance of and better understand the mechanisms employed by the narratee in helping evaluate how successful a narrative is in its intention to convey agency.

A study of the narratee also helps identify a variety of the narratees and appreciate their role as mediators between the narrator and the readers, or between the author and readers. So crucial is his or her role in serving to characterize the narrator. Readers are helped to gain capacity to differentiate the narratee from the ideal reader, virtual reader and actual

reader through this study. And, of course, the narratee is certainly the spokesperson for the values advanced in a literary work. This study is also significant because it allows us to examine the background, dynamics, purpose and usefulness of narratological appreciation of literary narratives besides provoking a further critical discourse on the narratee notion in narratives. It contributes to the literary scholarship by enabling various categories of readers to read the narrative both as real and as communication from the author. And according to Peter Rabinowitz, this helps the actual reader identify with the narratee and the authorial reader in order to better appreciate the narrative.

1.6 Scope and limitations

Our study focuses on examining the notion of the narratee as portrayed in *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl* using narratology. It also identifies various narratee signals present in the texts that help debunk the postulated reader(s) of these narrative texts and eventually unveil the narratee. Further, this study explores how the chosen narrative texts manipulate other narratological features employed in helping tell the story of teenage girls in the society thus helping them to achieve agency about issues that they set out to present to the entire community. Although there are many other areas that could be studied in the selected narrative texts, the study focuses on the narratee notion so as to be able to portrait the fictional addressee of the narrator in the literary narratives and appreciate his or her role in an attempt to reveal and challenge issues that teenagers grapple with in society.

1.7 Literature review

This literature review focuses on three dimensions of study: the literature review on the nature of narratology, its critical views and the literature on the writers that focus on the subject. It should be noted that among the many roles literature plays in society, it explores issues that are real in life. Narratives, songs and other oral materials provide a channel through which the literature of a people is rendered and relayed. Therefore, educators are keen on exploring the art of narration in their approach to relevant topics with their students as they effortlessly help impart intended values from their moral development.

It is acknowledged that the present day narratology descends from Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928). Its concept of "narrative functions" is certainly the major source of influence. However, as Herman notes, structuralist proponents were more interested in literary narratives rather than the cases of routine story-telling in the field of narratology. It is therefore ironic that among fundamental sources for structuralist narratologists was Propp's examination of folktales engrained in 'orature'.

Mieke Bal in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. 2nd ed. (1997) submits that "narratology is a theory of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, cultural artifacts that 'tell a story'." (3) Its focus is on narrative texts of all kinds. It is imperative to mention as Bal does that narratology creates cohesion in the study of a narrative and its structure and how their relationship influences assessment of the same. He emphasizes on the restrictions in the practical use of the term.

The narrative is a subject of all narratological studies. Although various scholars of narratology have not been able to come up with any simplistic definition for it, a good number of them have attempted making their contribution to what they conceive it to be. Fotis Jannidis notes that besides literary and oral narratives, we have several texts that are not narratives but that contain materials for narratives. They may vary from court testimonies to descriptions of people, events and places. In this study however, we have limited ourselves to literary narratives in our investigation of the narratee. A literary narrative as used here implies a written narrative in a novel or novella. Okemwa's texts present us with crucial narratives on teenage girl experiences against the background of a repressive patriarchal culture.

According to Gerald Prince's submission in *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (1982), a narrative should not be defined based on its structural appearance. But "if and only if it is the representation of at least two events in a time sequence neither of which presupposes or entails the other." (163) In "Surveying Narratology" *What is Narratology? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory*. Ed. Tom Kindt and Hans-Herald Muller (2003) Prince reiterates that a narrative is "the representation of at least two real or fictive events in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other." (36) For Prince a narrative is factual or fictitious. It is also systematic and contains the element of time.

Prince in "Surveying Narratology" *What is Narratology? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory*. Ed. Tom Kindt and Hans-Herald Muller (2003) further

presents the specifics of a narrative, negating the notion that everything or every representation can constitute a narrative. He presents a rather burdensome definition of a narrative but which seems to precisely mark out what narrative is and what is not. It also helps in dichotomizing what can be categorized as narrative and what may be considered to be anti-narrative. As a major contributor to the theory of the narrative, Prince further asserts that:

If a definition points to a number of boundaries and makes a number of conditions or restrictions explicit, it also makes room for considerable diversity. For instance it does not specify the medium of narrative representation as oral, written, or sign language, still or moving pictures, gestures or a combination thereof. Nor does it specify their truth or falsehood, their factuality or fictionality, their traditionalism or modernity, their ordinariness or literariness, their spontaneity or deliberateness. Nor does it detail the nature of their content and its relation to anthropomorphic experience, the kind of topics addressed and themes developed, the sort of situations and events represented or the nature of their many possible links. Furthermore, it puts no limits on the potential magnitude of narratives; it barely indicates the degree of cohesion or the kind of closure they (ought to) possess; and it hardly constrains modes of narration or modes of narrativity (6, 7)

Moreover, Prince in “Surveying Narratology” *What is Narratology? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory*. Ed. Tom Kindt and Hans-Herald Muller (2003) additionally notes that narratology presents explicit margins in the definition of narrative. It is also responsible for their varieties. In the area of narrating, he adds that narratology describes rules to be followed by any narrative besides characterizing

narrative speed and its canonical temps and investigating narrative frequency. Narratology similarly analyses various forms of narration such as “posterior, simultaneous and intercalated as well as the modes of combination.” (7) Apart from exploring the specifics of the point of view in narratives, narratology specifies the narrator’s signs as “overt, knowledgeable, reliable or self-conscious” (7) It does so to the narratee as well. Finally, narratology outlines particular roles of “the actants of communication, the possible distances – temporal, linguistic, moral, intellectual, etc – as well as the possible distances separating them from the situations, events, and characters in the word represented.” (7) Prince posits that the major focus of narratology is “the nature, form and functioning of narrative.” (10) As he notes, it engages reality; its portrayal meets phenomenon, its model has correspondence with the molded. It also endeavors to elaborate an unambiguous, thorough and scientific explanation for the competency of a narrative. (12)

In *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (1982) Prince asserts that “If there is at least one narrator in any narrative, there also is at least one narratee and this narratee may or may not be explicitly designated by a ‘you’.” (16) ... It is thus the responsibility of critics to try and unveil him or her just as they are preoccupied with the narrator notion. Prince confirms that for any existing narrative text, both the narrator and the narratee must also be in existence as their roles are complementary.

From the study of narratology, narrative scholars are able to examine the minimal constituents of the narrated and distinguish those constituents necessary for binding a

story together into a cohesive piece and those that are not. According to Prince in “Surveying Narratology”, they are also able to study many of the possible relations between the minimal units such as “syntagmatic and paradigmatic, spatiotemporal, logical, functional and transformational.”(7) Finally, they are able to analyze various elements of a narrative such as characters, plot and context.

In *Gendered Interventions* (1989), Robyn Warhol puts forward the distinction between “distancing” and “engaging” narrators. According to him, a distancing narrator “provides so much information about the narratee that the he or she becomes very clearly defined...’ In contrast, the engaging narrator “strives to close the gaps between the narratee, the addressee and the receiver.” (7) In this study, we shall attempt to establish the placement of our narratees from these two broad categories identified. This reference is therefore relevant in this study hence its merit for use in this literature review.

Robyn Warhol in her more recent *The Look, the Body, and the Heroine of Persuasion: A Feminist-Narratological View of Jane Austen* (1996), makes use of the classical distinction between story and discourse and the classical concept of focalization in her contextualized feminist criticism. (7) This merging serves to appreciate and complement each other in narratological analysis of literary text as shall be applied in this study.

In “Gender and History in Narrative Theory: The Problem of Retrospective Distance” *A Companion to Narrative Theory* Ed. James Phelan’s and Peter J. Rabinowitz (2005) , Alison Case says, “Narratology gives us, among other things, the tools to identify and

describe narrative techniques more precisely, and thereby to consider their implications and significance in more nuanced ways.” (26) Additionally, the gender question presented through feminist narratologists feature predominantly in the role and presentation of the narrative persona in narratives. Case uses the decontextualized and non-gendered structural concepts “paradoxical paralipsis” and “ambiguous distancing” to investigate how narrative voices are gendered in specific narratives in historical contexts. (312)

More relevant to the present discussion too are the two types of readers that Jonathan Culler identifies. “Generic” and “flesh-and-blood” readers. The former are general. They understand narrative issues backwards. The latter are readers with their particularity and social identity in specific socio historical contexts. This marked distinction is invaluable for the furtherance of this study as it falls out of the scope of our study here. In this study we restrict ourselves to the identification of narratee signals, painting of the narratee portrait, assessment of their roles in the achievement of agency and making a comparison of the identified narratees in the two texts under this study. Nevertheless, it merits use in this literature review as it points at a dimension less explored that requires attention by proceeding studies. .

David Herman in *Story Logic* (2002) emphasizes the fantasy role narratives play world over. It is only through narratives that the power of imagination is hailed as it transcends physical, intellectual, historical and even mental boundaries. His emphasis is necessary for contextualizing our study. It also helps readers to appreciate the role authors play in

sharing their imagination with the narratee through the narrator, and eventually to the readers through the narratee. In chapter 9, entitled *Contextual Anchoring*, attention is directed to the “process by which cues in narrative discourse trigger recipients to establish a more or less direct or oblique relationship between the stories they are interpreting and the contexts in which they are interpreting them” (8) for both our texts under this study, there is no disconnection from respective contexts.

Eva Sabine Wagner scrutinizes the conditions for narratological self-consolidation. She challenges the view according to which narratology is built up simply by defining its object of research, arguing that there is a feedback loop between narratology and narrativity. In view of this circular dynamics, the goal of narratological consolidation cannot be achieved by attempting to provide narratology with a supposedly “solid” conceptual basis, but only by exploring narratology’s “complex” process of self-organization.

Roy Sommer presents what may be considered as relevant in solving issues of multiplicity in concepts and models that govern narratological studies. Sommer is pre-occupied by the manner in which narrative theories contribute to generation of scholarly information that concerns narratives. The way narrative is linked to knowledge is examined. He argues that availability of natural knowledge and prior experience to a great extent together with one’s intellectual capability enhances understanding in the relationship. From this standpoint, he discerns three types of compatibility in narratological theory building: “backward” compatibility where cognitive approaches

integrate various principles of earlier structural approaches; “forward” compatibility which focuses on research that opens up the way to the transgenic and transmedial dimensions of narrative; and “sideways” compatibility of classical and postclassical narratology. Sommer hopes that despite the diversity, many standpoints of convergence will be found due to the fruitful discourse happening in contemporary research in narrative theory.

From the documented sources in this literature review we find views that are invaluable in many respects towards contributing in one way or another in fleshing the content of our study, hence their merit for choice.

1.8 Theoretical framework

The central and contestable issue in Christopher Okemwa’s *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and even the onset of *Sabina the Rain Girl* is female circumcision. It is predominantly brought out and revolves around Sabina, the protagonist. Sabina’s struggles in the narratives are approached optimistically and resiliently. Narratology is appropriate in forming an informational grid of this study since the centre of interest is the narratee. As a theory of the narrative, narratology categorizes a narrative into “story” and “discourse”. The former is an account of happenings that include events, existents and the people or things prepossessed by the author’s cultural codes. Discourse on the other hand is the structure of the narrative transmission and its manifestation through verbal, cinematic, balletic and pantomimic presentations.

Mieke Bal in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* analyses two important constituents of a narrative; story and fabula. Story, according to Bal, is “a fabula that is presented in a certain manner.” Fabula on the other hand is “a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors.” She singles out the narrator who is “an agent that tells a story in a particular medium such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof” (5) as the most important aspect of the narrative. She attributes this to “the identity of the narrator, the degree to which and the manner in which that identity is indicated in the text, and the choices that are implied as lending the text its specific character” (18). By focusing on the narratological examination of the narratee notion in the literary narratives under this study against their socio-cultural background, this study seeks to identify various narratee signals and examine the portrayal of their agency.

Peter Barry’s definition of narratology in *Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* privileges the manner in which narratives are understood and their universal conventions. In this study, dimensions of meaning are approached from the position of the postulated reader. It is of superlative importance to examine the meaning a consumer of this narrative gets out of it even as the intended agency is relayed.

Susan Lanser developed what she identified as a feminist narratology through which she explored the aspect of gender in narratology. She is preoccupied with the manner in which narration of a story is influenced by the narrator’s gender. This strand of narratology is significant in the exploration of the narrator in the two texts that tell the

story of female circumcision. Okemwa, as a male writer, creates female narrators and presents his narrative through the narrator from their perspective. It is crucial to study how this point of view affects the entire narration process and the perception of the concerns that have been raised. Feminist narratology therefore, guides this study in investigating how the gender of the narrator influences the presentation of the narrative.

Through *Emerging Vectors in Narratology* (2017) Per Krogh Hansen, John pier, Phillipe Roussin and Wolf Schmid underscore the role of feminist narratology as invaluable in consolidating narrative dynamics. They note that feminist narratologists helped to save formal narrative poetics by combining narratology with feminist criticism. They concluded by emphasizing the importance of analyzing narratives from a gender perspective.

Narratology simply being the science of narrative as Gerald Prince defines it will help this study into scientifically examining the narratee. It will also provide all the necessary analytical tools to help analyze the narrative further and help demonstrate how its constituents cooperate to achieve the narrative process.

Feminist criticism is also appropriate for investigating how the males have been portrayed as dominating and the female as powerless as manifested in the texts. A number of tenets of this theory are to be employed in demonstrating the challenges teenage agency is faced with in a gender imbalanced society. Among them, patriarchy is key. As postulated in feminist criticism, “society is pervasively organized and conducted

in a way to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains: familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic” (Muchiri 2008).

The study also scrutinizes patriarchal biases in the society. It suggests that gender is a cultural construct generated by patriarchy. Patriarchal ideologies are perceived to permeate ‘great literary writings’, largely a males’ domain. Male expectations, interests and perceptions influence the principles for literary criticism. Therefore, the standard classifications and practice of literary criticism is gender based hence biased.

Generally, feminist criticism focuses on relationship between genders in society. It seeks to expose gender biased issues and challenge them. Clearly, this criticism awakens consciousness on what women grapple with in society; gender roles and identity. Views of liberal and Marxist feminist criticism are important in this study to awaken societal consciousness on challenges faced by women as a result of gender dichotomy. Since patriarchy favours men through promotion of traditionally biased gender responsibilities, it tends to introduce some binary comparison between men and women, with men being assigned superior qualities.

Whereas liberal feminist criticism seeks to acquire gender equality through legal means in situations where abuse is witnessed as opposed to generalizing the action to all men, Marxist feminist criticism portrays women as oppressed by capitalism. Not by men. It therefore pursues to liberate all women by overthrowing the capitalist system. It also aims at allowing both men and women to own means of production. Proponents here argue

that when women get empowered economically, their dependence and subordination to men shall cease to exist. This qualifies why Sabina is to be taken back to school after she ‘successfully’ flees from female circumcision and forced marriage at the end of our first text. She is expected to acquire knowledge and enlightenment necessary for economic independence.

