SEXISM AND SEXUALITY IN GORETTI KYOMUHENDO’S
FICTION: A PARADIGM OF FEMALE EXPERIENCE
OR MALE VILIFICATION?

BY:
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I, ODOCH GRACE, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted for examination in any other University or institution of learning.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my father Mr. A.K.D ODOCH.
I am most grateful to my supervisor, Dr Christopher W.N. Kirunda, for his intellectual stimulus, guidance and meticulous supervision without which this dissertation would not have been possible. Special thanks go to my mother, Mrs. Regina Odoch, and my siblings for their unwavering encouragement all those moments when it seemed difficult to move further. I would also like to thank Elizabeth Ongom, who was, and has always, been a great source of inspiration to me. Above all, I thank the Almighty God, who indeed made what seemed impossible, become possible to me.
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ABSTRACT

Gender dissonance reverberates in all spheres of human interaction in both blatant and subtle ways. Using facets of sexism and sexuality with a broader analysis on both overt and covert forms, this study set out to examine the extent to which these two can be used to determine the influence of gender dissonance in literary works. Goretti Kyomuhendo's works namely: The First Daughter (1996), Secrets Na More (1999), Whispers from Vera (2002), Waiting (2007), Different Worlds (1998) and "Hidden Identity" (1998) were used in this regard to ascertain whether or not, the gender dissonance therein, qualifies it as either a paradigm of female experience or male vilification. The hypothesis underlying this study sought to ascertain if Kyomuhendo deliberately champions a particular cause in her writing. Using a qualitative library-based approach, with the Feminist critical approach as a framework, two schools of thought -- image critics and gynocritics were examined as a guide. The findings indicate that Goretti Kyomuhendo does not highlight a particular cause but leaves the reader to deduce his/her own judgement of the male - female relationships from the situations presented. As such, gender dissonance cannot be considered as solely an outcome of patriarchal machinations that give us paradigms of either female experience or male vilification.
CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

It has often been argued by some female literary artists and critics like Elaine Showalter, Simone de Beauvoir and Helene Cixous, that male writers more often than not, portray their female characters in marginalized positions. They assert that the male writers have tended to uphold patriarchal dictates of the day that have continued to accord women a trivial status in society, a position from which they are not expected to oppose. This marginalisation is to a great extent exhibited through sexism and sexuality, which elements have impacted greatly on the male-female relations. A consideration of these elements together with their resultant negativity in terms of cultural biases and ills levied against women constitutes the female experience on the one hand, and male vilification on the other. It is in the light of these considerations that this study sought to examine Goretti Kyomuhendo’s fiction with a view to establishing her critical stance.

1.1 Background to the study

In Uganda the literary scene was until 1993 dominated by male writers such as Okot PBitek--Song of Lawino (1966), Song of Ocol (1970), Song of Prisoner and Song of Malaya (1971); Timothy Wangusa--Upon this mountain (1979) a novel, and his poetry anthologies: Salutations (1977) and A Pattern of Dust (1993); Richard Ntiru--Tensions (1971), and John Ruganda--The Burdens (1972) Black Mamba (1973) and The Floods (1980). Apart from some few women like Rose Mbowa, Proscovia Rwakyaka and Elvania Namukwaya Zirimu, whose poems were published in Poems from East Africa (1971), edited by David Cook and David Rubadiri, and Introduction to East African Poetry
(1977), edited by Jonathan Kariara and Ellen Kitonga, Connie Muheki was the only published woman at the time, with her Night of the full moon (1993). In almost all the above cited texts by male writers, women were either assigned trivial and patronizing roles, or considered a non-entity altogether. This kind of literary scenario was a result of the patronizing and/or discriminatory attitude towards the female, just as Gloria T. Hull puts it in her essay, "Sister Outsider: Essays and speeches":

The black literary scene had historically been predominantly a male preserve over the years, however, there has been a blossoming of a large corps of female writers. These had existed before but the male-dominated publishers had not seen it fit to publish the works of the female writers and also only the male articulation had been viewed as worthy of literary expression. In conjunction with the growth of a movement for women's liberation, however, this situation has been dramatically reversed in recent years (1975:84).

Women writing in Uganda arose out of the desire to introduce a female perspective to the socio-political vision of the society and to address issues relative to female subjectivity in order to expose the masked elements of sexism and sexuality, both of which are cultural impediments to the female. The female writers in Uganda up to until recent years were, therefore, regarded as "the other voices, the unheard voices, rarely discussed and seldom accorded space in the repetitive anthologies and the predictably male oriented studies", as Lloyd Brown puts it in "women writers in Black Africa" (1981 :3).

Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:52) suggests that "the self-assertive and self-reliant aspect of the woman's role in Africa" can only become visible through the collective efforts of
African female writers. In her view, the female writer should be committed in three ways: "as a writer, as a woman and as a third world person," (Jones and Palmer 1982: 10). This, according to Lloyd Brown (Nfah-Abbenyi 1997: 6) would "offer self-images, patterns of analysis and general insights into the woman's situation which are largely ignored by, or are inaccessible to, the male author." Kyomuhendo takes a stride to this end by placing the female experience as the source and pivot of her artistic construction and analysis in her works.

With the birth and launch of FEMRITE, an association of Ugandan female writers that has a publishing house as well, the scenario of scarcity of female writers has remarkably improved, with writers like Goretti Kyomuhendo--The First Daughter (1996), Mary Karooro Okarut--The Invisible Weevil (1996), Ayeta Anne Wangusa--Memoirs of a Mother (1998) and Susan Kiguli--The African Saga (1998) setting the pace. Many of the works of the FEMRITE writers are reflective of the three elements suggested by Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie and are further demonstrative of the various identities women can undertake in the larger society. We see the female characters portrayed no longer remaining insignificant to the plot.

Goretti Kyomuhendo is one of the serious upcoming female Ugandan writers of the day. Her works focus on the projection of women in the home, in the economy, in politics and in every other aspect of human activity where the woman has hitherto been reduced to a shadowy existence. Through this, whether consciously or unconsciously, she points at the flaws and presumptuous portrayal of the female by some male writers. Her works bring
with them a critical consciousness about the position of women and a ray of hope to the
appreciation of the female. Kyomuhendo ostensibly writes with a feminist inclination, an
aspect that calls for greater scrutiny. As she writes for the women advocating a change in
their portrayal, she stands out as one laying bare their female experiences by virtue of
being female too. As we read her works, however, we cannot help but hear overtones that
signal features of male writing where we do see some of her female characters given
negative attributes so often found in male writers’ works. Lisa’s economic dependency on
the males for her survival in Secrets No More is a case in point. The implication is that the
female cannot support herself and, therefore, she will always need the male. Kyomuhendo
underscores this observation by employing various elements such as the discriminatory
attitude towards women, highlighting the opinions that limit and define them as inferior
individuals and the demeaning treatment and exploitation to which they are subjected. The
exploitation of these elements is what, in this study, is treated as sexism. Sexism is a
systematic, pervasive and often subtle force that does not only maintain the oppression of
women but also makes the experience of the world as a whole worse for women than for
men. She further underscores this female dependency on the male by examining the
various ways in which people express themselves and their experiences, as human beings,
which encompass an array of sexual activities as well as an abundance of behaviour and a
series of actions and societal topics, which are examined as sexuality in this study.

Goretti Kyomuhendo’s works represent an aspect of the evolution of female consciousness
in Uganda. After a first reading, one gets the impression that she writes from an objective
experience as a woman battling with the realities of existence in prescribed and often
prohibitive societies. A deeper analysis however, reveals that her approach is different as will be seen later in chapter five. In this regard, Goretti Kyomuhendo, like her other female contemporary writers: Mary Karooro Okurut--The Invisible Weevil (1996), Jane Kaberuka-Silent Patience (1999), Violet Barungi-Cassandra (1999), Rosemary Kyarimpa--Echoes of her voice (1999), an anthology of short stories, and Words from a Granary (2001) edited by Violet Barungi, writes stories revolving around women striving to advance in the harsh patriarchal environment.

Most of the works of other contemporary female writers cited above have projections of unmasking the fallacy of patriarchy and phallogocentrism with its various manifestations, among which is sexism and sexuality. In all these literary works, the male characters are the antagonists whose presences enhance the virtues of the female characters. The female characters are the protagonists who invade the male domain and question the notion of male privileges.

As female writers, their objective experience has generated the zeal to transform their lives and those of other women and, ultimately, of all humanity by challenging the negative image of women propagated by their male counterparts. They exploit the strategy of creatively espousing the rebirth of the female, as a means of achieving their desired objective that the supposed weakness of the woman is actually her inherent strength.

Through the creation of these expressive texts, these Ugandan writers, like many others out there, have chosen to fight against both explicit and implicit forms of sexism and sexuality that have been used as facets to subjugate the female. They have chosen to fight silence,
which is one of the tenets of sexism, as earlier observed, and the most powerful tool used by the males to ensure that the female should neither be seen nor heard.

Turning to Goretti Kyomuhendo, it can be observed that the above objective experience of the female writers can clearly be noted in her works which, as earlier pointed out, include: *The First Daughter* (1996), *Different Worlds* (1998), *Secrets No More* (1999), *Whispers from Vera* (2002), *Waiting* (2007) and her short story "Hidden Identity" as will later be illustrated in this study. However, the similitudes and collations of the female experience so illustrated could, yet at another level, be construed to constitute male vilification.

There are similar structures in our societies, such as observance of strict hierarchies based either on hereditary dynasties or age-group rankings and, consequently, the dominance of male ideologies, practices and attitudes which loom large and inherently disadvantage women. In Goretti Kyomuhendo's works, the ubiquitous dominance of male supremacy and women's determined struggle against it is underscored. In a Preface to *Women Writing for Africa* (2007: xix-xx), Austin Bukenya suggests that the element of continued and determined struggle by women is a central element characteristic of the modern female writers. He further corroborates this struggle when he argues that the fight for survival by women is a result of the power to be, do and grow amidst the hostile environment which is all a creation of patriarchal impositions.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The gender dissonance in the form of sexism and sexuality reverberates in the spheres of human interaction, as observed in the societies presented in Goretti Kyomuhendo’s fiction.
Her critical stance on this matter however cannot be discerned, which leaves the reader wondering whether she is championing the female experience or vilifying the male. This study sought to address itself to this ambivalence.

1.3 Purpose and scope of the study

The study sought to establish whether Goretti Kyomuhendo is glorifying the female on the one hand while vilifying the male on the other in her works, with a view to establishing her critical stance. The study analysed her four novels: *The First Daughter* (1996), *Secrets No More* (1999), *Whispers from Vera* (2002) and *Waiting* (2007) as well as *Different Worlds* (1998)– her children’s book and her short story “Hidden Identity” (1998). All these works under study are written in the post-revolution years that is from 1986 when the NRM government came to power after a five-year bush war. It is during this period that “affirmative action” space was opened on all fronts to women. Special emphasis was, therefore, on themes and characterization as a means of teasing out the author’s critical stance.

1.4 Review of Related Literature

The portrayal of the female in a work of art is one of the areas of immense interest to the feminist thought with the underlying question of whether or not, the text can be considered gendered or sexist. Furthermore, Literatures on social movements and feminist ideologies, especially in Africa, do not adequately explain the conditions and struggles of African women. In analyzing feminist ideologies, the diverse views of some feminist activists have to be critically analysed to enhance our understanding of the struggles of women battling to find their true identity. Elaine Showalter, an American critic, feminist and writer on cultural and social issues, does not advocate a separation of the female tradition from the
male tradition. Her argument in *New Feminist Criticism: essays on women, literature and theory* is that women must work both inside and outside the male tradition (1985: 264). In the attempt to castigate the negative portrayal of the female in most of the male literary productions, most female writers have embraced the form of gynocriticism in literary presentations as advanced by Elaine Showalter who argues, in *A Literature of Their Own*, that a work of art should reflect three phases of development namely: Feminine, Feminist and Female, which she expounds thus:

The feminine stage involves imitation of the prevailing Modes of the dominant tradition and internalization of the Standards; feminism stage, a protest against these standards and values and advocacy of minority rights; and the female stage, a phase of self-discovery, a turning inwards, freed from some of the dependency on opposition, a search for identity (1978 :270).

A close parallel of the above phases can be noticed in the development of the feminist literary tradition in the literature by Ugandan women. In the presentation of her female characters, Kyomuhendo demonstrates the vitality of Showalter's suggestion through Vera in *Whispers from Vera*, Kasemiire in *The First Daughter*, Prossy in *Different Worlds*, Marina in *Secrets No More* and Alinda in *Waiting*, by intimating that the formation of this new world of female culture and experience should neither be dependent nor answerable to the male tradition. Kyomuhendo's writing has both the exclusionary and discriminatory patriarchal patterning that are reproduced through cultural perceptions that continue to militate against women's dignity, social recognition and worth as independent and self-motivated human beings. She does explore sexism and sexuality in a manner that brings to fruition the phases as advanced by Elaine Showalter.
Catherine Beecher, an American author and educator who does not challenge the traditionally subordinate place of females, does present a new vision of women as a strong and influential force that helps to determine the direction and conscience of a given society. She postulates the thrust and diversity of feminism—a facet of female experience, in an address on "Woman suffrage and women's profession" thus:

> We agree, then, on the general principle that woman’s happiness and usefulness are equal in value to those of man’s and consequently that she has a right to equal advantages for securing them ... that woman has never been allowed to such equal advantages and that multiplied wrongs and suffering have resulted from this injustice ... that it is the right and the duty of every woman to employ the power of organization and agitation in order to gain those advantages which are given to one and ... withheld from the other (Beecher 1975: 15).

Similarly, Kyomuhendo uses sexism and sexuality in her works to suggest that, indeed the woman too has a right to happiness and being appreciated in her own right. There is such an apparent influence of this conviction in her works that one may think, she is trying to confound masculine forms enshrined in literary works. She can also be seen as unmasking and demystifying the systematic operation of patriarchy by projecting strong female characters who refuse to be held back by their circumstances and their societal dictates of the day and are able to achieve happiness and self-worth.

In relation to the above, Tanaka and Hanson (1982: x) also assert that the women represented in the earliest recorded myths were generally strong, free and assertive and they frequently spurred with their male counterparts. This view is indeed shared by
Kyomuhendo as she moves on a point of departure from other writers with a feminist inclination to attempt to restore the female to the long lost glory, a reconstruction of the ideal woman, not as a new concept but as an image that existed before. However, there is cause to suspect too that she is vilifying the male through some of her presentations like Kyamanywa in *The First Daughter*, George Walusimbi in *Secrets No More*; Eric in *Whispers from Vera* and Father in "Hidden Identity", among others.

On the African scene, most women have toed exactly those lines prescribed for them by society. Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie in "African women, Culture and Another Development" posits that this certainty is due to the successful intimidation of the African woman by the man:

> Women are shackled by their own negative self-image by centuries of the exteriorization of the ideologies of patriarchy. Her own reactions to problems therefore are often self-defeating and self-crippling. She reacts with fear, dependency, complexes and attitudes to please where more self-assertive actions are needed (1989:4).

Omalara's views here can also be detected in Kyomuhendo's works. In *Whispers from Vera* Kyomuhendo, through Vera, points out that the African woman urgently needs to rid herself of all the complexes listed above, for although today she is much involved in raising a family, she is equally participating in other spheres of nation building. This view is further demonstrated in *The First Daughter*, through Abwooli, Kasemiire's mother, who struggles to provide for her children when her husband's philandering takes on a new dimension altogether. Marina in *Secrets No More* also helps to concretize Kyomuhendo's views when she chooses to walk out of a loveless marriage to one where she is loved and...
appreciated. To gain recognition in the society, therefore, marriage and procreation whether selflessly or sheepishly pleasing the man, should be neither a pre-requisite nor an imperative.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), an English poet and dramatist, and considered as one of the greatest English Playwrights, challenges discriminatory stereotype ideologies against women as 'the other' when he observes, through Desdemona, thus:

This not a year or two shows us a man; they are all but stomachs; and we all but food; they eat us hungerly; and when they are full, they belch us ... What is that they do when they change us for others? Is it Sport? I think it doth; isn't frailty that thus errs? It is so too; and have we not affections? Desires for sport and fraility as men have? Then let them use us well; else let them know the ills we do, their ill instruct us so (Othello, 4:3).

In this presentation of Desdemona, Shakespeare transcends the stereotypes of his own time, undercutting the conception of women's inferiority to man when Desdemona is shown to be a virtuous woman who is finally vindicated. Similarly, Kyomuhendo alludes to this view that women are not at all inferior to men when given chance to prove their worth, though she is not as decisive as Shakespeare. As such, her works could be viewed as having an aspect of male vilification.

Simone de Beauvoir (1994), a leading French Feminist, also provides a comprehensive study of the secondary status of women throughout history. She is, indeed, in agreement with Showalter's views. Basing on the philosophy of existentialism which considers that human beings are free to make of themselves the kind of people they want to be and to
some extent, make for themselves the kind of world they want to live in, she addresses women's social, economic and political status as well as the existential meaning of womanhood. Concepts such as personal freedom or individual guidance by choice alone, responsibility or accepting the consequences of one's choices or denying one's freedom by shifting responsibility to an outside source and the role of psycho-analysis, convince her to posit that men have achieved the favourable status of transcendence. Beauvoir proposes assimilation into the male universe as a means of achieving gender equality. Women whose dependency on men has crippled their abilities to create positive identities and construct autonomous lives can thus have their lives revived.

Kyomuhendo appears to have embraced these concepts in her works. Vera in *Whispers from Vera*, chooses not to wait for her husband to determine her potentials but goes ahead to do investments like purchasing a plot of land and a car, which decisions enable her to pursue and achieve her dreams. Sheila, in *Secrets No More*, is highly educated but still chooses to pursue doctoral studies even when her husband begrudgingly lets her do so and, in so doing, risks the stability of her marriage. Kasemiire in *The First Daughter* chooses to first focus on, and complete, her studies at the university before she can move in with Steven, her lost and found first love, and Marina in *Secrets No More* opts for space in her heart for a loving relationship with Mr. Magezi and so quits a marriage with George Walusimbi that was never based on true love initially.

It should be emphasized here that it is not a matter of appealing to men to give women their freedom but a matter of women discovering their solidarity and the pleasures of
freedom. The woman must of necessity liberate herself from two shackles: the idea that to be independent women must be like men and the other being her socialization in passivity, which makes her adverse to risking herself for her ideas. With this current state of affairs, Beauvoir sets two pre-requisites: women must be socialized to engage the world and they must also be allowed to discover the unique ways in which their embodiment engages the world. The myth of women must be destroyed for as long as it prevails otherwise, economic and political advances will fall short of the goal of their liberation. She notes that dismantling the myth of women is not a recipe for an androgynous future for there will always be sexual differences, but most important is our mutual recognition of each other as free and as "other."

Similarly, Kyomuhendo's works portray women engaged in finding their true worth, as earlier noted, and their lives are not shaped any more by patriarchal dictates of the day. At the same time, however, she displays flaws that are apparently also common to the males through the lives of characters like Mugabi in *The First Daughter*, Father in "Hidden Identity" and Ben in *Whispers from Vera*, all indicative of the element of male vilification.

The situation is, however, quite different when we consider *The First Daughter, Secrets No More* and *Whispers from Vera*. In his article, "Male identity and Female space in the fiction of Ugandan Women" (2008: 193), Abasi Kiyimba presents issues of male brutality in relation to female vulnerability, female silence enforced by the social system; the emergence of the unconventional female and the inevitable clash with the intransigent male
as well as the role of art in the process of psychologically empowering women. In these works of Kyomuhendo, we note that male brutality is pitted against female vulnerability. A case in point is Kyamanywa's battering of his wife in *The First Daughter* for her disobedience.

Despite this vulnerability, the women do not give up the struggle for self-determination. Kiyimba further contends that:

> The struggle between men and women rages through the literature of nearly all Ugandan women writers. What is significant is not so much that a solution is found to the old questions because none is, but that it highlights for debate instead “keeping this evil buried by keeping quiet” (2008:201).

What Kiyimba misses, however, are the different levels of sexism and sexuality and how these impact on society. This aspect is examined in detail in this study.

I should hasten to point out that, unlike Kiyimba, Virginia Woolf does not believe that women should strive to be like men, but that men should take on some of the characteristics associated with women. She challenges the patriarchal system that allows a man to choose any livelihood he desires but often requires a woman to live her life in full support of his enterprise instead of deciding upon her own part. She explores issues of sex, gender and feminism, male power and injustices associated with it. She further criticizes the lack of legal rights, educational opportunities and financial independence for women. In view of the aforementioned injustices, she proposes that an androgynous viewpoint be adopted, one that will ultimately see both man and woman functioning as complete human beings. As she puts it in chapter six of *A Room of One's Own*:

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In each of us ... two powers preside, one male, one female, and in the man's brain, the man dominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain, the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is when the two live in harmony together. ... (1977).

Kyomuhendo like Woolf also decries this form of discrimination outlined above and goes on to show how insecure the man feels when he can no longer hold back the woman financially. His major fear here is that financial independence could easily lead to a breakdown of all the strong holds that have kept the woman in his grip. This view is demonstrated in *Whispers from Vera* when Vera's younger sister, Jacinta, suffers humiliation from her husband who continually harangues her for having got a job which would ultimately give her some form of financial freedom.

On the other hand, a close scrutiny of Goretti Kyomuhendo's works reveals that she does not only discredit women but also mobilizes conventional sentiments against them. A case in point is the virtual absence of women's participation in the political arena. None of her female characters per se shows an inclination towards politics. Even Sheila, in *Whispers from Vera*, who gets into close touch with politics through her husband, who has turned politician, considers it a bother that has invaded the peace and quiet her home once knew. In a way, one may get tempted to suppose that Kyomuhendo is portraying the attitude of the woman who has not realised free rein to exercising freedom in all spheres of life, to think that political virtues are not exclusively male. At yet another level, Kyomuhendo uses her works as a forum for not only analyzing women's circumstances and needs but also for highlighting possible achievements which are all geared towards building
also for highlighting possible achievements which are all geared towards building women's identity. She attempts to portray this through Vera in *Whispers from Vera* who 'launches out into the deep' and builds her life in the face of all the discouragement from her husband and Sheila in *Secrets No More* who goes ahead to pursue further education almost at the cost of her marriage, and turns out a formidable intellectual.

Goretti Kyomuhendo's use of language gives yet another angle to the debate on the male - female relationships which, in turn, reminds one of Helene Cixous' conviction that the creation of a new language of discourse is essential for feminine expression and women's search for identity. In her essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1971:337), Cixous argues for a female language and feminine writing since in her view, writing has been a male - dominated practice that has perpetrated male ideology and female repression. She further notes that the only way women can find voice and power is by redefining the language and the ideology that surrounds it, that is the binary oppositions evident in phallogocentric constructions of language. It is such an exploration of language, with a dimension of newness, that also made this study imperative.

Through the gynocritic approach, there is a plea for optimism in the portrayal of women, that women should not accept what patriarchy has hitherto accorded them as reality. As already noted above, the women's perceived weakness should be their strength for, as Bertholt Brecht (1898-1950) puts it in his play, *The Life of Galileo*: "If I am weak then I am strong.” Brecht's philosophy here implicitly points to the supposed weakness of the female as indeed their inherent strength. The female always exudes some form of inner
strength which may manifest sometimes in a subtle, tactful or subversive manner, or sometimes in a more open, forceful and unapologetically militant way.

Goretti Kyomuhendo presents the possibility of Bertholt Brecht's philosophy through Vera in Whispers from Vera who is able to juggle her roles as wife, mother and career woman as she engages the world around her. Marina in Secrets No More also exhibits strength of character when she has to attend to almost three patients at the same time but is able to remain composed through it all.

I wish to emphatically note here that, having come recently on the literary scene, Goretti Kyomuhendo's works have not been subjected to serious critical examination, more especially the concepts of sexism and sexuality as exclusive elements for consideration, as might be the case with the works by older female writers. This study, therefore, sought to carry out a detailed examination of the influence of these aspects in her works so as to establish her critical stance.

1.5 Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that:

Goretti Kyomuhendo does not deliberately champion any particular cause in her works but portrays society just as it is.

1.6 Research Methodology

This study was intended to be library - based right from the beginning and the research was carried out mainly at Kyambogo University Library, Makerere University Main Library,
FEMRITE Resource Centre as well as using the Internet. Relevant journals and literature were consulted to facilitate the researcher gain a deeper insight and appreciation of Goretti Kyomuhendo's fiction.

An examination of the various forms of sexism and sexuality as well as the character analyses in Goretti Kyomuhendo's fiction were undertaken, after the data was collected. The research then focused on the issues of female experience and male vilification before, finally, addressing the overriding question of Goretti Kyomuhendo's critical stance.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The study was grounded in the Feminist Critical Approach which, according to Toril Moi in *Modern Literary Theory*, is:

> A specific kind of political discourse: a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature (1991 :204).

This approach propagates two major schools of thought: the image critics like Helene Cixous, Josephine Donovan, Lac Irigaray and Julia Kristina, whose main concern is how women are depicted in literature, whether represented by female or male writers, and the gynocritics led by Elaine Showalter who, as noted earlier, advocates the three forms of development in women's writing and their literary contribution.

According to Josephine Donovan (1987), in "Beyond the Net: Feminist Criticism as a Moral Criticism", the primary assumption of the image critic is to evaluate the authenticity of the female characters in terms of whether an individual has a reflective critical
of the female characters in terms of whether an individual has a reflective critical consciousness capable of self determined action as a "self" or is yet another stereotyped identity or the "other". This form of evaluation thus enabled this study to determine the degree to which sexist ideology controls the works of Goretti Kyomuhendo. A Sexist ideology promotes the concept of woman as the object or woman as the other, used to facilitate or redeem the projects of men. This study sought to establish the representation or misrepresentation of the female with the focus on whether or not Kyomuhendo bares her critical stance in the manner of the character images or the employment of gynocriticism in her works.

In "Towards A Feminist Poetics" Elaine Showalter highlights that gynocriticism, as an aspect of feminist criticism, constructs a female framework for analyzing women's literature with the sole purpose of a study based on female experience distinct from the male tradition. Since this study sought to establish the critical stance of Goretti Kyomuhendo through the construction of sexism and sexuality in her works, the researcher deemed this, together with the other critical approaches discussed above, as most appropriate for the task.