Using the feminist criticism approach, this study generally seeks to analyze the implications of patriarchy and feminist contestation in the texts. Men seem to inflate themselves and abuse women, defining them in expedient terms such as *egesagane*. Such terms are intended to stigmatize the uncircumcised women and discriminate them from the rest of women in society, causing them to bow to the cultural demands of female circumcision. Ironically though, women use the very derogatory terms against fellow women, only those that have been circumcised being perceived as ‘real women’. Feminist theories are therefore important in and for this study.

Reader-Response Criticism will also be invaluable to this study. As Jane P Tompkins says in “An Introduction to Reader Response Criticism” *Reader-Response Criticism from Formalism to Post Structuralism* (1980), it will help “refocus criticism on the reader.” (ix) An examination of the “author’s attitude towards their readers, the kinds of readers various texts seem to imply, the role actual readers play in the determination of literary meaning, the relation of reading conventions to textual interpretation and even the status of the reader’s self” (ix) will be made possible through a reader-response criticism approach.

This approach as Walker Gibson acknowledges in his journal entitled “Authors, Speakers, Readers and Mock Readers” helps divert attention from the text to the reader. In this study we therefore focus on the narrator's communication with the various types of readers. Shifting attention to the reader during analysis helps to generate knowledge from the text. The approach is relevant to this study’s pursuit of the narratee signals and the eventual unveiling of the postulated reader through its idea of refocusing attention on the reader.

About the reader-response criticism, Tompkins in “An Introduction to Reader-Response Criticism” *Reader Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-Structuralism (1980)* presents a variety of readers that texts can address. He goes ahead to precisely mark out the differences among them:

The real reader (the person who holds the book in hand), the virtual reader (the kind of reader the author thinks he is writing for and whom he endows with certain qualities, capacities and tastes) and the ideal reader (one who understands the text perfectly and approves its very nuance). Once the idea of the reader has come into view it provides the critics with the opportunity to invent a new set of analytical tools. (xii)

Michael Riffaterre reiterates the position taken by Gibson, Prince and Tompkins about the meaning of a text being inherent in its language. But he adds that for this to happen, the reader must be able to relate to the very textual meaning. In other words, Riffaterre opposes the idea of meaning’s independence. He asserts that “literary meaning is a function of the reader’s response to a text and cannot be described accurately if that response is left out of account.” (*An Introduction to Reader Response Criticism*, xiii)

Stanley Fish's essay, "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics" helps this study, "to remove the literary text from the centre of critical attention and replace it with the reader's cognitive activity." As Culler's basic assumption in Reader oriented approach to literary criticism has it, "the shape a text assumes for its readers is determined not by the text itself but by the complexity of sign systems readers conventionally apply to literature." (xvii) Generally as demonstrated by the reader oriented approach, "if literature is what happens when we read, its value depends on the value of the reading process."

1.9 Research Methodology

Our study employs the textual analysis of primary texts with a major focus on narratology. This form of analysis dates back in the 20th century when there was a paradigm shift by the literary critics from focusing on an author to focusing on an author's works. As opposed to delving into an author's biography and the literary history as it was the case by earlier critics, F.R Leavis advocates for the close reading of the text itself. According to him, "The critic should analyze the words on the page rather than words from extrinsic evidence" (Peck and Coyle 153). Besides examining a text, textual analysis goes as far as discussing its artistry and effect. As Leavis further notes, it aims at revealing the complexity and elusiveness of what it discusses in reference to experiences of mankind. Protagonists focus on what the text says and how it says it. To put it differently, it focuses on the form and content of literature, what is described by literary critics as "the dual focus of literature."

Focus of our textual analysis is the examination of the narratee in *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl* using narratology. Analyses in both texts also cover the narratee signals for the postulated reader. Examination of other aspects of the narrative voice that propel the text towards the implied agency will also be paramount. Point of view is important in helping analyze the text in multiple perspectives.

To concretize the experiences of the teenage girl character and how the narrating voice gives her agency on female circumcision, the study, using narratology, reviews some critical works on gender based discourses especially female circumcision among teenage girls. Besides, this study probes the question of narration and teenage agency and other related works. It examines and integrates secondary materials that provide insight and corroborative evidence to concretize arguments here. In the course of this study, the researcher interviewed the author of the two texts on some of the cultural issues raised in them to better understand their contextual implication. From the interview, some of the material to be used for enriching this study shall be gathered.

The study then analyzes the information gathered from both primary and secondary texts through the proposed theoretical approaches. Narratology is relevant in explaining the nature of narratives vis-a'-vis the selected texts. The narratives centre on teenage girl characters from disadvantaged positions culturally, yet, positions that require them to acquire agency. Hence, the study focuses on narratology's examination of the narratee

signals, the narratee, his or her role in achievement of agency and also attempts to compare the narratees of the two texts.

1.9.1 Chapter outline

The first chapter introduces the study and gives background information on the concept of narratology and narratee and other related notions. It also examines the concept of agency from a gender based perspective, privileging teenage girl experiences in a culturally conservative society. It is also in this chapter that the statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology and the chapter outline for the work presented are found.

The second chapter examines narratee signals in the two novellas. It investigates aspects of the narratee as implied in the texts. The contestation here is that there exist various narratee signals in the texts that are important in revealing the narratee. It further analyses some aspects of narratology realized through the choice of the narrator's voice. This chapter, over and above all, acknowledges that narratee signals are central to helping identify the narratee in any given literary narrative. Together with other aspects of the narrative, the pursuit in examining the narratee in the two texts is made possible. Literary narratives here also offer an important platform for identifying narrative aspects that contribute to achievement of the postulated agency.

The third chapter pursues identification of the narratee. It also seeks to compare the narratees in the text under this study from analysis. Apart from that, it focuses on analyzing the narratee(s)' role in helping achieve agency from the narrating voice used to present teenage girl experiences in the narratives.

The final chapter, four, provides a conclusion to this study and the recommendations for further reading and areas of study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE NARRATEE AND NARRATEE SIGNALS IN *SABINA AND THE MYSTERY OF THE OGRE*.

2.1 Introduction

The novella, *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* was nominated for the Burt Award 2015 where it became the best in the teenage category. It majorly explores the controversial issue of female circumcision in the Abagusii Community. The protagonist, Sabina, is at the centre of the controversy. She is uncircumcised but determined not to undergo the cut. Her preoccupation is to rally other teenage girls and the entire community to join her in the opposition against the practice. As a result, she faces a lot of challenges. Her parents become victims of her uncircumcised status. They are ridiculed for their inability to get their daughter circumcised. As portrayed in the text, theirs is a “dirty” girl who should not be married by any man from their community. As the text comes to an end, Sabina has managed to run away from female circumcision and forced marriage. However, she is accepted back when the circumcision season is over, her controversial acceptance back into society elicits a lot of criticism and protest from the conservatives. Her community collectively resorts to take her back to school and support her through her education. Educating a girl is her best form of circumcision, not the physical cut, they resolved.

In *Sabina the Rain Girl*, the text unfolds when Sabina is being punished for being uncircumcised. This scenario contradicts the actual readers’ expectation of her being taken to school since this text is a sequel to *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*. In this community, it is the uncircumcised girl who is chosen as the rain girl to go to the land of

the ogres and deliver an ogre's tail to be used in cultural rituals. At the moment, the community is in desperate need of rain after prolonged drought. The ogre tail would be used to make the rain fall. Hardly any rain girl who went to the land of the ogres ever made it back alive. They got devoured by ogres or even other wild animals in the forest or killed by enemy communities who were ever on the guard for their land against invaders from other communities. Sabina is chosen for such a task. In a way, she is being handed over to her fate, a capital sentence for unacceptable status. Her death would not cost the community a thing because no one would marry her anyway. She would therefore not be able to contribute a thing to her community's wealth bank through a bride price that would have been paid for her if she were circumcised. Sabina once again goes through numerous challenges on her journey as a rain girl to deliver the tail to the community and be able to save them from the drought that has caused a lot of problems. Through magic realism and employment of other supernatural abilities, she manages to get the tail and delivers it to her people back at the village. Once again, she overcomes her challenges, emerging victorious against her community's expectation.

The fact that Sabina is not rewarded as expected at the end of the first text but rather subjected to another deadly challenge as a way of punishment for her being uncircumcised signifies the many, almost unending challenges, that women go through in society. Contests are perennial for them. Seemingly their fate is sealed and irrevocable. It is also an important pointer at the hypocrisy that exists in society especially from a gender perspective. It is improbable to tell the next hurdle that she will be presented with to overcome again as a way of punishing her for her uncircumcised status.

Through Sabina's voice, a 14 year old teenager, the text presents a narrative of a society that values and upholds female circumcision. According to Daniel Mokaya in *Female Circumcision among the Abagusii of Kenya* (2001), the female population who has undergone the cut stands at about 97%. During my interview with Christopher Okemwa on 22nd June 2019 at his home in Kisii, he admitted that indeed there is female circumcision among the Abagusii and that the concerns he writes about are not absolutely fictitious. "Female circumcision prevalence," he said, "is about 98%."

In *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*, Sabina's act of fleeing from female circumcision is considered cowardly. She feigns illness to escape being circumcised together with her age mates. In the proceeding circumcision season, she literally flees from the initiation stone to seek refuge at the Hermit's in the forest. Her parents are ridiculed and looked down upon for being parents of *egesagane*, a derogatory term for the uncircumcised girl. But Sabina is not overwhelmed by her prevailing challenges.

In *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Alice Walker asserts that "RESISTANCE IS THE SECRET OF JOY." She seems to suggest that the oppressed should stage resistance against the oppressor so as to revolutionize their circumstances and experience freedom. In her assertion, she implies that for women in Africa to repossess their "secret of Joy", they must resist female circumcision. She holds the practice as one of the most extreme ways in which men have chosen to ensure they keep the women folk under control physically, emotionally and economically. Therefore, by focusing on the teenage

protagonist's experience, our narratives provide agency on the female circumcision practice.

This chapter is an investigation of the various aspects of the narratee and narratee signals necessary for helping identify the narratee (s) in the texts. Emphasis is on how the postulated reader of the narrative has been implied, presented or represented in the text. From an interview with Okemwa, female circumcision among the Abagusii is not just the mere cutting, but a long process that is introduced to the girls while very young, about the age of five. It is introduced to them through the tales of the Ogre that would one day swallow them. Consequently, they grow up expecting the cut that should come in their early teen age as a culmination of the process that began much earlier in life. In this study, however, focus is on the narratee persona and the narratee signals that are significant in helping identify the narratee in the two texts. By focusing on the above, the chapter pursues to unveil indications of the postulated reader of the narratives in the texts present. The chapter also aims at studying other narrative strategies responsible for (re)conceptualizing the teenage voice as a tool for agency.

2.2 Aspects of the narratee

It is evident that many researchers and scholars in the literary field have done so much on the narrator; from examination of his or her nature to his or her role in the collective art of narration. It is however, unjustifiable why not equally much has been done about the notion of the narratee. Gerald Prince acknowledges this in his "Introduction to the Study of the Narrative" *Reader Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-structuralism*. Ed.

Jane P. Tompkins (1980, 7). He even notes the ease with which basic readers of literary narratives get to identify the narrator as contrasted with the narratee. He attributes this to critics' lack of interest in the notion, causing the narratee even as a term to remain strange.

In the study of poetry, like it is for many narratives, it is easier to differentiate between the poet and the persona. Whereas the persona is a fictitious voice that speaks in poetry, the poet is the factual writer of the poem. In the same version, there exists an actual reader of that very poem and a fictitious addressee who the persona talks to. Translating this into the narrative theory, we equate the poet to the author of the literary narrative and the persona to the narrator. On the other hand, there exists an actual reader like one for the poem, and an equivalent to the persona's addressee. In the case of narratives, the latter is the narratee. Many readers of both poetry and narratives find it much easier to identify the persona and the narrator respectively than they do identifying the narratee.

An examination of the nature of the narratee in a literary narrative makes an important contribution to the literary studies as it helps readers to focus attention on the projected consumer of the literary narratives. It can also help readers assess suitability of the texts presented in relation to their target audience. It is thus important that we learn to identify the narratee and the various roles he or she plays in narrative texts. This is the major preoccupation of our study. It is also important that we identify various categories into which narratees can be placed and point out what sets them apart from each other. Finally, it is invaluable that we study the various signals that point out the narratee in

literary texts for this will play a significant role in identifying the imaginary being(s) that the texts address.

Gerald Prince in his “Introduction” sets out to enumerate what we can term as a summary of the role of the narratee in fictional narrations. First, the narratee links the narrator to the reader, assuming the role of a messenger that gets the message from the narrator and hands it over to the reader. This relationship is instrumental in ensuring the intended communication is successfully relayed. On a different scale we may say that the narratee drives home the intended agency and or advocacy.

The narratee is central in establishment of the rules, belief system and ideas that permeate a given fictional narrative. Traditions of a people and what is considered acceptable norms are exposed. Societal values are also unveiled through the moral development of the narratives that the narratee helps deliver. As a result, taboos and general illegalities in a society are acknowledged and appreciated. In addition to that, the narratee helps in the Characterization of the narrator. A portrait of the narrator is therefore mounted by him or her, strengthening the make-belief in an otherwise imaginary construction.

He is also vital to note the role of the narratee in helping lay emphasis on the various thematic concerns that the literary narratives address. In the texts under this study, female circumcision is clearly the main issue. But there is also what can be interpreted as a violation of teenage girl rights like the right to education and other traditional practices like forced or arranged marriages. Whereas some of these highlighted concerns elicit

mixed reactions based on cultural expectations of a community, it is the manner of their portrayal and emphatic contestations that help mark out the overriding attitude towards them.

The narratee's contribution towards developing events that form the main story in a narrative is recognizable. Without him or her, the narrator would not be able to communicate effectively to the reader. This therefore implies that there would be no story at all. As acknowledged by Gerald Prince, "Each story must have at least one narrator and at least one narratee." The two notions are therefore interdependent in their roles hence mutually complement each other. Together, they help relay the narrative agenda to the readers.

Finally, a narratee is considered to be the one relaying the message of the narrative. He or she is without a doubt the agent of information through whom the narrator's message gets home. The task of ensuring the success of a literary story is thus bestowed upon him or her.

Gerald Prince's contribution to the narrative theory remains priceless. He identifies various signals that can guide scholars and readers in identifying the narratee in various narratives. He points out two unique attributes of the narratee. First, recognizing the narratee's exceptional ability to remember, then pointing out that the narratee must share a close linguistic relationship with the narrator, being able to understand the narrator's language. However, Prince also establishes the narratee's shortcoming in his or her

inability to comprehensively claim familiarity of all issues that concern characters he interacts with.

2.3 Narratee Signals

Back to the narratee signals, it is clear that they exist in variations. Whereas we find indications of the narratee in literary narratives that are directly addressed to him or her, we have those that are not. Prince enumerates them as varying from their behaviour, historical record, the public's notion of them to their corporeal attributes. There are also those indicators that precisely define the narratee just as we have those that do not explicitly refer to him or her. Such exciting dynamics are what characterize this study, making the narratee persona an interesting subject of examination.

In the "Introduction", Prince presents important guidance for the process of identifying the narratee. He argues that the focus should remain on the text under study for signals:

Any indication, whether explicit or indirect, should be interpreted on the basis of the text itself, using as a guide, the language employed, its presuppositions, the logical consequences that it entails, and the already established knowledge of the narratee.