1.8 Significance of the Study

It was hoped that this study would enhance and facilitate a liberal approach to the appreciation of literary works by an author irrespective of the author's sex. Consequently, furthermore, it was hoped that this study would make significant contribution to the ever intensifying debate on the male/female representations in literary works, more especially African Literature, and specifically the Ugandan Novel.
Finally, it was hoped that this study would provoke further research on Goretti Kyomuhendo as a creative writer.
1.9 Definition of Terms

In this study:

Androgynous: refers to having no gender bearing as either male or female.

Female experience: refers to the way the female envisions her life in relation to her society.

Feminism: refers to a movement that advocates the emancipation of women and seeks evaluation of the roles assigned women in a patriarchal society.

Gender: is a social - cultural category influenced by stereotypes about the female and the male that exists in our attitudes and beliefs.

Gynocriticism: is the historical literary study of writing by female writers.

Male Vilification: refers to severe ridicule or serious contempt of the male by the female.

Patriarchy: alludes to male hegemony/rule by the father taken from the basic view that our civilization is pervasively male-centred, organized and controlled in such a way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains.

Paradigm: refers to a model.

Phallocentricism/phallogocentrism: relates to a system of belief that considers the penis as a symbol of authority in the social order.

Sex: refers to a biological category as either male or female.
Sexism: refers to the unfair treatment which includes exploitation and domination, of one sex by the other.

Sexuality: relates to the innate characteristics of a person's sexual make up that determine his/her relations with other people.
CHAPTER TWO
FORMS OF SEXISM AND SEXUALITY IN GORETTI KYOMUHENDO’S FICTION

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the question of gender relations within the home, the culture and the entire society is greatly considered, with keen focus on sexism and sexuality as mirrored in Goretti Kyomuhendo's works under study. As already observed in Chapter One, sexism is any mistreatment of women, such as subjecting them to violence and inferior treatment. I wish to further observe that sexism is a matter of serious concern since all women experience it in one form or another, and at one time or another. When women do not stand up for themselves and tolerate abusive treatment from both men and fellow women, mistreat other women and sometimes deny their own intelligence, we see clear manifestations of internalized sexism. As if that is not enough, most women tend to internalize, believe and act out this sexism after being bombarded with sexist misinformation.

Two forms of sexism and sexuality have been identified for deeper study and analysis: the overt and covert ones. As already noted, overt forms of sexism and sexuality refer to all the blatant forms the effects of which have far reaching effects upon women while, on the other hand, covert forms are all those that are subtle in nature, not life threatening but still damaging to women. Both forms not only get into the way of women enjoying full and empowered lives which ultimately affects their self-respect and confidence, but also leads them into making choices they would not have otherwise made. This chapter gives these
two forms of sexism and sexuality serious consideration, for to give up on either is to give up any future on women’s liberation.

2.1 ‘Overt Forms of Sexism

As noted earlier, overt forms of sexism are those blatant forms of mistreatment of women whose far reaching effects upon the lives of woman can be devastating. These forms include: domestic violence, rape, sexual intimidation and harassment, denial of education, early marriage, bride price, son preference, and betrayal. We will now examine each of these components, one by one, in more detail so as to determine their contribution to this study.

2.1.1 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence involves physical abuse, including battering which not only endangers the lives of the victims but greatly humiliates them. Violence against the female is enforced through sexism and is a common occurrence in African societies. Through social and cultural attitudes, male authority is structured and strengthened. The men will always act violently to prevent their power from being diminished both within and outside a family setting. The marauding soldiers in Waiting enforce this as they comb through homesteads of their victims. Not even the knowledge that a woman was in labour could soften their attitude. Kaaka, who was assisting Alinda’s mother have her baby, meets her death through such violence:

One soldier kicked her hard in the stomach. Kaaka screamed … The soldier kicked her again …. The soldier whom she had addressed pointed his gun at her and fired. Then he fired again, aiming at her stomach … The soldier kicked once more and she screamed loudly (2007: 37-38).
In the family setting, we see this when the old man in *Waiting* borders on madness when he butchers his wife:

And by the time she returned, he had worked himself into a murderous frenzy. He asked for his meat, and she told him, she'd just given it to her parents. 'Go and get it back', he demanded. She said she couldn't do that, as it would be very improper. "So your Parents love meat, eh?" he said. That's when he got a panga and started cutting her into pieces. When he finished, he put the pieces into the gunnysack, tied it on his bicycle, and rode to her parents' home. "I have brought you more meat. I understand you love it very much" (2007:75-76).

Much as physical abuse in the family setting may be considered a private affair, sooner than later, it turns out as a public tragedy that calls for the involvement of the society as seen above in the case of the gruesome murder of the old man's wife.

It should further be noted that patriarchal machination uses physical beating and battering as a way of training and bringing the female to conform to behavioural patterns acceptable to the male authority in their lives as seen in *The First Daughter* when Kyamanywa gives his second wife a thorough beating for her disobedience; N gonzi as a teenage girl gets beaten by her parents, having been sighted in the company of a young man; Kasemire and her sisters as well as their mother, get beaten by Kyamanywa when he learns of Kasemire's pregnancy:

Her father burst into the room and pounced on her like an angry leopard. He grabbed her from the bed and threw her to the ground. With the whip in his hands he started thrashing her with such fury that it soon broke. Then he started kicking and boxing her all at the same
time... "you can now go whoring with all my full blessings, you scum!" he shouted after them (1996:52-53).

Katutu, Kasemiire's younger sister, also gets severely beaten by her husband, apparently for no given reason, and is later chased away together with her children. There is no doubt therefore, that male violence against the female does not need any prior prompting as seen in the case of Katutu, the child - girl wife and mother who, indeed, suffered untold misery in her marriage. She is representative of the young girls who have hardly found their bearing in the marriage arena, yet they are expected to be at the beck and call of the male authority in their lives either as wives or daughters.

In Whispers from Vera, Vera's father uses this authority when he beats his brother's wife, stirred by anger and suspicion that she caused the death of her husband. However, still in Whispers From Vera, Kyomuhendo shows that this norm can be changed when the women stand up against it. One of Vera's cousins rejected this life of being battered by setting radical conditions on how she would live in harmony again with her husband who was notorious for wife - beating. Vera gives us a glimpse of the type of woman her cousin turned out to be:

She is married to one of the most experienced and diligent wife beaters I've ever known and on this occasion, he battered her beyond recognition. She packed her bags and ended up at my house, all the way from the village... !Anyway, that the woman put conditions for her return. If she were going to continue with her marriage to this violent man, he should never raise a finger to beat her again. He should buy her, a bicycle, which would be used for ferrying water from
the well (no more carrying clay pots on her head). And he should also let her keep all the money she sold from their produce, buy her a cow, which would produce milk so that she would be assured of a good cup of tea everyday (2002:84-85).

Through Vera's cousin, we see that a man and woman can live in harmony without physical beating being used as a tool for enforcing authority. This also reveals that a male's confidence is structured when he turns violent, without which it is assumed that he is completely disarmed. Why go physical to enforce authority if not only to serve the animalistic nature in the male?

2.1.2 Rape

As a form of overt sexism, rape reveals a pattern of inflicting psychological and physical trauma upon the victim rather than the sexual interest involved. This can occur anywhere in the family, in the community or in situations of armed conflict where a woman can fall easy prey to any abuser. The attempted rape of Kasemiire by Mr. Mutyaba in The First Daughter is indicative of this kind of abuse in a family setting. A home is supposed to be the safest haven for anyone, a refuge for anyone at any given time. Kasemiire, who had been taken in by the Mutyabas, considered their house the new haven away from the incessant taunts of her father. Little did she know what was to befall her, as we later learn:

Kasemiire was sleeping in her room when she heard a soft knock on her door ... and there was someone standing in the doorway stark naked! Kasemiire's first reaction was that of panic. Was it a night dancer, a thief? She started to scream as loudly as she could, but the silhouette was moving her bed. Kasemiire froze in fear. She could not even scream! The figure was that of a man! ... It was Mr. Mutyaba! ... he was now sitting on the bed, trying to get in! ... He was now on top of her! 'My God' Kasemiire thought, 'he is going to rape me.' ... and
with all the energy she could command, she pushed him away and jumped out of the bed. She was crying hysterically (1996:90-91).

That the hitherto father figure in her life should at this moment attempt this heinous deed leaves us with no doubt about the many more vulnerable females out there screaming in silence, with no help at all at hand!

Much as Mr. Mutyaba is not successful in raping Kasemiire, in another family setting we see Matayo succeeding with the unsuspecting Marina in *Secrets No More*. This not only exposes the vulnerability of women but also shows how bestial men can be when overtaken by nature, for Matayo acts on the spur of the moment, intoxicated by alcohol:

> He is drunk! Marina thought to herself. I must run away from him. She tried to struggle out of his arms, but he was too strong for her. He pinned her to the ground, then with one arm, he began unzipping his trousers. In one swift movement, Matayo had removed the trouser ...

Marina then knew what Matayo intended to do to her (1999:58).

It should be noted here that alcohol should not be emphasized as the major factor since Mr. Mutyaba is not said to have been under the influence of alcohol like Matayo. What remains true is the fact that the purposed end of their actions was the same. It therefore comes as no surprise that in both incidents, the victims are unsuspecting young girls who have all along felt they were surrounded by love and ultimate security but are now left with bottled emotions of mistrust of even those once considered close family members. This brings to fruition the saying that one's greatest enemy comes from his very own family.
After the rape, we see the devastating effects on Marina. She becomes withdrawn and depressed and has frequent emotional outbursts that either leave her sulking or brooding. Rape thus strips the victim of all self-worth and leaves both physical and psychological scars upon the victim. Marina not only undergoes a difficult labour since her body was not yet physically mature for motherhood, but also has a dysfunctional sex life with her husband, Walusimbi later on.

Besides rape occurring in a familiar home setting which could be considered as a safe haven as noted above, it is also widely used as a weapon of war whenever armed conflicts arise between different parties and is largely based on traditional views of women as both property and sexual objects. Society has also ascribed women the roles of transmitters of culture and as symbols of a community. Violence directed against women, therefore, becomes a direct attack against the emblem of any given society and a particularly potent tool of war. In the face of the ethnic conflicts in Rwanda, women greatly suffered as sexual objects, as presumed emblems of ethnic identity. Mukundane in *Secrets No More* was raped before her husband and children:

> With the help of another soldier, they got hold of Mukundane and proceeded to pin her down on the floor. Mukundane kicked and squirmed, lashing out at the soldiers. The soldiers were momentarily shocked by her strength. One of them slapped her hard on the face. Mukundane let out a high-pitched wail... She was spread-eagled on the floor with two soldiers holding her down. A giant of a soldier was towering over her... He wore a stupid victorious grin and kept on licking his lips (1999: 16-17).
This kind of rape is done to trample upon the dignity of the victims and is often a precursor to murder. Kyomuhendo decries the use of rape in conflicts, for it clearly reflects the dehumanizing inequalities women continue to face in their daily lives. What is more, it reflects the unique terror it holds for women, the unique power it gives the rapist over his victim and, indeed, the unique contempt it displays for the victim.

2.1.3 Sexual intimidation and harassment

Sexual intimidation and harassment constitute a form of sexism that targets women with the primary motive of undermining their potentials as highlighted by Kasemiire's boyfriend:

He thought that women should keep behind men because they are the weaker sex; and he said that whatever Kasemiire thought or said, women would remain inferior to men, their level of education or riches. After all, they all had the same equipment but only arranged differently (1996: 102).

Furthermore, sexual intimidation and harassment is characterized by both unwelcome and often intimidating verbal or physical sexual advances, perpetrated by both males and females. Kyomuhendo once more gives insights into some of the different ways in which women propagate the very things that hold them in bondage. Sexual intimidation and harassment can either occur outside the family setting such as seen at a workplace, or at an educational institution. At the workplace, it not only degrades the woman but also reinforces the idea of non-professionalism on the part of female workers, who are consequently regarded as less able to perform their duties than their male counterparts.

When Vera in *Whispers from Vera* gets a new boss, a female at that, negativity is
expressed by both the men and the women. To the men, a female boss was never able to make clear judgement especially when ovulating and worse still, could be very unreasonable, petty and moody. The women perpetrate this uncalled for sexist view by also considering that women bosses are only out to undermine their fellow women in every possible way.

The above views held by the women, as echoed by the men, indeed become a reality at Sheila's workplace when eventually she loses her job:

We all know how Sheila has been conflicting with this woman for a long time. Apparently, this woman does not possess the qualifications required for the kind of post she is holding, so she is quite uncomfortable having Sheila as her immediate assistant. Sheila is the brainy one and she is always asked to do her boss' job. I keep telling her that the many qualifications of hers will not bring her any good, especially in our kind of environment (2002: 72).

At the Educational institutions, the victim finds herself in an uncomfortably threatening environment due to the unwelcome sexual behaviour of both the male and female students. This hostile environment includes situations like telling jokes or stories of a sexual nature, unwelcome touching such as patting or hugging, or making suggestive facial expressions or gestures. In most mixed schools, both girls and boys may harass the girls in a manner that could be labeled sexual assault besides sexual intimidation and harassment. When Kasemiire joins Duhaga School for her secondary education, she becomes a victim of such harassment:

"Have you ever slept with a man?" their leader asked. Kasemiire was shocked. She had never been asked such a question; she just stared at them speechless. The girl who had asked the question slapped her hard in the face. "I'm talking to you, goat!" she hissed (1996:32-33).
We are further told that all the 'njukas' were dancing and moving their bodies in a very disgraceful manner and that there was no music to match their rhythm. As if that was not scandalizing enough, Kasemiire was ordered to take off her clothes. Her shock is not a surprise since she could not afford to be seen naked by strangers (1996:34). But that was not all. More torture was yet to follow. She was to be informed that she was to become a "wife" of another Senior One student:

From now onwards, you are the boss' wife in senior one west, the assistants informed her matter-of-factly .... As she was getting up, the boy who'd called himself "headmaster" came and sat down besides her. He started caressing her thighs.
" Kiss me", he said quietly ... Ojuka was now behind her; he took hold of her waist and forced her to face him. Roughly, he started kissing her and the students shouted encouraging obscenities. After that he slapped her very hard and gave her a big shove (1996:35).

It should be noted here that the above torture is meted out to Kasimiire by both the school boys and the school girls, implying that sexual intimidation is not only a male sexist attitude against the female.

2.1.4 Denial of Education

Education is necessary for a girl's social and cultural advancement. However, the tyranny of gender roles hampers any contributions that a woman can make on the political, social and economic fronts in society. Patriarchy considers that the educated self-reliant woman is a potential threat to men both within and without the marriage arena. She is bound to challenge the cultural ideal of submissive womanhood. To avert such a scenario, the girl - child is denied education, and if she has access to it, then attainment of an all-round
education is made extremely difficult for her. In *The First Daughter*, the village drunkards clearly express their concerns:

"A woman's place is in the kitchen", another man retorted.

"Give them education and they will rebel.

"Give them education. the drunkard continued, which means they'll never be able to perform the only thing they are capable of on this earth!"

"What is that?" Kyamanywa asked inquisitively.

when they are ripe, just as a farmer would sell a ripe pumpkin then bring home cows and produce heirs!"(1996:8).

Despite such haranguing sentiments from his age-mates, Kyamanywa sends his daughters to school. The village drunkards are representative of the section of men who still harbour antagonistic thoughts towards the education of the girl-child.

It should be noted, however, that it is not only men who are against the education of girls. Even women perpetuate these patriarchal sentiments. Mukaaka, Kasemiire's grandmother, for instance, considers education for Kasemiire a waste:

If it was not for the lousy and cursed system of education, Kasemiire would now be having two children of her own ... After all, the primary education was really enough for her. Couldn't she now write and read? (1996:38).

Therefore when Kasemiire becomes pregnant and has to drop out of school, she gives credence to the male sentiments that educating a girl is indeed a waste. The structural obstacles bar her from continuing with her education while the boyfriend continues with his. Kasemiire's younger sisters suffer the brunt of her father's anger when they are withdrawn from school and any future for them through education is thus lost.
Kyamanywa, their father, feels justified in his actions as he later agrees that, “They are all women after all, and their offices are in their kitchen!” (57)

Whereas in *Different Worlds*, the girl-child is given opportunity to go to school, still she is disadvantaged. Whenever there is reason for one child to stay at home, either as a child-minder or to cook for the siblings in the absence of a mother, it was the girl again asked to stay home irrespective of the number of times she will have missed school. Prossy, who grows up in such a setting, suffers setbacks in her progress at school because she often had to miss school to look after her baby brother or cook for the rest of the family.

It has already been observed at the beginning of this section that education is necessary for a girl's social and cultural advancement. Denying girls this very important tool as demonstrated above, therefore, implicitly bares a very dangerous impediment to the personal development of the female, the preparation for adulthood and the consequent effective contribution to the future well being of not only their families but also society at large. The female will thus be unable to develop her own independent identity let alone have any experience in expressing her views, if any.

Denial of education, therefore, upholds the old patriarchal view that the female should not be given opportunity to develop her intellect. This view has led to disastrous consequences as we shall see in the next chapter.
2.1.5 Early Marriages

As noted in the previous sections, denial of education reduces a woman's access to a range of opportunities before her and ultimately promotes the practice of early marriages. Girls are compelled to get married at an early age before they are physically, mentally or even emotionally mature. This can happen for a host of reasons: Katutu, Kasemiire's young sister, gets married at the age of fifteen having dropped out of school and having nothing else to do at home, as her mother explained to Kasemiire:

After you stopped sending school fees for Katutu, she also decided to get married. She was still young, fifteen, but I could not stop her; there was nothing for her to do here (1996: 121-122).

Early marriage is also a strategy for economic survival in instances where acute poverty abounds. The patriarchal society considers the girl-child a lucrative investment that can be sold off as soon as she begins budding breasts as a sign of physical growth as seen in the case of the marriages of Abwooli in The First Daughter and Nyinabarongo in Waiting. Abwooli, Kasemiire's mother, was a victim of an early marriage at fifteen as she reminisces:

Abwooli did not want her daughter to be a victim of an early marriage. She knew from experience what it meant; and that is exactly what would happen if her daughter did not join a secondary school. Abwooli had been a beautiful woman at fifteen, just the same age as her daughter nowl. .. Their father [Abwooli's] had been a polygamist and a drunkard who had a habit of marrying off his daughters at an early age so that he could squander all the bride-price on drink(1996: 11).
Nyinabarongo in *Waiting* was also a victim of an early marriage as she was used as an object of exchange. Indeed – he was given no choice in the whole matter as she sounds hopeless in her lament:

My sister had been married only for a year when she suddenly died. We never got to know what really happened. Her husband then demanded that he be paid back some of the bride-price. My mother had already used part of it to repair our house and the rest to pay my school fees. My sister's husband said that if my mother could not pay back the money, he would take one of us as his wife. I was about fourteen then (2007:65).

Victims of early marriages usually face onerous domestic burdens, constrained decision-making and reduced life choices as seen by the multiple pregnancies that follow and greatly affect the health of the women. This is clear in the case of Kasemmeer's mother and her sister Katutu who at only eighteen already had three children. The female is expected to endure this in silence, which tantamounts to a total curtailment of personal freedom and the lack of opportunity to develop a full sense of selfhood.

2.1.6 Bride Price

Bride price is undeniably one of the anchors that ensure a family's honour from the patriarchal point of view. This is in terms of the value of the items brought to the parents of the girl which is equivalent to the perceived value of the girl. Education is a cardinal avenue through which women can conceive of marriage and a general outlook of their life in very individualistic terms. For the protagonist, Vera, in *Whispers from Vera*, it has equipped her with the ability to estrange her from some or all the traditional practices that still inform her society.
When Eric proposes marriage and all arrangements are on course, Vera does not hesitate to tell her father what she thinks of the "clan's list" showing the bride price. She has a broader outlook as she voices to us her thoughts regarding her father and his kinsmen on what they agreed upon:

He has sent me a list of things he wants Eric to take. This man failed to make money while he was still working now he wants to use me to obtain a fortune from Eric ... He assured me that it was not really his interest to sell me off like a heifer .... (2002:26).

Kyomuhendo too, through an authorial intrusion, questions those situations that still potentially construct and position women not only as objects of exchange but with no status as subjects as well. Through the bride price negotiations, a woman is haggled over like a commodity at a market stall! In this patriarchal set up, after bride price has been paid, the woman is expected to work in payment for that which was paid. The payment includes the ability to provide heirs, which takes this discussion to another aspect of overt sexism, as will be observed in the next section.

2.1.7 Son Preference

In the African society, son preference is manifest in the treatment of the girl-child in relation to her male siblings. More often than not, the son is given preferential treatment. The girl is not only denied essential needs such as some food delicacies and education, but is also relegated to house chores and other physical labour-related activities. Prossy in Different Worlds has to miss school several times to either look after her siblings or for some other domestic call.
It was also considered that girls could not be named heirs because they could not perpetuate the clan or inherit any property. Vera's father in *Whispers From Vera* made this very clear while he was still alive, as Vera explains:

> My father never allowed us girls to even think that we had a share on that precious hind of his, which he had even started selling before his deaths (2002: 105).

However in instances where a girl became an heir to her mother, no bride price would be demanded for such a woman. In every marriage a woman would not be considered woman enough if she could not give children to her husband, let alone provide an heir. Such thoughts cause Mukundane in *Secrets No More* untold distress, as Chantal’s expressions of sympathy implicitly demonstrate:

> "I cry with you, Mabuja...I know you must be hurting. But as a good wife, you also know what is expected of you. You must give your husband an heir" (1999:6-7).

We are told that with such comments, as the above, Mukundane would become pensive. She still believed that it was her fault that she could not conceive. Chantal further brings to the fore a husband’s expectations and Mukundane’s tension, at the same time thus:

> "Please don't be", Chantal assured her gently. "Mabuja, it's high time you gave your husband another baby, a boy this time. Marina is a big girl of seven now". Chantal would steer away the conversation to ease her mistress' tension. But the topic of conceiving was always unwelcome to her mistress (1999:9).

Even the spiritual father, Father Marcel, knew that sons were greatly treasured in the African patriarchal social set up. So when Matayo, as a boy, runs away from home to take
up service at the mission Father Marcel expects resistance which, indeed, sooner than later is seen when Matayo’s father comes for him.

In *Whispers from Vera*, Sheila is disappointed to get another baby girl yet they had postponed the birth of another child with the hope of getting a son, as Vera her close friend observes:

> Sheila has got another baby - a girl again. I know she is a little disappointed because she had hoped for a boy. But I tell her to look at me who has only boys! (2002: 1 06).

In *Secrets No More*, Marina too suffers George's indignation for her failure to conceive. He begins accusing her of one thing after another, such as being barren or taking some form of contraceptive, leading to their fights becoming more frequent.

Ironically, however, Kyamanywa had prayed earnestly for his first born to be a boy, which prayer was granted, only for the son to turn out a total disappointment:

> Kyamanywa looked up to see his oldest son Mugabi approaching ... he was too short for a boy of seventeen, shy as a woman, and his father did not believe he had ever bedded a woman! ... He was both too lazy at his class work and the hoe. What could he do then ... Christ what a waste! ... He remembered how he had prayed to the Almighty to make his first born a boy. God had indeed rewarded him and he had named him Mugabi, meaning 'God is Giver' (*The First Daughter*, 10).

When Nyinabarongo, in *Waiting*, was chased away to return to her mother, she was only allowed to take the younger child, a girl but not her son. This is clearly indicative of the
value attached to sons as though it is the only symbol of progeny. In her own words, she tells us:

No, I don't think so. Even if the boy had been younger, his father would still have insisted that I take the girl. He believes boys are more important than girls. I should never have married that man (65).

This value is so well articulated that through the process of domestication even the girl child is aware of it as Alinda tells her sister Maya when their mother is expecting a child:

"But he's only slaughtering the females [the female goats]."
"Yes, because there are only two males. One he is reserving for mother if she produces a baby boy. The other is to make the other females pregnant... " (2007:30).

We do realize from the above that the sexist attitude cuts across to every female creation, animals not withstanding any doubt. The male goats were being reserved for pro-creation purposes!

2.1.8 Betrayal

Betrayal as an overt form of sexism occurs when there is a violation of a presumed confidence that produces a moral and psychological conflict within a relationship between, or among, individuals which can further lead to distress or loss of trust. It can be looked at from different angles: betrayal between couples, friends, domestic help/employer and employee, parents and child/children. The letter written by Mrs. Mutyaba to Kasemiire's parents in The First Daughter is a case in point. We are informed that Kasemiire was left astounded by the enormity of the lies in it, which led her to conclude thus:

Whoever had thought Mrs. Mutyaba was a kind woman had certainly guessed wrong. No wonder her mother had looked at her with that odd
expression finding it very difficult to believe that her own daughter was capable of committing such atrocities (1996:123).

Infidelity, which is best manifest between couples, can be considered a form of betrayal as well for it also leaves an indelible mark of pain and mistrust, damage to self esteem to the cheated person, a high sense of instability sets in and a myriad of emotions emerge in the wake of such an occurrence. In *The First Daughter*, Mr. Mutyaba leaves his wife for another woman, as his wife tells Kasemiire. Kyamanywa also becomes a polygamist with a second wife and displays the potential to get many more. His philandering brought so much strife that his entire household was left in disarray:

Then your father? He left too; he went to live with a woman, a woman who has bigger children than you, my dear, a woman who has been married twice! But she has property. And so your father is living with her! He left me when I was expecting her ... He has never set his eyes on her! And he never cares about this little brother of yours, either (1996:122).

George Walusimbi, in *Secrets No More*, is betrayed by his mistress when she sleeps with another man in the servants' quarters. His reaction to this sees her death in a car accident, a move which was well orchestrated by George. George too, much as he had a wife, was involved in a number of illicit liaisons, as his wife ponders:

But she knew her husband was taking on lover after lover ... Their fights were becoming frequent (1999: 147).

Unknowingly, Marina commits adultery and becomes a pawn in Dee's revenge plot against George for the murder of his sister, thus she too commits infidelity:
Dee had awakened the feelings Marina had not imagined existed in
her. He made her feel like a woman, a woman like all the others who
respond to a man's sexual arousal (1999:147).

Furthermore, Mrs. Magezi ends up with a half-caste child, not fathered by Mr. Magezi, as
her husband tells Marina later on:

Your late Aunt could not conceive for about five years after we had
been married ... So I decided to send her to these "powerful" doctors
in America. A few months after she had come back, she "conceived"
and later gave birth to Kimuli "our daughter". You know the rest. We
decided that the best thing to do was to send Kimuli back to America
to her father when she was still a baby (1999:175).