(13)

In narratives where the narrator uses the second person pronoun in representing the narratee, the designation is fairly explicit hence easier to make out. In John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* (2000), for instance, such a designation appears four times in three different paragraphs. As the narrator talks about the people of the Gulf and their preoccupation with superstition, he observes that what was of essence to them is what they believed or knew, not what they saw. He says, "There was no certainty in seeing, no proof that what

you saw was there or was not there.” (32) In this context, the second person pronoun “you” designates a person being informed about the behavior of the people of the Gulf or one who has associated with them in some way. The narrator is critical about the belief system among people of the Gulf. Probably, the postulated reader here does not share in their superstitious beliefs. It thus implies that the narratee is not one among the people of the Gulf.

The narrator goes on to caution the narratee against longing too much for something. One may not end up getting it. He says, “It is not good to want a thing too much. It sometimes drives the luck away. You must want it just enough, and you must be very tactful with God or the gods.” (36) Superstitious beliefs and religion are still the main concern in the address. The narrator is critical of the happenings among the people of the Gulf although obviously maintaining some critical distance. “You” here seems to designate universal humanity. The narratee then is suggested to be someone who is closer to the narrator and who cares to listen to the piece of advice, but more especially one who has some inclination towards superstitious beliefs.

In the third paragraph where the narratee is designated by the second person pronoun, the narrator points at how insatiable human beings are, “For it is said that humans are never satisfied, that you give them one thing and they want something more.” (45). The narrator, however, points out that it is this greed that humans have that makes them superior to all other animals who seem to get satisfied with whatever little they have. He gently attacks Kino for his greed, together with the whole lot of the people of the Gulf but

again acknowledges it to be a universal human trait. In other words the narratee, though closer to the people of the Gulf, bears a universal connotation of human weakness.

Being an allegorical narrative of an ancient parable among the people of La Paz, the narration of *The Pearl* is subject to varied interpretations. But the postulated reader is suggested to be at home with it. The narrative text employs a lot of symbolism indicating that better be understood by the natives of the Gulf and or their associates. From the use of symbolic names like 'Juana' to the style employed like the use of various songs require a native understanding for proper interpretation. The fact that these songs are neither interpreted nor explained reinforces this assumption.

One of the most obvious pointers to the narratee of our two primary texts under this study is the narrator's use of the local dialect, *Ekegusii*. Unlike in the context of a native postulated reader where the use of local terms and phrases is not interpreted, the narrator of these two texts seems to be presenting the narrative to a narratee that is foreign to the Abagusii language and culture. On the first page of the text, the narrator explains the term "egesagane" as a reference to "uncircumcised girl." On the very first page, the ritual that preceded the female circumcision is also explained. The "night of the Ogre" has also been explained for better understanding of the narratee as "a ritual you have to undergo before *the day of the ogre* – the day of the knife!" (1) Many local terms have been explained in the text to help the perceived inscribed reader to understand them. Words such as *kegori* that is interpreted to mean the "age mate" and others like *omong'ina* that

means an “old woman” (5) have their equivalent meanings provided for the sake of the postulated reader who certainly does not understand them.

The narrator of *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* chooses to hint at the postulated reader by directing a question at him/her. Sabina in her protest against female circumcision wonders whether the practice was really worth undergoing. The narrator reports that “She wondered why they had to experience all that painful torture. Was it worth the while?” (10) In a way, the narrator seems to attract the attention of the narratee towards the subject of female circumcision, questioning its value and relevance in the contemporary society.

Since the society depicted in this narrative is typically conservative and in support of female circumcision, it is implied that the addressee is not one of them. A loyal observer of the Abagusii cultural sensibilities would have no two ways about the practice. The implication that the addressee is an outsider is further qualified by the hypocrisy unveiled by failure to take Sabina to school but rather appointing her for a deadly punishment as a rain girl. Her parents stand is that she must be circumcised. All the women, men and even children in her community are custodians of this belief too. Her question must have been directed to an external audience for sympathy or empathy and a possible intervention to annul the practice.

In Chinua Achebe’s *A Man of the People* (1966), the narrator is precisely designated. The actual reader easily makes out the voice behind the narration as that of Odili Samalu. His

account of the encounter with Chief Nanga both at the present time and in his earlier days in primary school is the gist of the narration. Odili tells the story from a third person omniscient narrator's perspective and on several occasions addresses his narratee directly by use of the second person pronoun 'you'. In the opening paragraph of the first chapter he says:

No one can deny that Chief the Honourable M.A Nanga, M.P., was the most approachable politician in the country. Whether you asked in the city or in his home village, Anata, they would tell you he was a man of the people. I have to admit this from the onset or else the story I am going to tell will make no sense. (1)

The narrator's confession of his attitude towards Chief Nanga is already established and the task he now assigns himself is that of substantiating the claim through his narration. Many literary titles, however, bear sarcastic or even ironic titles. In most cases, 'a man of the people' is in real sense an enemy of the people and 'an enemy of the people' a man of the people in their depiction. Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* and Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* are clearly demonstrative of this assertion. In a literal depiction, Odili is out to sanitize Chief Nanga and display a portrait of him as a man of the people but at the same time gives a contrary implication. He is determined to infuse his attitude into his narratee through his narration. The narrator's use of the second person pronoun 'you' is therefore an important pointer towards who the narratee is.

In the third paragraph of the text, the narrator further draws the actual reader closer to his relationship with the narratee. He observes that:

The popular 'Ego Women's Party' wore a new uniform of expensive accra cloth. In spite of the din you could still hear as clear as a bird the high-powered voice of their soloist, whom they admiringly nicknamed 'Grammar-phone!' Personally I don't care too much for our women's dancing but you just had to listen whenever Grammar-phone sang. (1)

As observed, the narrator points out the narratee through the use of the second person pronoun as well. The narrator lets the narratee know that he was not so much into the idea of women singing, but confesses that grammar-phone's singing was irresistible. In a way, he is drawing the narratee's attention towards the kind of a singing Grammar-phone did besides revealing his attitude towards her. He intends to influence the narratee's attitude as well. His use of the first person determiner 'our' while at the same time addressing the narratee indicates that the addressee and addresser share in the object of reference in relation to possession. The implication is that they relate in some way or share some common traits and even geography or otherwise.

In *A Man of the People*, there is also increased use of Pidgin English, associated with West African countries especially Nigeria. However, the narrator does not in any way explain meanings of those pidgin phrases or words. Inference here is that the postulated reader depicted in this text understands Pidgin English. Following the narrator's story comfortably in this text requires that one is able to relate with the meaning brought out in phrases such as, "You see how e de do as if to say money be san-san; he was saying. People wey de jealous the money gorment de pay Minister no sabi say no be him one de chop am. Na so so troway" (10) which any other reader who does not understand it may

have difficulty discerning. The narratee is therefore not geographically, linguistically and even culturally far removed from the narrator.

Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre employs increased use of local dialect. The narrator uses several Ekegusii terms in the process of narration. Unlike what is seen in Achebe's *A Man of the People*, the local terminologies are given equivalent English words. It is probable that the postulated reader of this text does not belong to the Abagusii community. Otherwise, he or she would need no interpretation of words like *egesagane* (a girl who is not circumcised) as seen in the first paragraph of the text. (1) Whereas both *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *A Man of the People* maintain their authenticity and a clear sense of its geographical setting, it is suggested that the narrative presented in the former is meant for foreigners as the latter appeals to the local textual community. "The Night of the Ogre" ritual is explained as a ritual that initiates have to undertake before the day of their circumcision. (1) Several other terms in the local dialect such as *kegori* "age mate", *omong'ina* "an old woman", among others have been interpreted for the postulated reader. And when the day for circumcision came, the narrator announces that:

The hour had come. It was the time for the ogre. This was a ritual all girls who had to be cut had to undergo. Sabina's mother and all other women in the village had experienced it. Great grandmothers and their mothers observed it. No woman in the village ever escaped this custom. In this village, it is what made them women and wives. (16)

What is further noted by the narrator is that this day of circumcision was “an important moment in their lives.” (16) Detailed explanation is meant for the addressee within the narrative.

From the narration, it is clear that the entire community from which the narrator tells the story of Sabina is in solid support of female circumcision. Although one may say that this changes as the story comes to an end, it is seen as hypocrisy as the object of the narration who is supposed to be sent back to school to receive education and be supported by the entire community is unexpectedly sent to the world of the ogre as a rain girl. Punishment to her for not being circumcised is inevitable. She is meant to die in the process of getting the tail for her community for that is what happened to her predecessors. The precious member of the ogre’s body is to be used to appease the gods of rain and cause it to fall. Salvation of the society from drought and famine are more important than the life of one uncircumcised girl. Society is hypocritical towards women who are not cut. However, the narrator tries to derive sympathy and empathy through the narratee when s/he questions societal standing:

Sabina’s skin was now wet with horror. Her intestines coiled into one knot of fear. She wondered why they had to experience all that painful torture. Was it worth the while? She wondered. (10)

In a way, the narrator is appealing for empathy from the narratee. He or she should feel with and for the victims of female circumcision and probably come to their rescue. At another level, the narrator is inciting the masses to spark some dialogue about the entire issue and to start asking some critical questions and cause the perpetrators to re-evaluate relevance of the practice or lack of it. This is agency.

Some addresses by the narrator also seem to be directed towards an ‘outsider.’ Through Pa Sabina’s moment of introspection, the reader is able to make out the glory that would accompany Sabina’s acceptance of the cut in her father. He imagines the respect he would be accorded and a restoration of his place among his peers. He would no longer be seen as “*enana*”, a child. His joy and dignity would be reinstated. (26) His man hood depended upon Sabina’s circumcision and he craved for it. Thoughts about a celebration that would accompany this and even the possibility of his marrying another wife from Sabina’s bride price gave him hope for reasserting himself in the eyes of society.

The actual reader of *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* may encounter some conflicting expectations. For instance, Sabina is the protagonist of this text and from all indications; she is opposed to female circumcision. However, she is seen to be torn between her position and the position of her community. She wishes she were circumcised:

If she were circumcised, she could fare on well with her age mates and the rest of the village girls. She could be loved by her mama and papa. She could be respected in the village and could be called upon to participate in community functions. She could be a flower girl during wedding ceremonies. To remain uncut continued subjecting her to unpleasant moments, embarrassment and trouble with other girls. She wished she had been cut. She wished she had endured the pain the previous year and done away with it.

(31)

Conflict is clear in Sabina’s mind. And this conflict is a result of external forces; those that demonize female circumcision and associate it with a number of challenges that the

narrator highlights. One may be tempted to question why society imagines that female circumcision is bad but male circumcision good. Is it not true that in both cases pain is experienced and blood shed? Maybe the answer to this question can be sought in the intention of the cut. For men, it is seen as meant to ‘improve efficiency’ while in ladies to make them ‘docile’ according to Kulet (2008). Alice Walker in *Possessing the Secret of Joy* hints at this argument suggesting that for women to regain their secret of joy, they need to put up resistance against the practice. The protagonist goes ahead to ask some questions that may not go down well with the perpetrators of this practice: “But, how can she go in for the cut when she already knew of all the health problems that came with it? Won’t she be doing something wrong to simply please others?” (32)

Critically examining these pertinent questions raised by the protagonist, they are directed towards the reader of the text, the consumer of the given information; the narratee. They serve to reveal his/her “knowledge or defenses” as Prince puts it. Following those questions is the narrator’s interpolation that, “If her mother and father really loved and respected her then they should give her the freedom to choose what to do with her body.” (32) Address is clearly to a postulated reader. The narrator clearly suggests that Sabina’s parents neither respect nor love her. And that is why they compel her to get circumcised against her will. The narrator too seems opposed to the happenings in this society although narrating from within it to the narratee who clearly is from without it.

Proponents of the cultural rites like that of circumcision, the likes of Pa Sabina are seen as “the real enemies of the family.” (39) They are unyielding to calls for change. The

narrator questions whether he would understand if a discussion about outliving the era of female circumcision is presented to him. “If explained, will he understand? No, he won’t! It will be a waste of time. It could even turn tragic.” (39) Change is difficult to come by from within the narrator’s community. This is the message being driven home in this whole scenario. Appeal for intervention can only be directed to an alien. A foreigner to the community.

Abhorrent behavior, according to the narrator, of old men taking young girls without their consent for wives is celebrated by most people in the community of the text. It is encouraged by fathers who are in want of the bride price to enrich themselves. Women reinforce it since they went through the same practice and would wish it relayed. Teenagers know not anything else apart from what they see and experience happen. They celebrate it. Patriarchal tendencies that characterized most African cultural set-ups are at play to ensure the female gender is kept under suppression culturally, economically and even intellectually. It is therefore unlikely that the addressee is a member of the Abagusii community who, according to the text, are expected to embrace their culture fully and preserve its sensibilities. The address is seen to be directed to an inscribed reader of this text.

Unlike in *A Man of the People* which seems to be an interpretively open novel that suggests a precisely designated narratee, *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* is a generous novel with a generously engaging narrator that seems to reach out to the narratee and the actual reader. He translates all the Ekegusii terms and phrases and invites

a wide range of audience for readership. Translation in this case is to the benefit of those who may not understand the Ekegusii terms used. Traditional rites of passage in Abagusii culture are also explained and their significance implied.

The postulated reader of *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* is however not so far removed from Africa and its traditions, especially East Africa. Occasional use of Kiswahili words that are not translated or interpreted is a clear indication for this supposition. The postulated reader would experience difficulty in associating meaning with words such as “*Huyo! Huyo! Shika yeye!*” (80) to denote a situation where people are shouting at a person who is running away, calling on each other to have the person captured. A Swahili word, *leso*, (84) has also been used several times by the narrator without bothering to have them interpreted. How else would a reader from without the East African region understand it to mean a piece of cloth that women use to tie around their waist both as a demonstration of modesty and self-respect culturally? Several other Swahili terms have been used by the narratee without providing their English equivalent meanings. Such words include *panga* (29) which denotes a machete, *sufuria* (43) to mean a metallic object with raised sides and space in the middle used for cooking and *ugali* (87) a staple food in East Africa moulded from maize flour that is mixed with boiling water and stirred to form a solid mound, *shukas* (63) that mean long and wide sheets of cloth and also *mzee* (93) that simply refers to an old person.

Using the Kiswahili word *matatu* (100) is more revealing about who the postulated reader actually is. Connotatively, the term refers to any Public Service Vehicle that is neither a

taxi nor a bus, used for transporting people in Kenya. Since the term is associated specifically with Kenya, it follows that the postulated reader here is also likely to be Kenyan because the word has not been interpreted for a foreign narratee and other levels of readers.

It is also interesting to note that there is some cultural symbolism that the narrator presents to the reader although they are not explained. When Sabina is presented to her would be husband, she is requested to kneel down:

One woman came out of the hut and brought blood in a cup. A goat had been slaughtered from which they got the blood. Her mother helped her sip from the cup. She was then led into the hut. (56)

The significance of drinking from a cup of blood has not been stated to the reader though the narrator goes ahead to clarify that it was goat's blood. Readers are only left to suppose that this was a symbolic welcome and initiation into the institution of marriage. But why the blood? And while in their hut, Sabina and her supposed husband are given milk in one cup from which they sip, "It was milk which they poured into a cup and gave both of them to sip from. After this short, simple ritual, the women left the hut one by one." (57) Sipping from one cup of milk by the potential husband and his expected wife has also not been given explanation. The only possible pointer to its significance is when the people left the hut one by one, leaving Sabina alone with the old man. It would however be crucial for the imagery in blood and milk to be disclosed to the postulated reader if the narrative was meant for everybody. Failing in this disclosure is indicative of a demarcated addressee of the narrator.