Stella Maris, Marina's friend at the orphanage, is also betrayed by her catechist husband
for failing to give him children. She tells Marina:

There isn't much to tell, Marina,' she answered in a sad tone. After
you left, I became very lonely. So when this man came along and
suggested that we could get married, I accepted ... He was a nice man,
a catechist. But then I could not give him children, he chased me away

We note that this betrayal was such a big tragedy in her life that her emotions could not let
her finish her story as Marina observes:

Stella Maris interrupted her before she could finish. Her voice was
charged with emotion and Marina thought it better not to push her ...
But she could see that Stella Maris would need more than just mere
words to console her. She needed understanding, love and material
support, to help her cope with the tragedy which had befallen her
By not telling Vera about his illegitimate child, Eric also betrays the trust that Vera had in him, as she recounts:

Anyhow, as it turned out, Eric had a child with another woman while still at college...I feel betrayed. feel trapped. I feel compromised. I feel used. Eric has taken me for granted. It's like he knows there isn't much I can do (2002: 19-20).

In *Whispers From Vera*, still, we see Vera's father, while on his death bed, betraying his wife, Vera's mother, by accusing her of adultery which he alleged was responsible for the birth of one of his 'so called' sons. In his own words, as quoted by Vera:

Before my father died, he called one of his brothers and confided in him that the good son of his who is so disciplined was not fathered by him and so he should never be the heir. The validity of this story depends solely on the word of the brother because no one else was there (2002: 105).

In other instances, the woman may be abandoned altogether as seen in the case of the first wife of the Lendu woman's husband in *Waiting*. She was abandoned after failing to become pregnant and the husband had to marry the Lendu woman. Nyinabarongo is also betrayed by her husband's family when she is sent away for an act which leaves her a victim of circumstances since her crime was of having a poor mother. She was incapable of reciprocating the invitation to a meal by her son-in-law's family, which failure is claimed to have annoyed the twins, leading to a "burning disease" in the in-law's family. So her daughter, Nyinabarongo, was chased away and the condition for her return was her family's readiness to invite her husband's family to a meal (8-9).
At the orphanage in *Secrets No More*, Matayo exploits the trust that Marina had won in him which made her open up to him. She had told him the story of the gruesome murder of her family, but Matayo betrayed this confidence and trust by raping her:

Matayo had betrayed her trust. She had began to believe in him and confide in him. In a funny way she reminded her of her dead father ... But Matayo had opened her eyes to the world. She would never trust any man again, just like she vowed not to trust anyone when she had found out that Chantal had betrayed not only her mother's trust but that of the entire family (1999:61).

This betrayal brings on a deep-seated guilt that keeps gnawing at Matayo that even when he travels with Father Marcel and Sister Bernadette to Hoima, when Marina delivers his baby, he cannot face her:

Matayo was seated in the car when Father Marcel got there, 'Is Marina coming with us?' he asked bewildered.

'No. Why?' Father Marcel asked ... 'yes, the baby is coming but the mother is remaining behind,' Father Marcel answered.

'I... see,' Matayo said, relief washing over him. He had avoided seeing Marina that morning. He was still in a state of shock and did not know what he would have said to her (1999:71).

In *The First Daughter*, betrayal between friends is manifested through Anita. She betrays the trust Kasemiire had in her as her best friend when she does not deliver Kasemiire's messages to Steven and, later on, tells Steven lies so that they could have a relationship as Kasemiire ponders:

Yet Anita's story had stunned her. Why had she lied to Steven that she had visited her in those terrible days! ... Lie to me, Steven prompted, “because she wanted me for herself. She confirmed it herself when
we met in the same University in the States. That's why she lied (1996:111).

Furthermore, by sleeping with his friend's wife, Ben betrays the trust that Eric had in him much as he never got to know about it. To some extent, Vera also feels betrayed by her sister, Jacinta. She was not satisfied with the counsel of Jacinta on the issue of Eric and his child.

Betrayal is further manifested between child and parent. Michael feels betrayed by his father, Mr. Mutyaba, when he realizes that his father also has interest in Kasemiire and soon develops a hatred for his father:

Michael did not come regularly to visit his family. He seemed to have developed a hatred for his father, and whenever he came home, he avoided talking to him (1996: 90).

By getting pregnant, Kasemiire not only betrays her father's trust in her, for he had chosen to educate a girl despite the anti-patriarchal views to the education of a girl, but also betrays the trust that her mother had in her as her hope amidst her problems, for with education, Abwooli believed doors to a better life would be opened for her through her daughter:

First her mother! What had she done to the poor woman she had suffered all her life having to live with an inconsiderate, unloving husband, poverty, hard work, child-bearing made worse by the constant loss of her children! Kasemiire had been her light, her hope, her saviour, her everything, the only reason which had kept her sane in such a world full of madness, the only reason she had not broken
And lastly, Richard Kalenzi, in “Hidden Identity”, is mistreated as a child on grounds that he bore no resemblance whatsoever to his father. His father thus betrays the trust that the child could have had in him as a father. Kyomuhendo ridicules this patriarchal thought pattern that in order for a child to be called his father’s son, he must take after him in one way or another.

With betrayal between the employer and employee, we see Chantal in *Secrets No More* betraying the Bizimana family when she is paid by the state to spy on them and is an accomplice in the murder of the other members of Marina’s family, as she tells Marina:

Chantal was staring at Marina coldly, her face twisted in anger. .. What I’m talking about is that the country is fed up with the likes of you. And that we shall cleanse it of all inyenzi” ... your parents.


George Walusimbi betrays the trust of his uncle when he steals cheques from his Uncle’s office. This act gets his Uncle suspended from work pending investigations into the missing colossal sum of money from the corporation account where Uncle Ntambi was the chief Accountant. As a result, his Uncle later dies from a massive heart attack triggered on by the stress that his integrity built over the years through meticulous work was being flashed down the drain!
2.2 Overt forms of Sexuality

The overt forms of sexuality examined in this section mainly dwell on an aspect of human behaviour highlighting the treatment of women with regard to societal topics such as gossip and denial of food delicacies.

2.2.1 The Village women gossip

Gossip is one of the vices of humanity. This foregrounds the different means through which some people can best express themselves and their experiences as human beings. The village women carry on with gossip unreservedly, updating one another with the latest village gossip of sex scandals doing its rounds in the village:

"Have you heard of the recent scandal in the village?" another woman asked Kasemiire's mother.

"No, what is it now? You mean the scandal where Mrs.Byaruhanga was caught red-handed with another man? " another woman shouted from the extreme end of the hill.

"Look at Kisembo's daughter!" Another woman said sadly.

"What did that one do?" Kasemiire's mother inquired.

"She got herself pregnant before marriage and now the boy responsible has denied her and .... " (1996:3-4).

Kyomuhendo points at the trivialities surrounding the lives of women. Instead of talking about constructive issues, they Seem bent on belittling one another. This in a way perpetuates the simple-mindedness an attribute that society has long bequeathed to the women folk.
2.2.2. Women denied delicacies

In most African societies, there are food taboos in place. Traditionally women were forced to subsist on a diet that in many ways is deficient, or may harm their health. They were not allowed to eat certain traditional delicacies such as eggs, chicken, edible grasshoppers among others. Today, however, this food taboo is no longer operational in the lives of many women, possibly as a result of either the fruits of educating the girl child or the patriarchal foundation losing its grip in this regard. It is only still adhered to by some of the traditionalists - the older generation. In The First Daughter, we see the women and their daughters catching grasshoppers that they were not supposed to eat:

The Banyoro women were not permitted to eat grasshoppers. It was a delicious meal enjoyed only by men (1996:5).

They were also to consider this as a way of gauging a husband's love for his wife. This is a common occurrence in polygamous households. Wives strive hard not to lose the affections of their husbands. The more grasshoppers one served her husband the more she was assured of a traditional dress or two at Christmas.

Prossy, in a letter to her city friend Winnie, in Different Worlds, tells her what her mother has told her. "She warned me against ever eating a rabbit. She said it was against our tradition for women to eat rabbits" (2007:32). Ironically, it is the women who see to the rearing of these rabbits, a culture which is
2.3 Covert forms of Sexism

Covert forms of sexism will be examined under the following sub-sections: sexual assault including marital rape, subjugation, psychological abuse, exploitation and oppression.

2.3.1 Sexual assault including marital rape

Any forced sexual activity within the context of marriage that often accompanies battering can be considered sexual assault, including marital rape. This violates the sexual integrity of the woman. In practice it is difficult to prove that sexual assault including marital rape has occurred unless the wife can prove grave injury. The patriarchal society does not regard marital rape a crime, for the wife is expected to submit whenever the husband demands his conjugal rights. In *The First Daughter*, Kyamanywa sexually assaults his wife after beating her:

Kyamanywa expected total obedience and his word was always final, never to be questioned. His second wife had once disobeyed him; she had gone to visit her parents despite her husband's refusal; she had paid for this disobedience dearly. Kyamanywa had beaten her thoroughly until she had cried out for mercy. After that, he had led her to bed and ordered her to spread her legs wide apart, then spent a full month without visiting her bed chamber (1996: 6-7).

Kyamanywa gets away with this brutal behaviour because his wife cannot even raise a complaint about this hideous act, let alone, proving it.

Still traumatized by the mental images of both her mother's rape and her own too, Marina in *Secrets No More* suffers inhibitions in her sex life with her husband, George, who cannot understand her reactions and, therefore, ends up being forceful with her. George also uses sexual assault as a tool to punish women and Marina is a representative of the
victims. Having been hurt by Lisa's actions, he vents his anger on Marina, as he himself recounts to her:

She did bad things to me, Marina ... At first, I wanted to punish every woman I met for her sins, I wanted them to pay on her behalf but .... he shrugged and did not continue (1999:146).

In *Waiting*, much as Jungu's mother was now a widow, she had a marital home and, therefore, any infringement on her sexual rights by her late husband's boss tantamounted to sexual assault:

Jungu's mother had lost her husband who had worked in the cotton mill. Every day she went to the mill to collect her late husband's salary and the manager kept telling her to come back the next day. A month went by like that and she still had not gotten the money. Every time she went to meet that Indian, she returned home tired and crying. After about three months her stomach grew big and round. She did not say who made her pregnant and she never got back her money (2007:19).

2.3.2 *Subjugation*

As a covert form of sexism, subjugation saps the very foundations of self-respect, self-help and self control, which are the essential conditions of individual prosperity and social virtue. Subjugation of the female manifests itself through social abuse and domestic abuse.

Social abuse is a less well known form of mistreatment of women. It occurs when the husband solely makes decisions regarding the social life of a family, prohibits social contact and activities with others, controls what the woman does or who she sees, does not
give her any privacy and controls what she wears, among others. George in *Secrets No More* is so obsessed with this:

> He always made sure that she dressed smartly, going to great lengths to buy her all the latest designs. It was like competition between her and the wives of his other friends, to see who dressed more expensively. But Marina did not need the clothes; after all there were very few outings for her (1999:147).

Much as the aspect of buying Marina the latest and smartest clothes may not sound bad, it was all an outward show. What Marina needed was genuine affection and not to be an object to be used by her husband, George, to showcase his wealth or to be flaunted before his friends like a treasured prize!

Kyomuhendo goes on to show that such a state of affairs can be averted. George’s frequent temper outbursts and the manner in which he would embarrass Marina caused her to fight back. With time Marina begins to stand up to this, “I will find a way of handling it’, she told herself... (1999: 137). Her affair with Dee had now gone on another level. She was seeing him more often without much thought to whether George would suspect or find out. Upon her return after one such rendezvous with Dee, she found George in a foul mood and he venomously voiced his suspicions and threats without mincing words. To his surprise Marina boldly stands up thus:

> “Go ahead,” Marina answered with more confidence than she felt. .. She was tired of being kept on a short leash as if she was some kind of criminal. The man never allowed her to go anywhere! (1999: 157).
At another level, we see George's father still controlling the reins in his wife's life. She cannot stay longer to nurse her son because of the ultimatum given by her husband:

George's mother had long gone back to the islands because her husband had threatened to chase her if she stayed another week (1999: 167).

This abuse clearly is not restricted to a particular age group. We see that it is manifested in both the younger and older age-groups as long as it is directed to a female.

In Whispers from Vera, Eric never takes time to consider asking his wife, Vera, for her views on the social aspect of their lives. He invites his friends to the house without any prior arrangement with Vera and expects her to be hospitable towards them regardless of her other house chores:

On Sunday, Eric invited his friends home and we had an evening party. I would have really loved to spend the day lying in. I work hard these days during the week and I would really love to leave my weekends free. My work is even suffering due to these domestic pressures (2002:33).

She continues to complain,

Eric’s other name should have been ‘inconsiderate.’ He invited his friends again for a Sunday party ... He should remember that he is now a married man with different priorities and responsibilities from his bachelor friends (2002:34-35).

This form of abuse is also manifest when he makes plans for the family trips:

Eric insisted that we had to go to the village for Christmas. I didn't want to go. I know what village life means especially when you are used to the city life of running water electricity and the cooking
appliances. But Martina and Kenny were so excited by the prospect of going to the village and there was no way they would let me spoil their excitement. So we went (2002:43).

Sheila experiences this social abuse at another level with her husband Samson too. When he becomes politically active Sheila has to keep on his campaign trails and entertain endless visitors in their home, much to her chagrin:

Sheila's life has completely changed, or rather somersaulted. There is always heavy traffic in their house. When I remember how Samson used to hate any form of overcrowding in his house! ... Sheila is sickened. She can't believe what her husband has turned into and what he is subjecting her, and the kids to. She has to entertain these people who throng her house almost every evening. They have to go to the village every weekend either to attend a burial, wedding or any of those unclassified ceremonies the idle villagers are wont to engage in (2002: 67-68).

When Sheila chooses to go back to school, her husband begrudgingly gives her the go-ahead with such thoughts criss-crossing his mind:

Samson has not changed much. He does not want her to go back for the final year because he says his home is breaking apart. That there is no one to keep it clean or prepare good meals for his important political friends when they come visiting. He is also worried that Sheila might be keeping someone else's home clean where she is (2002:86).

Vera's move to take on some personal investments follows disparaging remarks from her husband Eric whenever that subject was broached. Vera nevertheless chooses to go ahead, with or without his consent:

53
I have not breathed a word to Eric yet about all this. He will only despise my modest efforts and warn me that I cannot go far without him. Well, I don't intend to go out in the cold either, when he is out of job and there is no more money for rent or food ... At least we shall have a leaking roof above our heads - especially my children (2002:75).

Jacinta, Vera's sister, faces almost a similar experience at the hands of her husband in various forms, ranging from stopping her from working and also rejecting any form of assistance to her from her sister, Vera, to accusing Jacinta of failing in her duty as a good wife:

That Jacinta hasn't been fulfilling her marital duties ever since she got a job and he recons he can't put up with her constant reference to 'big sister' as the benefactor of he fortunes (2002:21-22).

When Eric's father is admitted to hospital, his daughter cannot attend to him on grounds that the husband has not allowed her: "She claims that her husband does not allow her to leave the house" (2002: 108).

Kyomuhendo goes ahead to say that this form of abuse is not lop-sided as being male -based only, but can also be perpetrated by the female as seen through Eric's mother in Whispers From Vera. At the christening of Eric's son, his parents did not attend:

His father would not dare come. I hear the wife calls the shots in the home. The father strives to abide by his wife's demands in order to keep peace in the home (2002: 18).

Uncle Kembo in Waiting chooses to punish his wife for refusing to follow his lead in changing his religion by stopping to provide for her:

54
Uncle Kembo's wife refused to convert to Islam and continued going to church with mother. Uncle Kembo was very cross with her, and he married another woman whom he put in charge of the shop. He stopped coming home to his village and told his two sons, who were Tendo's age and best friends with him, that if they did not convert to Islam he would disown them (2007:58).

With domestic abuse, a husband may choose not to participate in the running of the house, thus leaving this burden to the woman, although this could arguably be considered as one's way of managing his household. George in Secrets No More chooses to send away all the maids on any flimsy excuse so that Marina is left to do all the house chores and attend to all his friends who were always at her house:

At first Marina had not paid much attention to what George's friends and their women were subjecting her to. She had two live-in maids who did most of the housework. But later, when her husband insisted that he wanted her to cook all his meals and chased away the maids, she began to feel the stress. She had complained to her husband who had only laughed in her face and said that an African woman was supposed to cater not only for her husband's needs but for those of his whole clan as well, and in this case, his friends (1999: 137).

Vera is faced with almost a similar problem in Whispers from Vera. Her husband, Eric, does not lend her a hand in whatever she does in the house. He is not even moved by the extra demands necessitated by the baby. In her own words:

I have so much work to do. I have to bathe, dress and feed the baby. This takes hours! .. Then in the afternoon, I have to iron his clothes, bathe him again, feed... Eric does not help at all. He goes off to work in the morning and we don't see him until late in the evening .... The
baby screams the whole night. When I ask Eric to hold him, he says he is very delicate and he hasn't learnt how to hold him yet. When I ask him to sing him a lullaby, he just laughs and says he is too young to know about lullabies. I think he is just being inconsiderate ... At times he even shifts and sleeps in the guest room. His reasoning is that because I am on leave I can afford to take a nap in the afternoon or wake up a bit late in the morning. How unfair! Can't he see what I go through in the night and how much work I have to do during the day? I don't know what I am going to do. I need help, for Christ's sake!

(2002:16-17).

And as Vera sums it up later,

With a new baby in the house, there's suddenly too much to do. As usual, Eric takes the backbenchers' position - just watches us from a distance


2.3.3. Psychological abuse
Psychological abuse is emotional in nature and it includes anything from verbal abuse and constant criticism from men to more subtle tactics such as repeated disapproval of what one does or says or even the refusal to ever be pleased, which ultimately impacts psychologically on the women. In The First Daughter, Kyamanywa's wife dreaded facing him about the issue of her daughter's school fees for fear of being barked at by her husband. Furthermore, Kyamanywa continuously calls Kasemiire, his daughter, a whore after she gets pregnant while still at school:

Her father now regarded her with open hostility, he regarded her as if she were dirt and whenever they came within sight of each other, he turned away and spat. But he never once said a word to her.

Kasemiire felt rejected, alone and frightened. Her mother was a poor comforter, for most of the time she was crying herself. She even
thought that her sisters hated her too because she ruined their future (1996:58).

Psychological abuse operates in a brain-washing manner in that it erodes the woman's confidence and sense of self-worth and trust in her own perceptions. This can be done by either constant berating or belittling or even by intimidation which more often than not, cuts to the very core of the person, creating scars that may be far deeper and more lasting than even physical abuse. When Kyamanywa's grandson is born, he does not show the slightest interest as we are told he never enquired about the sex of the child nor set his eyes on him. Much as Kasemiire tried to reach out to her father, he remained closed to her as she recounts:

She had written to her father twice and the third letter she had received a reply saying that he did not want to associate with whores ... Her father was a hard man, he had no forgiving heart, Kasemiire concluded. She wondered how her mother had managed to live with him all these years (1996:87).

Even when the offer by Mrs. Mutyaba to take Kasemiire to the city is received with great enthusiasm by the rest of the family, her father remains indifferent to this good news:

Her father was the only person not moved by the good news. He still loathed her and talked to her only when necessary. He had never allowed her back to his house. 'That's one whore rid of', was all he said since he had branded her sisters as whores too ..... When she went to bid her father goodbye he refused to open the door, pretending to be asleep (1996:85-6).
Much as Kasemiire had disappointed her father, as a parent he should have been more forgiving. This indifference is not displayed towards Mugabi when he proves to be a failure in almost every area of his life:

He was too short for a boy of seventeen; shy as a woman, and his father did not believe that he had ever bedded a woman! ... He was both too lazy at his class work and the hoe (1996: 10).

Manifestations of psychological abuse include aggressive name calling, emotional blackmail, unpredictable responses due to emotional outbursts and verbal assaults using sarcasm and so on. George and Marina experience this so often in their relationship as she says, "Her husband rarely talked to her or rather they could never sustain a meaningful conversation without it degenerating into an ugly argument" (1999: 145).

In *Secrets No More*, George is not impressed by the fact that Marina of all the people in the room knew the meaning of "Ange Noir" to mean black angel when he asks coldly: How could you know that? George's question does not surprise us since Marina had never been to Ange Noir as she herself recounts:

Of course not, her husband continued coldly. She wouldn't know it. Besides she has never been there (1999:138).

Much as Marina should have felt proud of this, she instead berates herself for having given the answer. Here we see Marina displaying an erosion of sense in self-worth and loss of trust in her own perceptions as we are told:

Marina would never forgive herself for shooting off her mouth like that. She knew that her husband never wanted her to make any form of comment whenever his friends were around (1999: 138).
Again Kyomuhendo highlights how sexism does not appreciate intelligence in women. At the same time she belittles the so called 'superior' intelligence of men to think that one must have first gone to a place to have any knowledge about it when George says, "She wouldn't know it. .. Besides, she has never been there" (1999: 138).

When George suspects Marina of infidelity, after his accident, he refers to her with all forms of derogatory names:

At other times, George was very unreasonable and he would scream at her at the slightest mistake and call her derogatory names. Your hot little pussy cannot let you sit down even for a while, can it? Every time you have to look for a man to dip his thing in it. Go ahead, after all, you used to give it to other men even when I was still man enough. And to think that at fifteen you were already ‘eating’ things. Then you come and pretend with me .. Women! The only time you can claim she is yours is when you are holding her in your arms (1999:167-168).

Even when she tells him she is leaving him, he goes ahead to say:

Women! You are all the same. You are like buses; whoever has money is the one who gets on, when the money is finished, he gets off, and another one gets on! (1999: 173).

In all the above mentioned cases, the scars left upon the women could have been skin-deep were it not for their strong resolve to change this aspect of abuse in their lives. This now steers us to another aspect of this discussion.

2.3.4. Exploitation.

Exploitation occurs through financial abuse when the husband has absolute control over the wife's money or any other economic resources. The woman is usually placed on a strict allowance, has no money of her own, has to account for every penny given, or worse
still, the money is withheld at will. It is more pronounced where the pattern of financial abuse involves a joint account, for a husband may take full control of the family finances.

Sheila faces this with Samson:

You see, Samson, Sheila's husband, doesn't want her to send any assistance to her parents back home. He claims that the money they are currently making should be used to look after their two girls and try to put some constructive and income-generating projects in place for the future. Samson is one of these tough, no-nonsense people when it comes to spending, while Sheila is the spendthrift. He is now trying to protect her from the ever-demanding parents and relatives. He has successfully managed to ward off his own parents from asking for assistance until when he feels that they have put aside enough for the family. You see, he even postponed the birth of another child (hopefully a boy) so as to invest (2002:36-37).

Matters become worse when Samson quits his job and joins politics. He squanders the family savings as if he was the sole earner and contributor. Sheila has to watch helplessly:

Samson is very serious about his political ambitions and has even quit his well-paying job. Sheila is truly alarmed. The man has got all their savings (I told you how they've been running a joint account) and sunk it into his campaigns (2002:60).

By so vividly describing such selfishly inconsiderate behaviour of the male, as in the above case, Goretti Kyomuhendo convincingly presents exploitation of the female as, indeed, a humiliating covert form of sexism.

2.3.5 Oppression

Through domestication and gender-streaming roles, women have been condemned to restrictive roles, those from which they may not easily disentangle themselves. Men have created a culture which the women help preserve. This is well developed through Jacinta,
Vera's sister in *Whispers from Vera*. When Vera confides in Jacinta about her issue with Eric concerning the illegitimate child, Jacinta regards Vera's concerns as trivial as Vera recounts:

> All men have children, outside marriage and God knows yours is not even a marriage. Her solution was that women should just learn to expect and accept it. She advised me to 'get' Eric to marry me and bring the child to stay with us. Period (2002:22).

By preserving this very culture, women help men achieve in almost all spheres of their lives yet when the rewards come, women are left out.

Domestication gets internalized in the girl child to the point that it occurs so naturally. This is demonstrated by Kasemiire on her first day in Duhaga Secondary School:

> Kasemiire immediately knelt down, remembering her mother's teachings that she should never on any occasion speak with elders while standing (1996:30).

Certain paradigms in society that impede the full development of potentials only apply to women. Gender-based divisions of labour aggravate the situation by placing women as central pillars in the education of the female child. A girl learns the traditions and taboos of her society, her ethnic and family history through story and myth-telling. As a mother, the woman passes these on to her children and as an elder, she continues to instruct younger women. In the texts under study, we see Mukundane in *Secrets No More* telling her baby about her family and ethnic history.
You ought to be proud of your forefathers too ... they trace their roots to the Abyssinian Mountains in Ethiopia, that land of beautiful and courageous people in Africa ... (1999: ix).

The same goes for Mukaaka, Kasemiire's grandmother in The First Daughter. She is the reservoir of history when she begins telling Kasemiire the tribal and family history which fell in line with what Kasemiire had been taught at school. In waiting, Alinda goes through this stage with the women around her, giving life skills using proverbial sayings that would concretize what they wanted to pass on to her. Kyomuhendo at this point upholds the intelligence of women to present the collective wisdom of their societies to other women much as in life, sexism does not appreciate intelligence in women.

Children are prepared for different facets of adulthood. Socialisation begins when the girl-child is conditioned to stay at home and do domestic work, enjoy almost no leisure, unlike her male counterparts who are free to play and associate, for instance Prossy and Alinda. At adolescence, the essence of a girl's life revolves around serving her father and brothers, and she is made to believe that these roles make and define ideal womanhood. Any deviation to the status quo is punished accordingly. This position is demonstrated when Kasemiire gets beaten by her mother for engaging in a fight with her brother:

She had got hold of a cane and beaten them severely and even more so Kasemiire, all the while saying, 'since when did women start beating men ... ?' Kasemiire had to run away to escape her mother's wrath (1996:21).
Prossy in *Different Worlds* has to do housework before and after school. As she tells her city friend, "Mummy says we have to learn how to do housework." Furthermore, right from childhood, gender roles are clearly demarcated. For example, it is mostly boys who ride bicycles and have lessons in brick-laying while the girls are introduced to different kinds of activities such as lessons in rabbit rearing and general housework.

Then at adulthood and marriage, a girl is assumed to have internalized her roles and, therefore, she is properly grounded in servitude, muteness, invisibility and dependence, with a natural acceptance of a corresponding male superiority and dominance. This internalization of norms is preserved by the elder females as overseers, as seen in the case of Kasemiire and her mother.

### 2.4 Covert forms of Sexuality.

Sexual permissiveness and sexual perversion are the aspects examined in this section as indicators of the experiences that encompass human behaviour, indicative of covert forms of sexuality.