An owl in an African setting is associated with bad omen. Many African societies believe that when an owl hoots anywhere near your compound, something bad would happen in the home, especially death of a family member. Consequently, the owl is often chased to go and hoot from elsewhere. At night, a piece of glowing coal is thrown at it to scare it into flying away. When pa Sabina falls in a trance the narrator reports that, “The owl flew in and perched itself on a tall tree in the hedgerow and hooted; its echo reverberated against the huts and tall trees in the compound and sounded grave and solemn.” (93) On their way from Sabina’s suitor, the procession walked in a single file back to pa Sabina’s home. There are about fifty head of cattle that have been given as bride price for Sabina and the cows are being led home. As they went through some thick canopy of trees, “Sabina heard the wild cry of a black bird and the hoot of an owl in the nearby tree and looked up, but could not see any of them.” (63) Images of the ‘black bird’ and the ‘owl’ are significant for understanding of the happenings of the moment. These images are thus associated with what happens later in the text by a reader who understands their significance.

A lot of significance has also been accorded to the mention of a *Mogumo* tree (95) under whose shed visitors have been made to sit as a special place. This image reverberates also in the writing of Ngugi wa Thiong’o. In *The River Between* (1965), *Mogumo tree* whose spelling here is ‘*Mugumo tree*’ is a sacred place as seen in chapter four of the novel. Its size and how other smaller trees around it relate to it is also significant. The narrator says: A big Mugumo tree stood near the edge of the hill. It was a huge tree, thick and mysterious. Bush grew and bowed reverently around it. And there the ancient tree stood,

towering over the hill, watching as it were, the whole country. It looked holy and awesome, dominating Waiyaki's soul so that he felt very small and in the presence of a mighty power. This was a sacred tree. (15)

While pointing at the *Mugumo* tree on a different occasion, Waiyaki's father confirms that the site where the tree stood was indeed a sacred place, "That is a blessed and sacred place." (18). The *Mugumo* tree is also a place where cultural and traditionally religious sacrifices were made according to Ngugi wa Thiong'o. In a conversation between Chege and the elder from Gathanjo, it is discovered that Joshua's daughter, Muthoni had not healed from circumcision. All the other girls had. He attributes the occurrence as a punishment from their gods for Joshua's abandoning of his traditional faith to join Christianity. Chege says:

If Joshua had not sold his heart to these people, it would have been a simple case. Why! A black ram without blemish under a *Mugumo* tree – simple sacrifice. And all would have ended well. (48)

The implication of using *Mogumo* tree as the chosen point for Pa Sabina's visitors to sit is therefore figuratively brought out. We can deduce that the visitors were so much respected, feared or revered by Sabina's father following the bride price of fifty cows that they had given him for Sabina's hand in marriage. They had the key that would change his life forever. His status as "a child" as seen by his peers would also change when Sabina is eventually circumcised and married off to the main visitor. Pa Sabina would also be able to marry a second wife and elevate his social status among other men in his community thanks to the visitors. They were important indeed. Heaven send. Almost

sacrosanct. It follows that they would only be allowed to sit at a sacred place, most respected and revered. Associating the image of the *Mogumo* tree with its significance can only be possible with a reader who understands it. A Kenyan reader probably from the Central province or the Gusii region.

A conciliatory tone that characterizes the concluding paragraph of *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* exposes the mood and attitude of the narrator and that of the narratee as well. The former seems to celebrate with the rest of the community for Sabina's change of fate. She has successfully steered clear female circumcision for the third season and made clear her position against the practice. In what is clearly unexpected turn of events, she has managed to rally the entire community behind her in the fight against female circumcision. Her reward is to be taken back to school and be educated. An old woman that had earlier been excommunicated from this community is also accepted back and everybody shares in the jubilation:

People in the field clapped their hands and cheered the dancers on. Sabina waved her hands to the crowd and to those who had had come back to the field as she perched on the men's shoulders. She had turned into a heroine. What a turn of events! What a change of heart! Who could believe this could happen in this village? (102)

The narratee is invited into the celebration and to marvel at what had happened in this village. The narrator announces that change had happened and that hearts had been turned. And rhetorically asks the narratee if there was anyone that could believe such happening would come to be in the community of the text. The addressee is probably foreign to Sabina's village and is being invited to celebrate with them.

In a quest for freedom from what she considers patriarchal oppression, Sabina wishes she were a bird. The third person omniscient narrator that relays this story to the narratee reports what is on Sabina's mind. In what seems to be her moment of introspection, she contrasts her life and generally that of girls in her community to that of birds. Unlike her fellow girls in their village, birds were free to do what they pleased and to fly wherever they wanted. "Birds, she thought, have freedom. I wish we girls had the same freedom as the birds! Freedom to fly about, to do what we think is good for us." (62) Her quest for freedom and by extension that of girls in her community insinuates their suppressed status. Their actions and lives in general are dictated by their cultural norms that are certainly gender biased. The narrator is thus appealing for mercy and possible intervention to free them from the implied oppression. Intended audience here is from without the community.

Behavior of small stones and small sticks when thrown into the waters has been contrasted. Unlike small stones which "get swallowed by the waves," small sticks "dance on the waves." (63) The narrator says that the protagonist watched with joy as the latter happened. In a way, she appears to wish that she were able to stay above her cultural challenges that she experienced being a girl in society. A small stick is flexible enough to be broken but still light enough to float on the waters. A stone is hard and rigid, however small. That suggests why it is swallowed by the waves. She has no smile on her face thinking about her situation. Like a small stone, she has been swallowed by her cultural demands from which point she is struggling to emancipate herself. The symbolism is presented to the narratee by the narrator so as to reflect on the situation of

the protagonist. Several other circumstances evoke equivalent feelings in the narratee. One of them is the inevitability of circumcision for every woman in the community of our narrative text. There were no two ways about it. If one would not willingly get the cut, she would forcibly do. One would not be saved even by death. “They will cut you by force, especially during the time for giving birth. And if you die before they cut you, they will cut your corpse, sing songs and carry out all rituals.” (91)

Animal imagery has been used widely by the author. During their journey in the night to the burly man’s home, the procession meets a chattering squirrel that brings them to a standstill. It ran and “vanished, disappearing into the woods.” (47) Shortly after that, they are confronted by a bold hyena that stands on their way before being hit with a club on the head and scampering for its safety. (48) And as they approached their destination, they met a snake, a cobra. (48) They hit its neck with a stone as it struggles to slither away, eventually succumbing to its injuries. Sabina meets a young hyena at night as she escapes being circumcised. It ran towards her. She quickly ducked aside in good time allowing it to flee past her. “Before long, the same animal ran back and directed its teeth at her.” (83) It is her screaming that scared it, making it run away. Scary images of animals like the dragon (17) and even the ogre are also used in the text significantly to relay intended symbolism. However, all these animal symbols have not been explained by the narrator implying that the narratee understands their significance.

Witchcraft that is associated with cannibalism is evident in *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*. The omniscient third person narrator that relays the story of Sabina takes the reader

in the protagonist's mind and communicates the fear in her. Sabina fears the hermit whose place she takes refuge in the forest after she runs away from the initiation stone. In the description of the old woman the narrator says that "She was so thin that Sabina thought she was a witch... witches are normally thin and bony..." (84) It is believed in this community that witches are cannibals too. It sends a lot of fear in the protagonist who as the narrator says:

...had heard of women who killed other people and ate their flesh and drank their blood...
(...)... the old woman could call upon her accomplices and, together, they would slaughter Sabina, remove her heart and chop off her liver and tongue. These, it was said, were the parts needed by witches and cannibals. They believed the organs could make one rich and successful. (84)

Details of what the community believes in are given by the narrator who undoubtedly understands the customs of the people. He or she even knows how mysterious witches' voices sound. (85) The narratee is invited to share in this knowledge probably because he or she is unfamiliar with the cultural and traditional practices of the community.

Over and above narratological features portrayed in the narrative, agency for the plight of teenage girls in society is revealed. The narrator clearly addresses a variety of audiences. To one group, they are encouraged to be courageous and confront some challenges in life head on. To another group, the narrator seems to suggest that change is inevitable in society and that everyone should be ready to embrace it. To yet another group, the narrator seems to say emphatically:

We need to be intelligent. We need to question every aspect of our culture. We need to be wise. Wisdom calls for wise decisions and wise judgments. We need to act soberly, with intelligence and understanding. (99)

Sobriety is advocated for. Such words by a custodian of female circumcision in the community, the circumciser herself, appear to soften and change the hearts of people completely towards the practice. Villagers are completely disarmed physically by those words. Some are engulfed in sympathy and empathy for the estranged girl and the old lady for her woes. Commenting on how times have changed, the speaker continues to call upon people to change with the times:

This era is different from the old days. Things have changed. We used to get water from the river, now we get it from the tap; we used to walk on foot, now we board *matatus*; we used to fight using arrows, now we fight using guns. How things have changed! If we used to circumcise, it does not mean we can continue doing so. Let us give this young girl and the old lady whom we banished, a chance to live their lives. If they want to remain dirty as they are, let them. If they want to endure the scorn of being called *egesagane*, let them. If they want to undergo the cut later, let them. Give them a chance to live their own lives. (100)

Comparison, analogy and contrast in the happenings of the ancient days against contemporary times work miracles. All people in this village, men, women, boys and girls agree to the circumciser's words and together opt to stop alienating women who choose not to get circumcised. An agreement to let the uncut women live their lives is reached. Society yields to the advocacy and collectively approves that Sabina should be taken back to school. She is carried shoulder high by the young men present and celebrated. The narrator reports that "Those who were present saw this and marveled,"

(102) insinuating that s/he was in agreement with the resolution reached. A call for re-evaluation of traditional and cultural practices and the general way of life among people is made. Sabina's advocacy gets home. Her agency is realized.

Plural first person pronoun "we" used in the circumciser's speech above is indicative of collectivity and universality of the call to change. Everyone is invited to embrace it. "We" also means that both the narrator and the narratee are parties to the address. Therefore, the narrator talks to himself and to the narratee at the same time. Deduction here is that the narratee may also be a perpetrator of the happenings noted in the narrative just as the narrator and even the actual reader of the text is. Address is hence to all levels of readers and probable audiences. Benefit goes to the young girls and women who have perennially endured untold cultural challenges in silence as a result of the patriarchal constructions by the masculine gender. Stereotypic and chauvinistic tendencies aimed at subjugating the feminine gender are in a way watered down through this agency. It was the dawn of 'a new day.'

Sabina the Rain Girl proceeds from where its predecessor stopped. Divergence is observed in the use of the word "ogre" in the two texts. Whereas in the earlier text it symbolically meant 'circumcision', in the proceeding text it refers to the imaginary monstrous creature, characteristic of the African oral traditions. The narrator chooses to employ magic realism in what now seems to be a complete fairy tale. As earlier mentioned in this study, the text begins on a punishment note where Sabina, now a fifteen year old girl is chosen as a rain girl to go to the land of the ogres and bring an ogre's tail

to the traditional priests and rain-makers for the rain making ritual. This is meant to bring to an end a long season of drought and famine that the village had been experiencing for a long time.

Initially the word magic realism was broadly associated with fine art. First used by Franz Roh, it described works by German painters characterized by what J.A Cuddon describes in his fifth Edition of *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (2013) as “still, sharply defined, smoothly painted images of figures and objects depicted in somewhat surrealistic manner” (433) The term was then picked up by notable literary authors such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Günter Grass, Alejo Carpentier, Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie, Milan Kundera, among others. Cuddon gives the features that characterize Magic realism as:

Mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic or bizarre, skillful time shifts, convoluted and even labyrinthine narratives and plots, miscellaneous use of dreams, myths and fairy stories, expressionistic and even surrealistic description, arcane erudition, the element of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable. (434)

David Lodge in *The Art of Fiction* (1992) writes that magic realism exists “when marvelous and impossible events occur in what is otherwise a realistic narrative.” (114) As Lodge additionally asserts, issues that “cannot be adequately represented in a discourse of undisturbed realism” (114) as presented by authors are presented through magic realism. Further, he notes that, magic realism is characterized by “images of flight levitation and free fall as defiance of gravity has always been a human dream of the

impossible.” (114) Some feminist authors like Jeannette Winterson, Angela Carter and several others use magic realism to voice their gender related issues.

Surrealism on the other hand is a concept often confused with magic realism. As Andre Breton, one of the renowned proponents proposes in Lodge’s *The Art of Fiction* (1992), it is anchored on “a belief in the supreme quality of certain forms of association heretofore neglected: in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought.” (175) As a concept, its effects are employed by women authors and artists to “subvert patriarchal cultural assumptions.” (175) Our study notes that both magic realism and surrealism are important tools for use by feminist writers whose intention is to criticize patriarchal supremacy and subjugation in their cultural settings.

Lodge undertakes to give an explicit description of surrealism that contrasts it with magic realism though acknowledging existence of some similarities between them. He says:

Surrealism is not quite the same as magic realism though there are obvious affinities between them. In magic realism there is always a tense connection between the real and the fantastic: the impossible event is a kind of metaphor for the extreme paradoxes of modern history. In surrealism, metaphors become real, effacing the world of reason and common sense. The surrealists favorite analogy for their art and often its source, was dreaming, in which, as Freud demonstrated, the unconscious reveals its secret desires and fears in vivid images and surprising narrative sequences unconstrained by the logic of our waking lives. (175)

In *Sabina the Rain Girl* the narrator takes the story from a realist context into magic realism. While at the Diviner's home at night, Sabina witnesses a bizarre experience she had never had an encounter with before. A strong wind blows the thatch roof of the hut she is sleeping in away. She could see up in the sky. She shouts for help. But none is forthcoming. In what seems to be like a monologue or even an apostrophe-like address to an imaginary figure, she hears the voice of her host demanding for what the text calls "more powers." (29) This is followed by an affirmation for issue from an imaginarily mysterious figure whose voice is more powerful and much louder than that of her host. More strange happenings follow. Deafening sounds seem to have descended from the sky accompanied by some storm. Her host reappears riding on wind amidst the rumbling of thunder and flashing of lightning. Thathila the diviner had made her return from her magical world where she had gone to solicit for divination power from some imaginary authority beyond her. She floats in the air, defying the law of gravity. She demands greater magical powers to operate supernaturally and make magical dictations that surpass human capabilities.