#### 2.4.1 Sexual permissiveness

The manner in which Kyornuhendo handles sexual matters is indicative of her transcendence of all cultural diffidences of the day that consider sex as a taboo to be discussed, more so by women. In *Whispers from Vera*, Vera demonstrates this when she talks about her sexual escapades to even the minutest details; from her first inexperienced lover through to Eric who finally marries her. The following three excerpts say it all:

> I have never experienced anything like this. I mean, at 30, I thought I would never feel like this again. I thought it had all ended with Mark, remember him. Poor thing! He was so
inexperienced. We both did it the first time and it showed and ... (2002:3).

As I was saying, I was really about to give up "these things. The married man, remember him? He came immediately after Mark because I thought I needed someone more experienced and mature, someone I could count on in times of trouble. A strong, well-built 'man. Anti you know me with big -bodied men! (2002:3).

Then came the Casanova. By the time I met him .... But there was no future in that affair. At the end of the day, I went back to Mark. He was much better, even with his inexperience ... So back to my newly found happiness. Eric, (that is his name) is just exceptional! (2002:5).

Vera's actions in all this demonstrate that one's sexuality is not dictated upon by one's gender, but rather it is common to the nature of humans as a whole.

Whereas men are expected to fully explore their sexuality, it is deemed deplorable for a woman to do the same; such is the patriarchal societal outlook to this matter. It is not surprising, therefore, for Eric's boss not to consider it awkward to make a pass at his subordinate's wife:

Eric's boss commented on how elegant I looked and even scratched my palms and winked at me in a suggestive manner. Surely, this man is fit to be my own father! (2002:57).
Ben also has no qualms about sleeping around with women, including the wife of his close friend and workmate, Eric. He even has the audacity to ask for a repeat! Little wonder then that he has a child outside marriage.

When it comes to women and girls in particular, however, the societal expectations are different. The patriarchal instinct governs the situation. Vera's mother and sister Jacinta cannot imagine that Vera is pregnant before she has been 'properly married!'

I told Jacinta, my elder sister who lives in the village, and she was petrified. She said all the academic degrees I got were for nothing (I've got only one) because I am dafter than those village women who never stepped in school. She said a smart girl should never get her tummy round before she gets a ring on her finger (2002:7).

The mother's reaction, as expected, was not different:

My mother ... says I have totally disgraced her and the whole clan ... that I acted like one who goes to the dancing floor and fails to get a dancing partner. That in their days, only girls who were promiscuous enough not to be virgins on their wedding nights would be given away free, just like I had given myself away (2002: 10).

And the father's deep disappointment and regret sums up society's deep-rooted bias against women, and the girl child in particular:

My father too, has worked himself into frenzy. He says he is regretting why he spent such an awful amount of money educating me, if I cannot differentiate between good and bad. That he was expecting me to bring him the honour of giving me away properly (and he is probably thinking of the money he would have extorted from Eric) He has promised to break Eric's bones if he ever steps in
his compound. (Except, of course, when he goes to introduce himself) (2002:10).

This explains why Abwooli as a young girl is given such a beating by her parents when she is suspected of having been in the company of a man. To her parents it could only spell dishonor as her father rants. She is only saved from her father's scathing remarks directed to both her and the young hunter when the hunter asks for her hand in marriage.

The above patriarchal dictates and expectations gravely impact on the girl child. Girls are often depicted as victims of their sexuality. It is something they are brought to fear indulging in, for it can bring along with it dire consequences, such as, unwanted pregnancies, or one turning into a whore, among others.

It should be noted here however that there are women who are not prepared to succumb to the dictates of a patriarchal society or societal expectations. They are out to demonstrate against them and by so doing they exert what they perceive to be their freedom. The manner in which Vera's younger sister sleeps around with the village boys, and the fact that she becomes the hunter instead of the hunted, as illustrated by her interest in Vera's driver, demonstrate exploration by the female of her sexuality in total disregard of societal expectations:

My younger sister has been giving her a headache again... she dropped out of school at an early age and started sleeping with all the village boys. My mother begged me to bring her to the city and find her something to do (with no education?) ... Then she fell in love with our office driver. Every morning and evening, when the driver picked
and dropped me home, she would parade herself in front of the gate to entice him with her made up face and short skirts. She made sure she opened the gate ... She started writing love notes to the driver and pushing them into the compartments of the car (2002: 87-88).

The mother of Martina is another one. She behaves in an unbecoming way with her lovers before her daughter, which has a profound effect upon the daughter later on. Vera encourages Martina to indulge in sex by offering her a packet of condoms though this move could be interpreted as an attempt at protection.

The female defiance is further vivified by Martina. She is worried that at fifteen she is still a virgin yet other girls of her age, or even younger than her, are no longer virgins. The fact that the girls at Martina's school can even get involved in incestuous relations shows that one can have no control on the level of sexuality.

Patriarchal rule therefore falls short of its expectations where it hopes to give free rein to boys to fully explore their sexuality and yet punish the girls in their attempts to do likewise. Whereas Anita explores her sexuality to the fullest, just as Kasemiire's cousin does, Kasemiire was narve in that regard. While Kasemiire in The First Daughter is called a whore, her father wonders if her brother Mugabi has ever bedded a woman simply because Mugabi so far, has exhibited mannerisms uncharacteristic of a typical male child.

It is not surprising therefore, that when Mugabi later on, elopes with a married woman, his father does not say anything about it or against it. It is actually his mother who speaks against it thus:
And your elder brother, Mugabi? Rumour has it that he eloped with a woman twice his age! A married woman moreover! (1996:122).

It should be noted, however, that much as Abwooli disapproves of the son’s conduct, she is not surprised since he seems to have taken after his father. As the saying goes, like father like son. Abwooli tells us that her husband, and Kasemire’s father, Kyamanywa did almost exactly what she was condemning in her son. For Kyamanywa, going after very old women was like a second habit to him:

He went to live with a woman, who has children bigger than you, my dear, and a woman who has been married twice! But she has property. And so your father is living with her (1996:122).

Ateenyi, the co-wife of Abwooli is yet another woman who behaves contrary to societal expectations. She chooses to marry Kyamanywa yet she was carrying somebody else’s child as Kyamanywa is informed by his mother, Mukaaka:

Now let me tell you the truth. Before you befriended and married that woman, she had another lover who had made her pregnant! When she met you, she so much wanted to marry you that she denied the former lover the pregnancy .... (1996:24).

Returning to the patriarchal monstrosity, we note that it knows no bounds. It pervades all aspects of life including religious calling and institutions. When Matayo in Secrets No More is caught in the act of fornication in his room at the orphanage, he is only asked to go for penance whereas the girl, his companion in sinning, earns herself an expulsion from the orphanage as if to suggest the whole incident was all her doing and that the man was free to carry on with his sexual exploits at any other given time. Even the discussion
between Father and Sister Bernadette, after Matayo's apology, is further proof of the discriminatory and sexist attitude displayed in enforcing morality:

It was a mistake, Father. It will never happen again, Matayo replied. Very well, my son, it is good you accept that you made a mistake come for the sacrament of penance tomorrow ... We have to remove that girl from the orphanage ... she will spoil all the other girls. I know Sister, Father Marcel said in support of Sister Bernadette's decision. She can't stay here anymore; she will tempt Matayo again by her presence (1999:37).

I wish to conclude this section by observing that when all is said and done, there are instances when sexuality is exploited by both male and female to satisfy their individual or selfish desires. Lisa in Secrets No More uses her sexuality as a tool for survival as she tells, her brother Dee when he expresses misgivings about George, the man she was involved with:

I know what you mean, Dee, but it's only for the money, Lisa had answered confidently and he had believed her (1999: 161).

On the other hand, George also expresses sexual permissiveness when he begins to use women as his objects solely for gratifying himself after his disappointment with Lisa:

After the experience with Lisa, he had sworn not to get close to any other woman again. Whenever he needed sex, he bought it straight from the prostitutes. What was the use of spending money on ungrateful girlfriends when one could get one's money's worth from these ever willing women, he often told himself (1999: 120).

In all the above, Kyomuhendo brings out a form of sexual rebellion in the face of patriarchal expectations. Likewise when Marina sleeps around with Dee and throws all
caution to the wind, we again see a conscious choice has been made here in exercising sexuality.

2.4.2 Sexual perversion

A lesbian relation to the African society is looked upon as a foreign, controversial and repugnant notion. Little wonder then that in *Whispers from Vera*, when Vera's older maid makes a suggestive gesture in this regard to the younger maid, a fight breaks out and the older one cannot stay around to give an explanation of what took place to her boss but chooses to flee:

Apparently, the big one, the one supposed to be Kenny's minder has been 'disturbing' the younger one. That whenever we go away; she starts touching her "privates" and winking at her in a suggestive manner. So yesterday, she opened the bathroom door while the younger one was bathing and wanted to do it to her! The older one, maybe in embarrassment, angrily locked the bathroom door from outside, packed her belongings and others which did not belong to her, and left. With the bathroom door key! (2002: 32).

From the above it is again clear that sexual perversion is not anything about a particular gender group but anyone can be affected. The Nigerian Delegate chooses masturbation as a way of relief in the face of committing adultery, Vera's reaction to this is indicative of how this too is viewed in society. In an ironic twist, she too adopts this method when she is working in West Africa, away from her husband. Though Kyomuhendo does not sound supportive of explorations of sexual identities for women that are not also potentially reproductive, she attests to the notion that human sexuality is a drive that is separate from natural functions. She further, attests to the fact that such drives can arise in male and female alike, denial or repression of sexuality along gender lines is inappropriate because
sexuality is just part of humanity. What is more, sexual perversion may also manifest in the form of love for pornography, as seen in Waiting. We see Bahati moving around with a pornographic magazine with pictures of naked women. And although he is in a relationship with Jungu, however short it may seem to be, there is no indication of any intimacy between them. We could infer that Bahati gets his gratification by just looking at the magazine. By such presentation, Kyomuhendo highlights the unspoken truth that sexuality may be expressed in a number of ways besides the commonly blatant forms.

I wish to conclude this chapter by observing that Kyomuhendo's works portray the pertinent issues that deny women the full development of their latent potentials due to cultural practices and societal attitudes created by patriarchy, which in turn have been internalized and preserved by the victims, the women. She does, however, give a glimmer of hope to the effect that much as gender identity is important, it is only part of what makes up one's personality. The most important concern for both males and females in her view is the full realization of one's potential, as exemplified in the lives of the protagonists in her works. This leads us to the next chapter in which we examine the various ways in which Kyomuhendo exploits characterization to further develop the various facets of sexism and sexuality highlighted in this chapter, and others yet to be revealed or unmasked.
CHAPTER THREE

CHARACTERISATION IN KYOMUHENDO’S FICTION

3.0 Introduction

Kyomuhendo’s works resonate with echoes of feminist inclinations enhanced by her character portrayals which, to a great extent, serve as pointers of the feminist ideals there enshrined. Kyomuhendo shows that the strength of her female characters lies in their acceptance of both the losses and gains they get en route to self-attainment. As a female African writer, she does present them with the elements of sexism and sexuality looming large. Her choice of characters is paradigmatic from childhood, through adolescence and finally adulthood. We are taken through the cultural inhibitions at every stage of growth and development and, all this vividly gives an assemblage of female strength in relation to female experience and male vilification. This assemblage of characters captures the rhythms of domestic life in both the traditional and modern realms as illustrated by the character analyses drawn from the various texts.

In this chapter, through characterization, we see how Kyomuhendo symbolically uses her characters to explicitly highlight critical themes which, though multi-dimensional in form, elaborately embody the patriarchal forces and bring to the fore; not only the victims of patriarchy but also those who vehemently oppose it in as far as oppression and discrimination against women are concerned. The major flaws that inhibit the emancipation of women from sexism and patriarchal forces are embedded in some of these characters who live in a male dominated society, where the men are both the architects of culture and the law makers. At
the same time, the same men are the custodians of the law and are also its enforcers. These themes include: resilience, submissiveness, selfishness, compassion, masculine valour, violence and innocence. We will now examine each of these themes, one by one.

3.1 Resilience

Resilience can be considered as the ability to overcome a setback or recover from a misfortune. Many of Kyomuhendo's female characters display a blend of various attributes such as being smashing beauties, having resilient personalities, are intelligent, and are resourceful. Kasemiire, Marina, and Vera demonstrate most, if not all of these attributes. Their portrayal is reflective of Kyomuhendo's objective portrayal of the female. This can be seen in *The First Daughter* when Kasemiire drops out of school after getting pregnant just before she can write her Ordinary Level examinations. With great disappointment, her father throws her out of his house. She stays with her grandmother 'Mukaaka' and looks after her 'bastard' son. In the face of a bleak future, however, she does not allow herself to wallow in self-pity but begins to make and sell pancakes and mats for both her own and her son's upkeep, an indicator of how resourceful she is. Above all, Kasemiire is also very intelligent as evidenced by the fact that she was the best performer in her school in the Primary Leaving Examinations. Her intelligence further enables her to pass highly even when she eventually goes back to school, after giving birth, through University, until she finally graduates as a lawyer.

Marina in *Secrets no More* is endowed with a natural ability in everything she does, which enables her to adapt to the changed lifestyle at the orphanage and also during her marriage to
George Walusimbi where she is subjected to serve him and his friends almost like a domestic maid.