From what seems to be a combination of magic realism and surrealism, the narrator gives an account of what happened from an encounter between Sabina and Thathila the Diviner. Happenings here were far removed from the realistic world and seem to be completely fairy. Gravitational force has been defied, the dream motif invoked and some elements of horror captured:

All these came to her like a dream, a mystery she could not fathom. In this mystery, the earth and heaven had merged into one another, one beside the other, and became one, and she, being part of the earth, and being the earth itself, was weaved into the wholeness of

the entire creation. She felt as though she was suspended in space, with the supernatural being around her. She thought, at one time, that the host was a god herself and with her, had travelled together, to space and back, to the sea and valleys, and had probably shared what she was not allowed to share. The thunder, the wind and the entire mystery slowly subsided. The roof came back to its place, as miraculously as it had displaced itself. The natural darkness resumed and occupied the small room. The atmosphere reinstated itself. Sabina fell back onto her bed. (29)

The diviner's physical appearance has been over-justified in its description. This is an important pointer to the narratee notion that involves what Gerald Prince describes as the use of "meta-language, meta-commentary or meta-narration." As he points out, although in a subtle and indirect way, this brings out the personality of the narratee. The narrator observes that the Diviner's eyes were "so red like a devil and her skin was shining like clay." The narrator continues to describe her, "...her sticky legs creaking and seeming like they would break any time. Her huge lips shook and her teeth protruded out like those of a giant warthog. With her small darting eyes, she wholly looked even more like a witch or a cannibal." (30)

From the description, the narratee has an idea of how a warthog, a witch or a cannibal looks like. It informs the narrator's choice for comparison. Likening done by use of traits and animal imagery also reveals the attitude of the narrator towards his or her object of description – the Diviner. The attitude of the narratee is captured, being the addressee and object of the narrator's perception. The narrator goes ahead to observe that the Diviner's voice had "a shade of mystery in it, and she exuded fire from her frothing lips. There was

a strong wind and whirlwind emanating from her each time she opened her mouth to speak.”(31) Portrayal here is certainly that of a mysterious and scary being.

Another element of magic realism is noted in an encounter between Sabina and Koko-Lala, the magician. Fantastic encounters are evident when Koko-Lala summons some magical powers into a stick and hands it over to Sabina in a demonstration of what she should do to gain power over the ogres. It would enable her to cut its tail as dictated by her mission.

Animal symbolism has also been widely used by the narrator in this text just like in its preceding text. From a cultural perspective, each of the animals bears its fair share of significance. Hyena which has been recurrently used is often associated with witchcraft. It is believed that witches rear hyenas referred to in Ekegusii as “enyang’au”. From a friend of mine who hails from the textual community, hyenas are believed to be used by witches in this community as a means of transport in the same way horses are in other communities. However, in his context, passengers are often witches. Snakes connote evil. Sabina’s cobra bite is therefore a bad omen culturally.

There exists imagery in the text from the use of insects and birds. Although at one level they are literally used for atmospheric description in capturing the setting of the story, they have significance beyond their denotative mention. Hooting of owls rebound in the hills and valleys. (60) Humming of moths and insects in Sabina’s bedroom (65) amid her state of sleeplessness and discomfort is connotative of something else. Moths are

traditionally associated with darkness. But they seem to navigate towards light whenever they spot any. Frogs' croaks (66) and the crickets' chirps (36) have been used to imply a horrific atmosphere. Bees have also been used to attack Simba and his mistress Sabina (12) and also to scatter Sabina's abductors (83) so as to make possible her escape.

Many signals to the postulated reader in *Sabina the Rain Girl* are similar to those in the preceding text. Ekegusii words have been used and interpreted, implying that the addressees were not Abagusii. Such words include *ebisagane* (21), *omoroka* plant (34), *enyuomo*, *chisegi*, *okoibora* and *okwaroka* (41), *chisokoro* and *Engoro* (75) and *oroferu* (86). An exception to these interpreted Ekegusii words is the word *ekee* (87), which the author and narrator did not bother to interpret to all the categories of readers. Arguably this was an oversight as it diverts from the consistency that has been observed in the text. But some Kiswahili words such as *ugali* (9) have not been interpreted at all to the reader. The implication here is obvious; the narratee understands Kiswahili. As earlier mentioned in the discussion of *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*, the postulated reader is probably a citizen or citizens of the East African countries, and most likely Kenyans from their implied understanding of the term "matatu".

Songs have been both explicitly and implicitly used in the two texts. In *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*, Pa Sabina encourages his daughter to get circumcised through a song. Highlights following benefits of her getting circumcised both to herself and the entire family are brought out. Through the song he offers her advice on how to behave during the circumcision process besides encouraging her to be bold and persevering:

Sabina, my daughter, go in for the cut

Let the knife mould you into a woman
For mama and my sake endure the hurt
And let the village see me as a total man.

With courage, face that terrible ogre
Don't move from the initiation stone, don't run
Endure the pain and be able to conquer
Only in conquering would you make me a man
Only in conquering would you make your mama a woman
Only in conquering would you become a woman (26)

An in-depth analysis of this song reveals several things about the society from which the narrative is taken. The narrator seems to relay the attitude of the community towards female circumcision. It is highly embraced and valued. Girls only transition into womanhood when they undergo the cut. Parents whose girls are not circumcised lack honour and respect. To put it differently, the narrator is relaying what society considers values as an exposition to the source of conflict in the narrative.

Besides the aesthetic and cathartic values of songs in narratives, they entertain and momentarily break the monotony of narration. Also, they contribute greatly to the plot development of the narrative and build on the issues and concerns that result into conflicts.

During what is meant to be an official handover of Sabina to her husband-to-be, the burly man, songs of praise are sung for Sabina. Revelation of their long wait for Sabina's coming is evident. The song reveals a culmination of their quest for Sabina's coming, showering her with immeasurable praise:

Sabina, we have been waiting for you
But here you are at last, our daughter
Sabina, we have been waiting for you
But today you have come, our daughter (52)

Readers cannot help but deduce the community's attitude towards the "momentous" occasion. The fact that singers confess to have been waiting for a fourteen year old girl as a wife to their kin who is older than her father and who already has three other wives is absurd but permissive. To some extent, the author and narrator seem to be satirizing behavior of people in the narrative text and inviting the narratee to share in the ridicule. An outright denial of what feminist activists would term as gender rights are experienced as informed by patriarchal dominance. It is no wonder that the protagonist takes issue with what should be her sealed fate and stages a spirited resistance.

Chants and songs are also manifest in *Sabina the Rain Girl*. At the onset of the text, Sabina is adorned in a warrior's regalia to go to the ogre's world and fetch an ogre's tail. The mission is tough and fatal. It is equated to a death sentence by the narrator later in the text. Leaders gather people and lead them in a chant. Through the chant, the reader is exposed to the wishes of the people as they render their prayer to their Supreme Being. All categories of readers are able to have an insight into the nature of the mission Sabina

is set to accomplish and the consequences in case of any failure. Community in its entirety unites to make the chant:

Engoro, our god, here we bring you our heroine
Let her cut and bring home one of the ogre's tails
The item you crave for in order to give us the rain
Death is, oh God, the ultimate response if she fails

Engoro. Our God, here we bring you our heroine
Give her the skills to cut the tail of the fattest ogre
Bring to an end this drought by giving us the rain
Enable her to use well her spear and her dagger

Engoro, our God, here we bring you our heroine
Give her the bravery, the technique and the brain
To cut the ogre's tail that we shall use to induce rain
So as to bring to an end the hunger, death and pain

(3)

A people's way of life and their traditional beliefs are exposed. Need for the ogre's tail is brought out as an inevitable eventuality for their salvation. People need rain, their ultimate savior from starvation and prolonged drought. The chant is expressive of the traditions of people in the textual community. It also helps set the stage and mood for the nature of Sabina's mission besides fast-tracking the reader's expectation. Plot development is also enhanced through the use of this chant by the narrator.

After Sabina's mission become a success and an ogre's tail is delivered to the traditional priest, he leads the people to the shrine and invokes *Engoro*, their God, in a prayerful chant to bring them rain:

Our Engoro would like to promise

Rain! Rain! Rain!

With this tail of an ogre

Rain! Rain! Rain!

Let him shower us today with

Rain! Rain! Rain! (87)

There is a distinct "mingling of the realistic and the fantastic or bizarre" as Gerald Prince puts it, in this narrative as the text comes to a dramatic end. Gathering of heavy dark clouds and eventual heavy downpour of rainfall marks the culmination of the prayerful chant. People allow themselves to be rained on without bothering to take any shelter, demonstrating the magnitude of joy occasioned by the return of rains. Celebration for the end of a drought season, thanks to Sabina's courage and bravery that allowed her to deliver the ogre's tail on time, is at top notch.

Apart from chants, songs are used in a great way to enhance plot development and even preempt expectations as Sabina heads to the land of the ogres. Such a song is sung to Sabina by Thathila the Diviner. It highlights the horrific nature of Sabina's mission. It also helps the reader establish that ogres only eat the girls who are not circumcised. Ogres' sizes are described and Sabina familiarized with it. It is also established that the ogres are waiting to maul her and frustrate her ambition of ever becoming a celebrated

heroine. But the song also brings out the nature and lifestyle of the ogres. They are active during the day hunting and gathering food but rest at night in their lair:

Beyond the hills and valleys far away
Live ogres who eat the uncut lasses
By the wooded river bank they play
And run about in tall bushes and grasses

Beyond the hills and valleys far away
Monsters whose mouths are big and wide
Feed on the flesh and blood of uncut girls
Who visit their lair during dark of the night

Beyond the bushes and woods far away
Live ogres who run about in the forest
They hunt and play during the day
Then lie down at night to sleep and rest. (24-5)

Another song is taught to Sabina by Koko-lala, the magician. With this song, Sabina is expected to lull the monsters, calm them and make them immobile before unleashing her magic stick to point at them and render them unconscious. She would then select the fattest of the ogres and cut its tail before undoing the procedure. The latter would only be done while at a safe distance to enable them come to. Employment of magical powers so as to get into the world of imaginary creatures and get a fantastic part of their body for a realistic ritual of rainmaking through appeasing the “rain god” is characteristic of magic

realism. But Koko-lala's song and magic was the only possible way for Sabina's salvation from the ogre to be guaranteed:

I sing you a lullaby, monsters
To sooth you to sleep
I sing you a soft song, monsters
Sleep! Sleep! Sleep!

Close your stubborn eyes slowly
Never to wake up
Move softly to eternal glory
Sleep! Sleep! Sleep! (48)

The song also helps solve the mystery of how Sabina successfully approached imaginary creatures that are cannibal and had the ability to smell her scent while still several miles away. It also illustrates how she could successfully chop off a tail from one of the ogres and get away with it. Realism meets the fantastic here too.

Lastly, there is a song that comes after the successful return of Sabina from the land of the ogre with the ogre's tail for the rain ritual. In the song, there is praise of Sabina who is now a heroine. People marvel at how she managed to come back alive from that deadly mission. The song also announces her return to people besides demonstrating that the villagers had a lot of respect and admiration for her:

Sabina, our heroine has come back safely
Wa! Wa! Wa!

Sabina has made the village proud
Wa! Wa! Wa!
Sabina the daughter of the village
Wa! Wa! Wa!
Give way to the heroine of the village
Wa! Wa! Wa! (85)

A discernible change of attitude by the villagers towards Sabina is evident through this song. The uncircumcised dirty and filthy girl has metamorphosed into a celebrated heroine. What was initially punishment for her being uncircumcised earns her admiration and reward. “Young girls lined up along the foot-path to the shrine and bowed their heads towards Sabina as she walked along like a soldier after a successful battlefield.” (84) She is adorned in traditional regalia of a warrior as an honour for her valour. Her parents’ respect is restored and they are celebrated alongside her at the shrine.

Agency is relayed, especially to teenage girls. The narrative seems to imply that they can stand up for what they believe in and whatever consequences that may follow their decision, they could come out victorious. Being typically characteristic of teenage or young adult literature, the narrative has a heroic ending with a strong moral message that calls for determination. Feminist crusaders will smile at the assertion of the text through the narrator as Sabina is told, “You have put African women in their right place.”(88)

Elsewhere in the text, juxtaposition of life in the olden days and now is made. Forest cover had denser vegetation in the olden days and more dangerous animals than it has now. People were scarcely populated in the olden days as compared to the current dense

population. And in the very olden days “the mention of the land of the ogre was a death sentence.” (25) But now chances of one’s return from the land of the ogre are more. Certainly, this exudes optimism in Sabina’s quest for heroism and salvation for her village. Seemingly relaying optimism in the narratee, the narrator attempts to postulate that irrespective of the many challenges that people go through in life they can overcome them through determination. And that is the communication the narrator appears to relay to the narratee or the postulated reader.

Weather symbolism comes out explicitly in the text. Very widely observed in *Sabina the Rain Girl* is rain. However, we also find other images such as lightning, thunder and wind. A sad sea and the clouds have also been symbolically used.

Rain, in Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), has a lot of symbolic associations. Through the text, there is a recurrent use of rain and water images. As observed, the rain often precedes catastrophic occurrences such as death and destruction. At the onset of the text, it is summer. When winter eventually sets in, it is accompanied by “permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera. But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army.” (4) Rain has caused illness whose effect is immense. If the cholera had not been stopped, probably much more destruction would have been realized. The number of deaths recorded as a result of cholera has been described as “only seven thousand” and this happened just in the army. It’s therefore not certainly captured just how many lives the cholera had claimed. Rain is also seen to be “permanent” and certainly inevitable. Vulnerability and mortality of human beings is

implied here. Just like the rains will have to stop at some point, so will human existence. It can't rain forever.

Catherin confesses to Henry that she fears the rain. She says, "I've always been afraid of the rain ... I'm afraid of the rain because sometimes I see me dead in it... and sometimes I see you dead in it." (126) Despite this confession of fear about the rain, the couple realizes there is nothing they could do to prevent or avoid it. Rain is inevitable and beyond their ability to control. Eventually they would be consumed by their fears. Mortality just like the rain is short lived and inevitable.

Interestingly, as the text comes to an end, it is raining and the very last word of the story is "rain". Henry walks back to his hotel room in the rain after losing his wife and child to death. Death had robbed him two of his most precious people in his life. His denial of the fact that his wife had died made him send away the nurses from the hospital room that only he and the dead Catherin now remained. But that state did not last long. There is nothing Henry would do with a lifeless body of Catherin. Parting was unavoidable. He says, "After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain." (355) Rain therefore symbolizes a looming tragedy such as death disaster that causes a lot of destruction.

In *Sabina the Rain Girl*, rain is also seen throughout the chapter whose title is 'The Storm'. And just like in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, this rain is symbolic of danger, death or destruction. What began as a drizzle transitioned into a downpour and

soon, “The rain increased. Flash after flash of lightning ripped the sky. Thunder crushed and rolled, like giants hurling heavy metals somewhere above the sky.” (7) Simba’s death was forthcoming. Like Henry was separated from Catherin and his child through death in the rains, Sabina was separated from Simba, her companion dog given to her by her parents for protection as she heads to the world of the ogres.

As Sabina shelters in a cave together with Simba, rain intensity increases outside. She could hear “heavy drops of water drumming on leaves outside.” (9) This is accompanied by the growling of thunder and flashing of lightning. And outside the cave there was total darkness. Together with the crying of an owl and the sound of the hyena that was heard nearby, a bad omen was in the offing. And soon it did:

Sabina sat on the rock by the riverbank and watched the dead body of Simba. Tears dropped from her eyes and, effortlessly, rolled down her cheeks. A calamity had struck! And what a calamity it was! What a misfortune it was to her! (15)

Now alone, Sabina is gripped by immense fear. Chirping of crickets, croaking of frogs and the flickering of fireflies that the narrator likens to “small eyes of a demon” (17) heightened the already horrific situation. Bushes around her appeared monstrous and trees seemed to give the impression of sprites.

Several other symbolic weather images appear in the text. Wailing wind, a heap of clouds, an eclipsed moon, a sad sea, a pale sky, wind and cold among others, all of which are significant and relevant to Sabina’s situation. It takes a discerning narratee to make out their associated significance to the happening in the narrative. Together with the

generous use of similes, mental pictures are created in the readers' mind, contributing to the successful rendering of the narrative process. The narrator observes that "The stars had gathered and had made but a pale waste in the sky, like a sad sea." (17) Describing songs rendered by birds, he says that they "were frightening and sounded like a series of elegies." (17) Sabina was so frightened and that made her heart to hammer in her "like a role of drums." (17) Metaphors of horror also exist bountifully.

2.4 Conclusion

Gerald Prince points out in his "Introduction to the study of the narratee" *Reader Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-structuralism (1980)* that there exist variations of signals that can be used to portray the narratee. However, Prince warns that "Sometimes these indications contradict the narrative and emphasize certain differences between the narratee as conceived by the narrator and as revealed by another voice" (12) Nonetheless, he asserts that "by interpreting all signals of the narration as a function of the narratee we can obtain partial reading of the text, but a well-defined and reproductive reading." (12)

From my analysis of *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl*, a depiction of various narratee signals and pointers has been fairly done. I observe that the various signals presented in the texts do not point at any one particular narratee, but a variety of them. This is because they appear to be generous in nature, interacting with and inviting an assortment of readers. Various local terms used from the textual community of the narratives, taboos and revered cultural practices hint at the authorial audience.

Available commentary about the traditional rites presented together with the interpretations available for the Ekegusii words suggest some dimension of the addressees as well. Failure to explain the implied metaphorical significance of animal, bird and insect imagery offers an invaluable pointer at the postulated reader as well. I want to agree with Prince in "Introduction" when he says, "Indeed, every signal relating to a narratee need not continue or confirm a preceding signal or announce a signal to follow." (16) But I add that these signals have to work together, combining to offer a systematic discrimination that helps disambiguate the narratee notion.

CHAPTER THREE: IDENTIFICATION OF THE NARRATEE AND HIS OR HER ROLE IN ACHIEVEMENT OF AGENCY.

3.1 Introduction

Stanley Fish in *Is there a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (1980) makes an interesting assertion about the relationship between texts and their readers. He says: “No one would argue that the act of reading can take place in the absence of someone who reads.” (22) Proponents and scholars of the reader-oriented theories may arguably not agree any less about it. I want to agree with Stanley. And add that the act of reading would not take place without a text to be read either. Even orature, without any doubt the oldest means of preserving culture and heritage in Africa, requires a text which is only available during rendition. Texts and readers are therefore codependent for existence. However, our focus here is on the latter as the object of address by the narrator during the reading process. We also look at the various categories of this addressee but with intense focus on the narratee. The postulated reader is therefore privileged in our analysis just as is the case with Fish’s.

Gerald Prince as noted by Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker in *A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory 5th ed.* (2005) asks a crucial question regarding the narratee vis-à-vis the narrator: “Why, when we study novels, do we take such pains to discriminate between the various kinds of narrator (Omniscient, unreliable, implied author etc), but never ask questions about the different kinds of person to whom the narrator addresses the discourse.” (48) Prince’s question exposes a gap that most scholars have for a long time buried their heads in the sand about. To put it differently, Prince advocates for an analysis of the narratee. It is possible to bring out their sex, age,

class or even race and be able to paint their precise portrait just as it is done with the narrator.

An all important question that follows is how we can learn to recognize the narratee in a literary text. Raman Selden et.al (2005) also acknowledges that “There are many ‘signals’, direct and indirect which contribute to our knowledge of the narratee.” (48) Their argument is that “Even in a novel which appears to make no direct reference to a narratee we pick up tiny signals in the simplest of literary figures.” (48)

Makaryk Irena in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory Approaches, Scholars, Terms* (1993) reiterates that “While the person of the narrator is constructed on the basis of the question ‘Who speaks?’ the narratee is the one who hears, the one to whom the narrator is speaking.” Makaryk further enumerates various signals that point at the narratee in a number of texts. ‘You’ as a second person pronoun is pointed out as one of the common indicators of the narratee for it points out to the person the narrator is addressing directly. Occasionally there is the use of figures of speech such as rhetorical questions and varying allusions to shared knowledge. Her list does not end there. Other signals are as mentioned in the previous chapter from *Reader-Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-structuralism* (1980)

The narratee may be an individual or a group collectively addressed. Makaryk points out that “When a text is addressed to a collectivity, the narratee is constructed as a set of beliefs presupposed by the text...the beliefs of the collective narrative tend to blend with those of the implied reader on all questions other than the truth of the particular narrative facts.” (598) The question of the reader helping in construction of meaning by relating

experiences of the text to their personal knowledge and experience is evident. But narratologists do not do this haphazardly. They disregard treatment of a literary text in a traditional way as being merely representative of fiction but advocate for what M.H Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham refer to in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2012) as a more “systematic and purely formal construction.” (234)

Jonathan Culler in *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (1997) makes his invaluable contribution to the narratee discourse by insisting the presence of designated audiences for all narratives. In his argument, he asserts that:

Whether or not narratees are explicitly identified, the narrative implicitly constructs an audience by what its narration takes for granted and what it explains. A work from another time and place usually implies an audience that recognizes certain references and shares certain assumptions that a modern reader may not share. (87)

Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck in *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* (2005) propose that for one to better understand the narratee, they need to first understand how different visibility is from presence. They reiterate that “just as there is always an agent of narration, there is also always a narratee ... even though he or she may remain invisible.” (21) Prince (1980) points out that these narratees, like narrators are real persons in non-fictional stories but a creation of the text in fictional ones. To rid ourselves of any possibility to confuse the narratee for other notions in narrative texts such as the actual reader, it is imperative to note their location. Marion Gymnich points out in *Narratology and Ideology: Negotiating Context, Form, and Theory in Postcolonial Narratives* (2018) that “The narratee is located on the discourse level/level of narrative transmission and is constructed in more or less detail by the specific ways in which the narrator refers to an

addressee of the story he or she is telling.” (154) From consistency in the construction of the narratee, readers are invited to think about moral and conceptual issues vis-à-vis the demonstration and observation of anguish as presented in works of fiction.

3.2 Sampled texts with their postulated readers

In V.S Naipaul’s *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) the narrator says, “The river was called the Avon; not the one connected with Shakespeare. ...” (11) In this brief statement, Naipaul’s narrator portrays the narratee to be a studious person, one with knowledge of and about literary texts and therefore familiar with Shakespeare’s connection with a river named Avon. Contextually, the narrator is not addressing the general public. S/he discriminates audience with consideration for only those with such knowledge since no explanation is given to differentiate the two Avon Rivers mentioned save for the allusion to Shakespeare. It is also possible that the narratee shares the same locale with the narrator and understands the geography and topography being talked about hence able to distinguish between them.

Ernest Hemingway in *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) through his narrator writes, “Robert Cohn was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton. Do not think that I am very impressed by that as a boxing title, but it meant a lot to Cohn.” (3) The narrator gives his/her narratee the story of Cohn. S/he chooses to remind them that although that boxing title may have meant the world to Cohn, the fact that s/he writes about it does not necessarily mean s/he is impressed with it as well. S/he says categorically that s/he is not impressed by it. But the narrator tells the narratee that although s/he did not have any regard for that boxing title, Cohn did. In the proceeding statement, the narrator who seems to be a character in this very narrative goes ahead to say about Cohn that, “He

cared nothing for boxing, in fact he disliked it, but he learned it painfully and thoroughly to counteract the feeling of inferiority and shyness he had felt on being treated as a Jew at Princeton.” (3) Allusion to the treatment of Jews in Princeton further drives the point home to the narratee who now better understands why Cohn should be impressed by his boxing title although he does not like boxing itself. Seemingly, the postulated reader is also familiar with the historical (mis)treatment of Jews from the pre-Bible to Bible days through holocaust to the present day conflicts between Israel and her neighbours that could have possibly informed Cohn’s inferiority. All categories of readers are made to empathize with Cohn for his struggle that even led to a permanently deformed nose, giving him a strange look.

The narrator of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (2008) in the opening sentence of the text makes a contestable allegation but claims it to be universal truth. S/he says, “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.” (1) In a movie adapted from the same text and that bears the same title as the text, the narrator alters some original words in the text and says, “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a zombie in possession of brains must be in want of more brains.” (*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* movie, 2016). In whichever way the two assertions are looked at, the narrator seems to be making an assumption that everybody agrees with him/her. His or her idea of the narratee in this case is the collective humanity. Makaryk (1993) as earlier mentioned insists that, “when a text is addressed to a collectivity, the narratee is constructed as a set of beliefs presupposed by the text.” (598) Belief here is in the universal want for a wife in every single man in possession of some fortune.

Merle Hodge's *Crick Crack, Monkey* (1970) reads as follows in its initial sentence of the first chapter: "We had posted ourselves at the front window, standing on a chair." (1) From a quick analysis of this statement, the narrator is a character in the narrative that follows it. And this character, together with others, is telling his or her story. It is tempting to imagine that the narratee of this narrative is also a party within it. However, the narrator talks about what s/he and others with him or her did. That excludes the addressee who in our case is the narratee.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o begins his writing of *Dreams in a Time of War: A Childhood Memoir* (2010) by saying: "Years when I read T.S Eliot's line that April was the Cruellest month, I would recall what happened to me one April day in 1954, in chilly Limuru, the prime estate of what, in 1902, another Eliot, Sir Charles Eliot, then governor of colonial Kenya, had set aside as White Highlands." In this narration, the author, who doubles as the narrator, alludes to two Eliots. He chooses to explicitly explain the latter but does not do the same justice to the former. An understanding of the difference between the two Eliots to be able to disambiguate them requires scholarly knowledge. Whereas Thomas Stearns Eliot was an American-British literary writer and scholar, Sir Charles Norton Edgcumbe Eliot was a British colonial administrator. Ngugi's narratee is thus a person with literary knowledge about the poet alluded to here though not so adequately informed in political issues that characterized Kenya's colonialism and pre-colonial governance.

A Survivor, writing about his/her experience as a prisoner in *Auschwitz: A True Story* (2014) in which s/he is the narrator says the following words as the story unfolds:

I did not pay attention to the stern warning. The window became the only attractive spot in the dreary prison cell. The window collaborated with prisoners ... It showed us

pictures, it disclosed various scenes. In winter, we saw only a blanket of snow and the dark silhouettes of naked trees. (9)

Use of personal pronouns I and we is an important pointer at the speaker in this context, the narrator. Both the singular and plural first person pronouns have been used in the subjective case hence do not denote the addressee. Objectively used 'us' also points back to the group of prisoners among whom the narrator is. Together, they find attraction in what the window enables them to achieve. It is clear therefore that the narrator is addressing someone who is outside of the prison, but giving an account of what s/he together with other prisoners go through while in their incarceration. There is possibility that the narratee is a free person who should know what prisoners in Auschwitz went through during their holocaust era detainment. It could also be a prisoner in a different detention camp reading about happenings in different prisons. Bottom line, the narrator and the narratee do not share imprisonment.

Tsitsi Dangarembga in *Nervous Conditions* (1989) presents a narrator who speaks directly at his/her narratee, asserting herself and saying what s/he imagines is the mind of the narratee. The narrator says, "I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologizing for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling." (1) Being addressed here is a reader the narrator imagines may be judgmental or critical towards his or her for lack of grief following the death of a brother. 'You' as used designates the postulated reader while 'I' implies the narrator. Attitudes of both the narrator and his or her narratee have been portrayed as callous and judgmental respectively following the narrator's proclamation that s/he did not feel sorry when the brother died. Although the two parties here may or may not share in the same narration space, they are within a

conversation distance physically or otherwise. The narratee is therefore a critical observer who expects people to grieve at the loss of a relative or close associate yet attempting to justify his or her lack of grief for the same.

In his extraordinary text, *Black Skin White Masks* (1967), Frantz Fanon writes critically about the issues of racial discrimination. He gives a critical and analytical description of black men and women living among white people, especially those earlier colonized by the French. Fanon analyzes the impossible desire of black people to become white. Their quest is informed by their inferiority complex occasioned by racism and colonialism, but thwarted by the stuck reality that they cannot change their race. Fanon, who is also the narrator in the text, says:

The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man. A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with another Negro. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question. ... No one would dream of doubting that its major artery is fed from the heart of those various theories that have tried to prove that the Negro is a stage in the slow evolution of monkey into man. (17)

Fanon is certainly launching a scathing attack on the hypocrisy among black people and their intolerable desire to become white, running away from their black selves. Of course the object of this attack is not a White person. Satire and sarcasm implied here is intended to (re)awaken the Negro's consciousness about their sense of belonging and help them re-assert their self-esteem. In other words, Fanon seems to suggest that there is no need for black people to wear 'white masks'. It is impossible for them to become white however much they may try to imagine or behave like they were so. Our narratee in this setting, a

black person, is expected to put on integrity and avoid the racial and socio-cultural hybridity that denies them a proper sense of identity.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1966) is arguably one of the most widely read novels by an African writer. According to "theconversation.com", an internet source, on November 28th 2018, the text has been interpreted into more than fifty languages. By the said date more than ten million copies of the text had been sold. In this text, the narrator says about the protagonist as the story begins that:

Okwonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okwonkwo threw in a fight which the old man agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights. (3)

S/he recounts the story of Okwonkwo, a great traditional wrestler and warrior, who was brought down by a strong wave of change occasioned by colonial muscles. In this narrative account it is evident that the narrator and the protagonist do not come from the same town. It is a third person omniscient narrator who observes and reports happenings around the said hero. It is a story of an Igbo legend whose heroism was inevitably deflated by foreign incursion and power. Reading the narrative critically, it does not explicitly address an Igbo audience. An Igbo would find it so monotonous to read the old sayings and clichés presented through repeated use of proverbs and sayings used over time. More inclusive first person pronouns both in the subjective and objective cases

would have been used to accommodate an Igbo narrator and audience. Putting it differently, the narratee is non-Igbo. S/he listens to the story of Okonkwo and empathizes with the general vulnerability of African heroes in the face of colonial masters illustrative of him.

Looking at the last two stanzas of the fourteen in Christopher Okemwa's poem "The Razor" as captured in his anthology entitled *The Gong: A Collection of Poems* (2009), we come face to face with a replication of the plight of teenage girls in many traditional cultures. The stanzas read as follows:

THE RAZOR

(Lamentations of a young Girl)

...

Into the dark air I did stare

That razor long and sharp and bare

Was moving down through the air

Down towards me, ready to tear

Ouch! – The pain and the tears

The eerie sounds plugging the ears

Feeling the sharp blade as it tears

Drenched with blood that pours (17)

In this narrative poem, the persona or rather the narrator gives her account of female circumcision as experienced by herself. Lamentations realized in her tone towards all

levels of readers is an appeal for intervention. She appeals for pity, for sympathy and empathy, but above all, for action. The addressee in this background could be anyone who cares to listen to the cries of teenage girls in distress, or up in arms against female circumcision as in this scenario. From individuals such as parents to groups of audiences such as governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, to religious factions, the narrator seems to send her plea, and that of her demographic sharing in her plight. She hopes to initiate a conversation on the essence of female circumcision from her agency. As explained by David Herman in *Basic Elements of Narrative* (2009), “At the level of the story, agency concerns characters’ ability to bring about deliberately initiated events, or actions, within a story world.” (181) Ideally, the narrator of “The Razor”, and that of the two main texts under this study seek to achieve this.

3.3 The Narratee of *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl*

Following various signals discussed in the previous chapter that point at the encoded reader(s) in narrative texts, it is possible to paint a portrait of the inscribed reader of the two primary texts under this study. In *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*, there is increased use of the local dialect, Ekegusii. For a narrative, this is meant to authenticate it besides giving it a local flavor and context. Many of such terms have been identified and listed:

- egesagane* - an uncircumcised girl (1)
- kegori* - agemate (5)
- omong’ina* – an old woman (5)
- gento* – organs (21)
- egesanda* – a calabash (23)

- enana* – a child (26)
- omoruoti* – a wise elderly man (27)
- enkuri* – a crier (36),
- rise* – a stinging, poisonous plant (75)
- ribuogore* – traditional beer (95) .

as used across the text. This recurs in *Sabina the Rain Girl*. It appears that the postulated reader of both texts as implied through interpretation is an outsider to the community. For *Sabina the Rain Girl*, words such as

- Engoro* – supreme God (29)
- omoroka* – medicinal plant (34)
- enyuomo* – the marriage procedures (41)
- chisegi* – the inter-clan skirmishes (41)
- okoibora* – giving birth (41)
- okwaroka* – female circumcision (41)
- chisokoro* – ancestors (75)
- oroferu* – a traditional tray (86)

among others have been put into use. As observed in both cases, equivalent English words are provided for each Ekegusii word used. It follows that the addressee in these texts does not understand Ekegusii, occasioning the narrator to interpret. Thus s/he is not one among the Abagusii people, the context from which the narrative is drawn. Preliminarily, we can say that the narratee is a non-Gusii. It is also possible that the narratee is a stranger living among the Abagusii people or elsewhere.

As observed again in both texts, there is use of Kiswahili words, stimulating instances of code mixing. Words such as *matatu*, *mzee*, *leso*, *ugali*, *shuka* and *sufuria* are spread through the texts. We even have phrases such as “*Huyo! Huyo! Shika yeye!*” in the earlier

text signifying understanding of the Kiswahili language. However, unlike the Ekegusii words which have been given equivalent meaning in English, it is not the case with Kiswahili ones. Intimation is that the postulated reader understands Kiswahili hence no need for interpretation. Since the language is widely spoken in Africa, and mostly in Eastern Africa, we can say thus that the inscribed reader is found in Africa. We may then proceed to argue that this African is found within the Eastern Africa region, for that is the region with a concentration of Kiswahili speakers. Nevertheless, it is possible that the reader is found in other parts of the world although he or she may have had some social or biological association with Africa. He or she may also have stayed in Africa or is an African in a foreign land, or even a foreign student of African languages, with interest in Kiswahili. All these possibilities are invited by the narrator to pay attention to the plight of the teenage girl and possibly take some relevant action.

Several cultural rituals performed in the two texts are demonstrative of the tradition and belief system of Abagusii. Knowing that the encoded reader has no understanding of them, the narrator gives explanation about their significance. *The day of the Ogre* has been explained as “the day of the knife.” (1) It is on this day when girls are expected to be circumcised and culminate their metamorphosis into womanhood as culturally dictated. Notably by the narrator, it is this ritual that transfigured them into women. It had been experienced by all generations of women in the community of the text. As importantly noted, “it is what made them women and wives.” (16) As seen in the culture of the narrative, a bride was akin to a trophy for which a mock tug-of-war was staged between her community and the community of her intended husband. Traditionally characteristic of betrothal parties, it was a way of engaging the visitors to show how

capable they were to protect their jewel. Eventually it is the visiting side that was allowed to win. At this point the narrator explains that it happened so “to symbolize that they had won the trophy – Sabina.” (65) Together with the use of local dialect mentioned earlier; this implies that the narratee is a stranger to the community of the narrative. But it could be a neighboring community or a friend of the Abagusii.

Consequences of breaking cultural taboos are explained by the narrator in *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*. For whom is the explanation? As noted by the narrator, running away to escape circumcision was not heard of. It would not be tolerated by custodians of culture and tradition. Escaping was an abomination and would bring “a curse to the entire community. ... It could attract a sacrifice of several goats and cows to cleanse the act by the girl.” (69) Consequently, girls had to endure difficulty during the process of their initiation as a way of making them tougher. It was to mould them into women the cultural way. Bearing with the torturous moment singly and enduringly was inevitable. “It was against custom to support any of them. Difficulties and challenges were part and parcel of the ritual.” (73) Physical torture abound for initiates. They were literally whipped into submission and obedience. As explained by the narrator, they were rubbed by a poisonous stinging plant on their naked backs. It caused them a lot of pain and suffering. But “it was against custom for any girl to touch her back no matter the amount of pain or itch on it.” (75) Several other taboos are explained in order to inform narrators about their significance and consequences. All information here is meant for the narratee’s consumption who certainly does not share in the tradition and cultural practices at play.

In a bid to stir up conversation about the happenings in the context of the narrative, the narrator questions societal standing on matters of female circumcision. In a way, s/he is

exposing the community from which the narrative is told so as to invite external intervention and possible antagonism. The outside world has to get to know the plight of the teenage girl in this community and initiate intercession measures from the agency. Outside world as connoted refers to various agents opposed to the practice among them non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, educationists, medics and even the government(s). Change is expected to come by through these agencies.

From an address by the narrator to a peripheral audience it is discerned that if Sabina's parents loved and respected her, they would have allowed her to choose what to do with her body. It is implicit that Sabina's parents did not in fact respect her. Devoid of love or value for her body, dignity and feelings, her parents and the entire community compel her to undergo what she does not approve of. Culturally, their external image and aesthetics is given priority. Of concern to them is what they would eventually gain out of Sabina's predicament, wealth, honor, status and general dignity. Sabina should get circumcised, not because it is so important for her, but because it matters to her parents. Benefits of her getting circumcised are enumerated and they are many and invaluable.

Overwhelmed by societal pressure for female circumcision and several other customary demands in her society, Sabina wishes she were circumcised. Her opposition about the practice notwithstanding, the rite comes loaded with cultural honors. Cultural 'sanitization' would hand her access to several 'privileges'. She recounts her idea of them and wishes she were cut.

If she were circumcised, she could fare on well with her age mates and the rest of the village girls. She could be loved by her mama and papa. She could be respected in the

village and could be called upon to participate in community functions. She could be a flower girl during wedding ceremonies. She could participate in songs during circumcision ceremonies. To remain uncut continued subjecting her to unpleasant moments, embarrassment and trouble with other girls. She wished she had been cut. (31)

Her detest for the term *egesagane*, a derogatory word for uncircumcised girl, contradicts her position as an anti-female circumcision crusader as implied in the text. She does not want to be circumcised yet she prefers being referred to as a circumcised lady. Sabina's wishes are presented by the narrator in retrospection. It follows her suffering and frustration brought about by her uncircumcised status. Certainly, her presentation is meant to voice her frustration and attract sympathy and empathy. But her society is presented as unyielding and hypocritical; pretending to relent yet not really relenting on her grip to its idea of values and sensibilities. Hypocrisy in Sabina's community is sarcastically and satirically presented, unquestionably not to its 'faithfuls', but other alien parties who should take issue with its portrayal.

Plot development in both texts and the manner in which the conflicts have been resolved have some bearing on who the narratee is. In *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre*, the main concern is the fight against female circumcision. Proponents of this practice are both men and women, loyal to the community's cultural sensibilities, both in the narrative community and elsewhere. Sabina's resistance to female circumcision through the text that culminates in her victory and eventual reward is actually the intended agency of the text. The reader is thus motivated to stay committed to the ideals they stand up for no matter the circumstances they go through. Such resolution that is anchored on moral development is characteristic of teenage narratives. Intention is to cause teenagers who

are in the same situation to act. It is possible to assert that the narratee of this text is thus a teenager who should be driven to draw daggers against female circumcision.

Sabina the Rain Girl presents a similar development in its plot. Sentenced to death through a mission to search for an ogre's tail as a rain girl, Sabina confronts her sentence head-on. She endeavours to deliver on her mandate and save her community from death through famine and starvation. Many hurdles are erect on her way to deter her from realizing success but she manages to achieve her objective albeit with difficulty. As the narrative comes to a close she is rewarded for her braveness and for saving the community from their near destruction. However, unlike the earlier text, it employs a lot of magical realism and surrealism in achievement of the intended advocacy. The ultimate goal is eventually realized. Once again, Sabina overcomes a fatal punishment meted out upon her for being uncircumcised. She is heroic at the end and that changes society's perception about her and her parents. Her heroism following her success and the reward she receives is a form of agency that the uncircumcised girls are not useless after all as earlier perceived by the community. They can be traditional Messiahs for their doomed communities. Such a resolution impacts her community's perception and attitude towards those girls and women who choose not to get circumcised. To put it differently, the addressee for this narrative is suggested to be the entire community in relation to their value system and traditional standing. As Makaryk (1993) would have said, the text addresses a group of people, not necessarily a given targeted individual.

As the protagonist is a teenager in both texts, a fertile ground for positive influence is provided. The encoded reader provides an audience to a teenager's plight. S/he can thus be a fellow teenager who should derive inspiration from the narrative's moral

development. We, however, cannot rule out the possibility of the inscribed reader being a mature person, a perpetrator of cultural ‘ills’ upon teenagers. It is through such audiences that re-evaluation of cultural norms and practices can be done to ascertain their relevance in this contemporary dispensation. It is such people that the protagonist seems to address in what appears to be a series of rhetorical questions. “But, how can she go in for the cut when she already knew of all the health problems that came with it? Won’t she be doing something wrong to simply please others?” (31-2) Sabina also questions her mother whether they should “do things simply because others think they are right. (38) She aims at stirring up an animated dialogue on the viability of their customary practices. Evidently, the narrator paints the encoded reader as a victim of the happenings in the narrative. They are objects of the various rhetorical questions the narrator poses through the protagonist.

Sabina the Rain Girl comes to an end in what can be observed as a spirited effort for appraisal and empowerment of the feminine gender. Exploration of gender based issues and their impact on how a story is produced and interpreted, as proposed by feminist narratologists, can be observed. Addressing the protagonist, the narrator says, “You have put African women in their right place.” (88) Anybody’s guess would be as good as mine that such an utterance is meant to appraise the feminine gender. It implies that African women had been earlier misplaced, their place in society undermined by the masculine gender. They were either subjugated or suppressed by their male counterparts. Freedom from the same had now come their way through Sabina’s success. Further appraising the feminine gender, the narrator adds, “Women in Africa do a lot so as to save their communities.” (88) From the statement, it goes without saying that Sabina’s situation is

representative of what most women in Africa go through. They sacrifice themselves in many respects to ensure safety and security of their communities at different levels. Finally on this appraisal, the narrator concludes by saying, “And more often than not, African women sacrifice their lives for the sake of their community.” (88) African women are lauded as selfless. Their willingness to pay the ultimate price for the sake of their community is brought out. They are saviors. Without any doubt, this homage to an African woman is meant for an African feminine audience. In what comes out as a deliberate effort to discriminate this audience, the narrator does not forget to insist on the term ‘African.’ Emphasis brought out as a result of repetitive mentioning of the term ‘African women’ points out at the postulated reader. But the narrator also says ‘women in Africa’ introducing a critical dimension to his or her encoded reader. It is possible that ‘a woman in Africa’ is not ‘an African woman.’ Women of all races are found to exist on the African continent. ‘A woman in Africa’ would hence imply any of these other races of women who live in Africa and thus women in Africa as a whole. Whichever way we look at it, the implied discrimination still stands. It is the women who are found within the geographical boundaries of the African continent that the narrator pays homage to. However, ‘African women’ may possess some elements of ambiguity. Ideally, African women would mean women who have an African descent. Is it not possible that we have women of African origin living elsewhere in the world? Do they retain their title as African women? Well, from the narrator’s use of both “African women’ and ‘women in Africa’, he or she is addressing women in general but with special attention to those who have had an experience in or with Africa. And this constructs our idea of the narratee in the given context.

3.4 Comparing Narratee(s) of the Two Texts

From all indications, the narrator of both texts is engaging. He or she encourages interaction between the actual reader and the narratee. Communication is encouraged through use of rhetorical questions to the narratee. Presumably, the narratee and the narrator are in agreement. The latter appears to implore the former for sympathy, empathy and even compassion from the suffering the protagonist goes through.

Both texts seem to fictionalize real and critical happenings in Africa that affect female teenagers and women as a whole. Their presentation assumes adventure narrative form on African issues. Pan Africanism is exposed in assumption of a near-customary African rhetoric tone that is typical of Africa's storytelling. Besides all that we have noted as possible signals for the narratee in both texts, the narrator in a more general sense seems to talk to anybody that cares to pay attention to him or her. But as practically demonstrated, Africans form a majority of the target audience.

The author as brought out in these narratives, especially the later one, is suggested to be a mythic novelist. His narratives sound so, especially the latter. It is also characterized by magical realism in its attempt to fictionalize a real modern problem. Consequently, there is the merging of the mythical and factual in a breathtaking presentation of the teenage girl's plight in a contemporary society. Those with some taste for magical realism will find *Sabina the Rain Girl* more appealing to their reading as pragmatists embrace *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* more. However, both texts advocate for inclusivity as they avoid a precise portraiture of the narratee.

Although in both cases the author seems to imply endless challenges to the feminine gender, there is some hope from their resolutions. The protagonist, despite numerous challenges she faces both in the former and latter text, come out victorious each time. Hope is reinstated after every season of sufferings and tribulations. In a way, the teenage girl and by extension the African woman is encouraged to fight on whatever the magnitude of their challenges for there will always be success through resilience and determination.

Narratees in both texts are portrayed as not familiar with the indigenous knowledge of the language of the narrative community in their failure to understand Ekegusii terms. Both of them are also portrayed as nationals of one of the East African countries in their knowledge of Kiswahili language. The generosity they share in reaching out to their actual readers and involving them through use of pseudo-questions and dialogues invites various readers to pay more attention to the content they relay.

Narratees in both texts seem to be in agreement with the views of the narrator from the onset. In both cases, the narrators seem to be addressing everyone who cares to listen thus suggesting a narratee that is everyone but for the few discriminatory attempts observed. All categories of readers are thus invited although with a special attention to the Africans who may be interested in the plight of teenage girls and women in Africa. The engaging narrators in both texts seem to coerce the narratee to take action against female circumcision and the perceived violation of women rights presented in the narratives.

3.5 Role of the narratee in achievement of agency for the teenage voice used.

In a general sense, the narratee performs a number of functions in a narrative as earlier discussed in chapter one of this study. David Lodge in *The Art of Fiction* (1992) says that “The narratee, however constituted, is always a rhetorical device, a means of controlling and complicating the responses of the real reader who remains outside the text.” (81) From his or her relay role as stated by Prince, s/he bears immense influence regarding how the narrative is understood. In our narrative texts under this study, agency is achieved through the narratee’s interaction with the narrator and the reader(s). From the position that both the narrator and the narratee occupy inside a narrative, readers can only get to tell who they are from the pointers given by the author. Signals are used to identify these notions where the author has not explicitly identified them.

From the use of language in the narratives, which has been noted as a major pointer to the identification of the narratee, we realize that the narrator and the narratee divert in a subtle way in their knowledge of the narrative language. It is because of this diversion that the narrator consistently translates the Ekegusii words and phrases used. It is meant to bring the narratee to the same level of understanding the narrative as the narrator. The narratee is thus able to make out the major issues in the narrative because of his or her direct link to the narrator. Since he or she is within the text, s/he is the agent of relaying what is within the text to the readers who are without it.

The narratee also controls the narrator’s use of metaphoric and symbolic language. This is because they are all addressed to him or her. Use of language in this manner influences readers’ conclusions hence controlling the manner in which they think and act. Animal images such as the hyena are significant in Ekegusii narratives in many respects. Hyena’s

symbolic association as an evil animal for instance as used by witches and wizards in their hocus-pocus arouses some consciousness about witchcraft in the society. It is not unusual then that when the delegation to and from Sabina's betrothal party meet a hyena, there is some stir among them. They beat it causing it to run away for safety.

As an animal, the hyena has not just been given a mention. It is a significant image in contextualizing the happenings of the moment. Elsewhere in the narrative, a hyena runs towards Sabina and she is compelled to duck sideways in time to avoid its attack. Its howl has been heard in the course of the narrative too.

An owl's hoot is believed to be a premonition for evil. Traditionally, its association in many Africa communities, the textual community not being an exception, is symptomatic of a bad omen in the offing. Whenever it hoots around one's home something sorrowful, especially death of a beloved one may occur. To put it differently, a hyena and an owl are associated with evil.

Crickets' chirps are also used to signify imminent danger. They are used in the narrative to create a tense atmosphere. Readers are thus prepared for any horrific happening from their signification. Snakes images too have been used extensively in the narratives. Being the dangerous animals we know from their venom that kills quickly, they signify danger. A cobra's mention sends a chilling message to the reader. Its presence thus causes a scare for the parties within and without the text. Recurrence in use of this image is also significant. At one point it indicates the nature of the mission that Sabina is set to achieve as dangerous. But the fact that she treats herself and heals from a cobra's bite otherwise meant to be a death sentence implies an anticipated success despite the deadly challenges

faced by the protagonist. Very few dangers could be worse than a cobra's poison. These and several other images used in the narratives are highly symbolic. They contribute to creation of a relevant atmosphere to the happenings besides hinting at the nature of the happenings at the moment. Use of imagery helps all the levels of readers to understand the community's values apart from pointing out its myths, stereotypes and misconceptions. Generally, the belief system of this narrative community is brought out through the use of this imagery that is directed to the narratee.

Characterization is also achieved through the narratee from his or her establishment of relations with the narrator. Through this interaction, development of themes is achieved. Besides the obvious issues of female circumcision, the narratives expose community's perception of tradition, superstition, gender roles, among other concerns. Largely, these thematic concerns juxtapose the narrator and the narratee, revealing the relationship they share. A narratee is at the centre of the implied achievements in all the narrative process. S/he is therefore pivotal to the overall achievement of any narrative. In Prince's words, "we study the narratee in order to discover a narrative's fundamental thrust." ("Introduction" 23) The narratee fundamentally helps characterize his or her narrator besides contributing to plot development.

Articulation and relaying of the moral values accrued from a piece of literary narrative is a preserve of the narratee. In our narrative texts, the narrator and the narratee seem to be in agreement about the values the narratives seem to pronounce. Appraisal of African women is done by the narrator and relayed by the narratee. They agree that an African woman has suffered in the process of fighting for her position and more in society. They also seem to pay homage to her, praising her achievement in performing tasks otherwise

thought to be beyond her ability. Such is the case with Sabina's success in delivering an ogre's tail that eventually saved the entire community. Clearly, the narratee of *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl* seems to assert that determination and resilience lead to success. Besides, the narrator through the narratee appears to justify the notion that 'what a man can do, a woman can do better' hence helping to dispel the stereotypic belief that women are weak and incapable of achieving anything worthwhile in this textual community. This is agency.

In his concluding tone in the "Introduction", Prince acknowledges that:

The narratee is one of the fundamental elements of all narration. The thorough examination of what he or she represents, the study of a narrative work as constituted by a series of signals addressed to him or her, can lead to a more sharply delineated reading and a deeper characterization of the work." (24)

Therefore, the narratee remains invaluable in formation of thematic concerns in literary narratives and makes characterization possible since both the literal language used in the narration, all the figurative use of language and all the imagery are addressed to him or her before they are relayed to the reader. S/he conveys the concerns to the reader(s), causing them to take action in relation to the information relayed.

Okemwa's narrative texts studied here achieve their agency in this manner. The teenage voice used in the protagonist of both texts succeeds in marshaling masses to stop female circumcision in the initial text. An alternative to the practice is sought in educating the girl child and empowering her to be economically dependent and enlightened. In the later text, a woman is hailed as being equally important as a man in the society. Gender equity

and mutual respect between men and women in the society are advocated for. The very teenage voice also serves to define the narrative genre as falling under teenage literature meant to expose various issues that teenagers grapple with. Aimed at initiating a conversation about the concerns raised, the narratee helps provoke the narrative community to take action against propagating perceived retrogressive practices and abuse of women rights portrayed in Okemwa's narratives.

3.6 Conclusion

I have observed that since the narrative texts under this study translate vernacular words and explain most of the taboos and other cultural activities, they possess pointers towards the postulated reader. The narrator's interpretation of the Ekegusii words identifies the narratee as someone that does not understand Ekegusii language. But his or her lack of interpretation of Kiswahili words identifies him or her as someone who understands Kiswahili. This also aids in defining the author's authorial audience as the actual author expects the actual reader to understand Kiswahili.

Explanation given in the texts for Ekegusii terms may suggest that the narratee is basically everyone. However, the limit that is demonstrated by the disparity in interpretations given for Ekegusii and Kiswahili words helps in further demarcation of the postulated reader. He or she has associations with Eastern Africa countries and especially with Kenya from the use of words like "matatu" that are associated with her. The narrator is also restricted to appraisal of and paying homage to women of Africa.

From language use, the narratee is portrayed as Kenyan. Alluding to the various rituals and taboos present in the text, the narratee relates with a number of them even as the significance of others elude him/her. The authorial reader is tasked with making relevant associations with the references made. It is thus possible that the authorial author expects the authorial reader to discern associations with some of the unexplained rituals and taboos. Use of blood and milk in *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* exemplifies this. During Sabina's implied hand-over to her husband by both members of her community and those of her intended new home, she is made to fall on her knees. As the narrator explains, "One woman came out of the hut and brought blood in a cup. A goat had been slaughtered from which they got the blood. Her mother helped her sip from the cup. She was then led into the hut." (56)

The narrator does not proceed to explain the significance of the blood being given to the protagonist. Neither does s/he give the significance of the blood having been drawn from a goat and not any other animal. The connotation is that the inscribed reader understands their significance. While inside the hut, Sabina is handed over to the Old Man as his wife. At this time, the narrator observes that women "opened the containers they were carrying and poured their contents into one cup. It was milk, which they poured into a cup and gave both of them to sip from. After this short, simple ritual, the women left the hut one by one." (57) Significance of using milk has also not been given. Reason(s) for Sabina and the husband having to sip from one glass has not been given either. A postulated reader is hence expected to be able to make out the cultural connotation of the rituals portrayed in the narrative text.

From reading of the texts, I observed that the narrator's attitude towards the issue of female circumcision presented in the text(s) coerces the various readers of the text to take issue with societal position on the practice. This is by inducing a dialogue on the controversial and highly delicate matter through questioning their viability. Calls for the readers to abandon their regressive cultural practices are made. An alternative is provided in embracing education as the best rite of passage for the girl child. And since this advocacy is so obviously done, we expect inscribed readers to take action in alignment with the agency realized.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

This study aimed at examining the narratee in Christopher Okemwa's *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl*. Key to the study was the identification of the narratee signals that are invaluable in unveiling the narratee, identification of the narratee(s) in the two texts as pointed out by the narrator and an attempt to compare (and contrast) them. It also aimed at exploring how the two primary texts manipulate other narratological features and notions in telling the story of the teenage girl in society. Narratological tools were employed in helping realize the objectives of the study. In his endeavor to address practical happenings in society today, the author chooses to use a mythological approach that appears to fantasize the protagonist's experience in a society that is generally antagonistic to the ideals the central character advances.

As Prince observes in "Introduction to the Study of the Narratee" *Reader-Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (1980), "Numerous critics have examined the diverse manifestations of the narrator in fictive prose and verse, his or her multiple roles and importance. By contrast, few critics have dealt with the narratee and none to date has undertaken an in-depth study." (7) They rarely focus on the narratee. Some critics may even mistake this notion for other related ones like the actual reader. Studying the narratee notion helps readers better understand the functioning of a narration. This is because all the imagery and figures of speech that enhance narration are meant for him or her. S/he exists to relay them.

Animal imagery used in both texts under this study encodes the narratee as familiar with the associations of the images presented. Some of them are so domestic. In this case they require an indigenous knowledge of the Abagusii culture as they lack interpretation. The

metaphor of a hyena, for instance, as embedded in Gusii mythological knowledge is highly significant as it is recurrently used. The texts therefore postulate a reader who understands Abagusii's connotation of the animals, birds such as owls and insects like cricket presented symbolically and metaphorically.

From the portrayal of the narratee, he or she is African, East African and most probably Kenyan due to usage of more localized words like 'matatu'. He or she does not understand Ekegusii but understands Kiswahili. His or her knowledge about animal and weather symbolism as associated with the Abagusii culture is palpable. The narratee also understands and empathizes with the plight of an African woman. Like the actual reader, he or she may be up for their defense.

Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre and *Sabina the Rain Girl* in their mythological forms embrace Africans in their use of narratee signals. Evidently, the embrace stretches into their use of various images (animal, insect and weather) and style in terms of genre. Both texts are generous in their postulation of the encoded reader(s) as they encourage rapport with the narratee. Although they appear to discriminate the narratee(s) at various subtle levels, they generally make an appeal to everyone around to pay attention to them. All those with the plight of the teenage girl at heart are invited.

Okemwa's presentation of the narratives captured in the two texts assumes a more conversational tone that gives them a dramatic appeal. In a way, he is dramatizing the struggles that teenage girls and women experience in life in an attempt to assert themselves and claim their space. His construction of archetypal female teenage characters as the protagonist in advocating for gender rights is an attack aimed at

reforming cultural norms to align with the dynamic socio-cultural trend(s) in life. The attack sets them in antagonism with custodians of their cultural norms and sensibilities. Attempting to liberate themselves from cultural incarceration, their efforts are met with a lot of resistance. But the author navigates them to obtain power and a voice to articulate their issues and reclaim their identity.

Distinctively, Okemwa's fusion of realism and magic realism to tell the story of teenage girls in the society explicitly breeds success in the intended agency. He employs use of the third person omniscient narrator. This allows him to transcend all manner of limits in exploration of feelings and aspirations of the 'gendered subaltern'. Okemwa aids teenage girls to break their silence through Sabina and cause a possible cultural revolution as agency is taken up by the narratee. By using Sabina as a protagonist voicing teenage issues in this society, he voices experiences of the entire female teenage demographic.

In an attempt to redefine female circumcision, Okemwa advances the notion that education is the best form of circumcision for girls. It empowers them to advocate for their gender ideals and foster development in their communities. Through this study, anyone can take note of Okemwa's preoccupation in addressing teenage and children issues as captured in most of his writings and publications. From a personal interview on 22nd June 2019, he was driven by a personal responsibility and passion to make a difference in his society. This was in response as to whether his writings about women and gender issues were commissioned and for that matter sponsored. As to whether female circumcision among the Abagusii was fictitious or real, he confirmed that about 98% of Abagusii girls are circumcised. His narratives as I further noted were inspired by

his grandmother's stories passed down to him in his early days. This informs his passionate use of the ogre imagery both in a literal and metaphoric sense.

By privileging teenage girls' experiences and presenting his narrative from their point of view, he puts himself in a unique position as an African writer, giving the gendered subalterns a voice to speak and be heard. His writings thus secure a place among feminist discourses. From the depiction of teenage girls' experiences, I argue that Okemwa's prose fiction serve to unshackle teenage girls and women from patriarchal repression embedded in society's stereotypic and fallacious constructions perpetuated against women through the mythical beliefs surrounding female circumcision. As a don, established author and a passionate individual about theatre, his influence and commitment to satirizing society's ills cannot be underestimated. By choosing to write mainly for teenage girls and children, his focus is clearly on impacting both the present and the future. He breaks silences historically observed in cultural and gender discourses.

Challenging notions like 'girls only become women after undergoing circumcision,' Okemwa redefines the image of girls and women in society. Sabina is presented as brave, determined and resilient. She successfully overcomes the pressure to be circumcised. She also succeeds in resisting forced or arranged marriage to an old man as organized by her parents. She manages to rally her entire village behind her in advocating for girl education as an alternative form of circumcision. Above all, Sabina saves her community from famine and starvation after she successfully returns with an ogre's tail from the land of the ogres. The author uses her to distort the male chauvinistic attitude towards women's ability. Her return from her perceived 'death sentence' signifies resurrection. With this resurrection, so is the resurrection of the dignity of women, resurrection of their

abilities and capabilities and a resurrection of their gender roles. And this is meant to be relayed to the rest of the society through all the levels of readers: the actual reader, authorial reader, ideal reader, virtual reader, implied reader and certainly the postulated reader or encoded reader or inscribed reader, alternative terms for the narratee.

I believe in this study, I have attempted to unveil the narratee of the two texts and demonstrated how we can identify him or her in any other literary narrative. I have also attempted to give the various signals that aid in identification of this narratee in what should be a methodical study. Finally, I have attempted to compare the narratee(s) of the two texts under this study. However, there is still much to be done in the study of the narratee. There is need to study the various types of narratees as analysed by Gerald Prince in “An Introduction to the Study of the Narratee” *Reader Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (1980) pp. 7-25 and be able to distinguish between them in a variety of literary narratives.

By choosing to examine the narratee in Christopher Okemwa’s *Sabina and the Mystery of the Ogre* and *Sabina the Rain Girl*, using narratology, I believe I have contributed to literary knowledge by refocusing attention to what Prince calls “the different kinds of person to whom the narrator addresses the discourse,” a notion is often ignored by most critics. In the words of Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker in *A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, this study “Highlights a dimension of narration which had been understood intuitively by readers but which remained shadowy and undefined.” (48-9) In an “Introduction to the Study of the Narratee,” Prince hails what the study of a narratee embodies. He says that it can lead to “a better appreciation of the way a narrative functions and a more accurate assessment of its success from a technical point

of view.” (24) Prince concludes by asserting that “the study of the narratee can lead us to a better understanding not only of the narrative genre but of all acts of communication.” (24) Through this study as Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck say in *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* “It unveils fundamental culture-specific opinions about reality and human kind, which are narrativised in stories and novels.” (1) I have attempted to demonstrate these views in this study as well.

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