Vera in *Whispers from Vera*, on the other hand, is a career woman, wife and mother. Education has placed her in an advantageous position albeit she is still plagued by gender and socially constructed gender roles. As a career woman, having been given opportunity to work, Vera is able to prove her worth, which sees her go up the management ladder as seen when she meticulously handles the organization of the international conference that was hosted by her organization. Here, Kyomuhendo is advancing the view that women, in the absence of gender bias, are capable of doing important work in society when given the opportunity. Given that Vera is a dominant, influential character and a decision maker especially in domestic matters, she is able to attain success and prosperity in all that she set out to do in the face of setbacks that were manifest in the name of discouragement from her husband.

Through Vera, Kyomuhendo underscores the dependency of women on men for survival as a strong indicator of women degradation. If women are given opportunity to acquire assets of economic value in the family, patriarchy and all its machinations can be defeated.

3.2 Submissiveness

Submissiveness is the ability to yield to the authority of someone. This is evidenced in Kyomuhendo’s fiction by various female characters like N gonzi, Mukaka, Mukundane, Sr. Bernadette, George’s mother, Vera’s mother, Jacinta, Sheila, Alinda, Prossy’s mother and Richard Kal enzi’s mother.
Ngonzi also known as Abwooli is the mother of Kasemiire. She is, humble and submissive. This is seen in the manner in which she relates with her co-wife, Ateenyi. Not only did she treat her with utmost politeness but also expected the children to treat her like their own mother:

"Give her respect and never answer her back," she would say.
She would always inquire quietly about her health every morning then get on with her morning chores (22).

Abwooli's submissiveness is further illustrated by her reaction to the murder accusation levelled against her by Ateenyi. Out of either the desire to win the full love of Kyamanywa or to cover her wrongs, she had alleged that Abwooli had had a hand in the death of her son. And when her husband accuses her of the same heinous crime, she does not answer back. She listens quietly with tears running down her cheeks and seeks counsel from her mother-in-law.

Most of the mothers in Kyomuhendo's fiction— that is Mukaaka, George's mother, Vera's mother, Prossy's mother and Richard Kalenzi's mother exhibit this attribute of submissiveness phenomenally. Mukaaka is Kasemiire's paternal grandmother who was widowed at an early age of 25. Her submissiveness is evidenced in upholding tradition, both as a repository and vessel of history and cultural values and a pillar of strength to Kasemiire. This is further evidenced when she always has a point of wisdom to pass on especially to Kasemiire and to her grownup son Kyamanywa, when she tells him the truth about his second wife. Whereas Alinda's mother's submissiveness translates into hard work. She looks after her family in the village while her husband works in the city. Prossy's mother, on the other hand, takes on the role of teaching her daughter the societal expectations, for example the point of women not eating rabbit much as they are supposed to learn and know how to rear it.
George, Vera and Kalenzi’s mothers are the typical traditional women who have internalized the patriarchal dictates of the day with regard to what womanhood is. They believe that a man is truly the head of the family, who must have a grip on all domestic issues. They all comply to the wishes of the male authorities in their lives. George's mother ends up leaving her sick son unattended to in hospital in compliance with her husband’s ultimatum that she either went home there and then or never goes back. We also see Vera's mother just toeing the line of silence even when accused of infidelity and mothering a child there from. Similarly, Kalenzi's mother also quietly bears the insult of the denied paternity of her son. Kyomuhendo decries this attribute of blind submission to this domestic hardship which is akin to blind devotion. She in essence calls for a balance to be struck between the two parallels of upholding culture and being submissive.

Away from the traditional domestic setting, Kyomuhendo presents Mukundane a wife to Bizimana, a government official. She is a Tutsi while her husband is a Hutu, which places them at the forefront of targets for the ethnic cleansing campaign. It is through this that she and all members of her family, save her daughter Marina, meet their death. Like her husband, she is patriotic. The fact that she is able to live with a family from a different ethnic grouping and later on gets married to a man of a different ethnic background shows the spirit of tolerance, openness and sub-issiveness in her as opposed to what was going on in their community at that time. She accepts Chantal as a companion without regard to her ethnicity despite the fact that the strong tidal wave of ethnic division was sweeping across Rwanda.
Through Mukundane, Kyomuhendo advances the view that people can live in harmony if ethnic differences are set aside.

Sister Bernadette is also a traditionalist who has been indoctrinated by cultural practices and thus the element of submissiveness in her is with regard to how she upholds true tradition. This is seen in the manner in which she acts as "Ssenga" or aunt to the orphanage girls who are coming of age. She gives them lessons that would have possibly been given by their mothers or paternal aunts as the case may be. Through this, Kyomuhendo points out again that one's vocation does not erase the societal expectations of the female.

Jacinta is Vera's younger sister. She is no different from her mother with regard to her perspectives on a number of issues. She is simple-minded and gentle. She does not seem to have the ability to make any independent decision either for her life as an individual or even for her family. More often than not, she picks her cue from her sister Vera to the chagrin of her patriarchal husband, who says big sister is trying to mislead his good wife. Kyomuhendo looks at the marginalized position to which women have been relegated, a position that makes the woman entirely dependent upon man. Even when Jacinta has the chance to make an independent decision, there is an echo of patriarchal overtones as seen when she expresses concern for her teenage daughters' welfare in the village. This is all out of fear of what decision her husband will take should they drop out of school for one reason or another. She is the typical example of the female who allows others to have control over their lives. It is worth noting that much as Jacinta is not as well educated as Sheila, they share this common attribute of submissiveness.
Sheila is Vera's best friend and confidant in the city. She was also Vera's maid of honour. She is highly educated, holds a PHD, and is a beauty. Despite having all these, she does not negate cultural values as seen when they attend Vera's wedding ceremony. She has no problem with kneeling down to serve the cake while Vera, with her education now, has a different outlook towards women kneeling before men. Sheila further accepts to have a joint account with her husband through which she ends up losing much of her savings to him.

Across the divide of age grouping, Kyomuhendo presents Alinda in the category of the younger generation as an obedient girl. This is a reflection of her submission to societal expectations of her duties as a girl child -- she does the house chores and even plans the meals of the family before and after the death of her mother. She is a prototype of the domesticated female child as seen in the manner in which she even tells her sister, Maya, how to do some of the house chores.

In the above presentations, Kyomuhendo points out that the so much advocated women liberation is being hindered by blind submission to some patriarchal dictates whose status quo should no longer be maintained. There is need for them to be educated about the dangers of patriarchy without necessarily absolutely negating virtues of tradition in a modern society. Only when these issues are addressed by the conservatives of patriarchal dictates, will there be a meaningful change towards the emancipation of women in society.
3.3 Selfishness

Selfishness is when one only thinks of his own interests, pleasures, advantage or well-being without regarding others. Through a cross section of both female and male characters such as Kyamanywa, Mugabi, Anita, Mr Mutyaba, Michael Mutyaba, Abwooli’s father, Colonel Renzaho, Chantal, George Walusimbi, Lisa, Dee, George's father, Vera's father, Vera’s young sister, Jacinta’s husband, Eric, Samson, Sheila’s husband, Sheila’s female boss, Ben, Tendo, Uncle Kembo and Jungu. All these share a commonality of selfish interests at the forefront of all their actions. As such, the reader inevitably considers their general outlook towards life as grossly reprehensible.

Kyamanywa, the father of Kasemiire is heartless and cruel. When Kasemiire gets pregnant, he throws her out of his house together with her mother, though the latter is allowed back after some days. He goes further and removes his younger daughters from school and from then onwards, they all become non-existent to him as he regards all of them as whores. His reaction is a build up of conditioned behaviours that make him stand out as different a father and husband as possible. He expected total obedience from his family and his word was always final and unquestionable. He is also arrogant. When Kasemiire goes to talk to him to come back home, he still maintains a stoic front despite his fallen state as can be deduced from the fact that he was living in a woman’s house. Kyomuhendo clearly underscores the selfishness that makes Kyamanywa think he is more hurt than his wife, Kasemiire’s mother. He reacts in this way because he only thinks of the disgrace Kasemiire has brought upon him and not the larger family.
Mugabi is the first born and only son of Kyamanywa. As a son he was the preferred and prayed for choice of a first child to both his parents and the society. He, however, turns out to be a big disappointment, not only to his father but also to his own self. His inadequacies cause him to be very jealous especially of his sister, Kasemiire who was excelling in everything she did academics inclusive, making the father wish she were a boy. A woman was now much better than him. His selfishness is also displayed when he chooses an irresponsible lifestyle—he chose to elope with a married woman who was twice his age and, to crown it all, he appeared late at his mother's funeral, apparently not grieved at all. Throughout the reader's encounter with Mugabi, one observes an exclusive concern for his own interest and happiness. This also partly accounts for his unbridled jealousy towards his sister, Kasemiire.

Anita was the best friend of Kasemiire at Duhaga. She was from a rich background but unfortunately, she was spoilt. She did not care much about studies. Much of her actions were not based on genuine friendship because at the end she proves that in all her dealings with Steven Karungi and Kasemiire, she was seeking out for her own pleasure. Much as she was a kind, considerate and friendly girl to Kasemiire, her betrayal of their friendship caused both Steven and Kasemiire so much pain. This selfish betrayal is also exhibited by Chantal who was employed by the Bizimana family but she ended up being paid by the state to spy on the very family whose trust she had won.

Mr. Mutyaba is the husband of the lady who gave Kasemiire the chance to go to the city to start afresh. He however gets erotically interested in Kasemiire, much as she had taken him as the new father-figure in her life. This attraction becomes a point of conflict between him
and his only son, Michael, who is also interested in Kasemiire. In a selfish move, he decides to send his son away from home on grounds that he could no longer concentrate on his school work.

Michael was a tall and handsome boy with his mother's big eyes and his father's kind smile. He had a good sense of humour and liked teasing so much. This gives a presentation of a happy young man. Like his father, he also falls in love with Kasemiire but his feelings are not reciprocated. He gets so emotionally unstable that his class grades get affected. This deterioration is aggravated when he realizes that his father too is also interested in his prize as noted above. This betrayal triggers animosity towards his father (1996:90). Here we notice the height of selfishness exhibited by both father and son, with the resultant emotional pain it breeds.

Walusimbi is a primary seven drop-out who decides not to be part of the poverty in his home island where all the locals seem to have a set pattern of life. He chooses to launch into the deep, goes to the city despite the odds against him that is low education. A selfish spirit moulds him into a shrewd and calculative man who is also very unforgiving and ruthless in dealing with those who bruise his ego. This is seen in the manner in which Lisa meets her death--it is intricately planned, after he caught her cheating on him. After his experience with Lisa, he begins to use women as objects to gratify his ego as he says:

At first I wanted to punish every woman I met for her sins, I wanted them to pay on her behalf but .... (1999:127).

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Kyomuhendo decries the use of women by men as mere objects for the sexual gratification or other selfish interests.

George's father was also a very materialistic man, who chose to disown his son George for failing to send him money regularly, but gladly took over the son's property when he died. A similar scenario is witnessed when we come to Colonel Renzaho. He is a ruthless, cold-blooded merciless killer of Mukundane, (Marina's mother), who has selfishly enriched himself from the loot of his unfortunate victims.

When we come to Dee, we note that he selfishly uses Marina as a pawn in his revenge plot against George Walusimbi (1999: 161). The latter had married Marina after murdering his earlier mistress, Lisa, who was Dee's sister. Dee first posed as a close friend of Walusimbi and used that closeness to lure Marina into a "love" relationship with him as a way of avenging his sister's murder, which could at another level be considered betrayal of friendship. Marina unsuspectingly falls prey and becomes far more emotionally attached to Dee than to her husband Walusimbi, whom in any case, she never loved right from the beginning. She only ended up with Walusimbi simply because Mrs. Magezi encouraged her to do so. She was now married and living with a man she did not love and would never love. Here it can be observed that much as Dee was naturally justified to avenge his sister's murder, he could have thought of other methods instead of selfishly fooling Marina that he loved her.
A similar betrayal is witnessed when we come to Ben. He is a workmate and close friend of Eric, who ended up also being his best man. However, he later betrays this friendship and trust by sleeping with Vera, the wife of his friend, Eric. By presenting Ben as Eric's best man, Kyomuhendo implicitly tells us that selfishness does not respect any relational ties because it always seeks to achieve its particular advantage. Ben has no remorse whatsoever but asks for a repeat instead (2002:62).

Jacinta's husband explores his position as the man in the home to a point that it now bears the markings of domestic, social and financial abuse. He comes across as a selfish, proud and domineering husband. He sends his sister-in-law a message to stop meddling in his family affairs based on the fact that Vera had got Jacinta a job, sent her clothes for the new baby and was always ready to help her sister. This is all masculine selfishness and a feeling of insecurity at work.

Eric is Vera's husband. He is illusive most times in his communication as observed earlier. This is seen when he fails to tell Vera early in their relationship about his daughter Martina. Later as a married person, he still hangs out and invites over his friends to his house at will which exposes his selfish, inconsiderate and insensitive side when he tells his wife to consider consolidating her marriage than focus on building a career.

Samson is husband to Sheila and a friend to Eric, Vera's husband. He acts as a mediator when Vera and Eric have a major row springing from the discovery of Eric's illegitimate child. Unlike his wife who is a spendthrift, Samson is not one given to spending. He actually
controls the joint account of the family in a manner that spells financial abuse to the wife
more so when he used their finances to fund his political campaigns. When his wife goes back
to school, he selfishly exhibits deep-seated jealousy to the point that he begins to think his
wife might be having a relationship out there. He is also a proud man. This is seen at the time
when he loses his ministerial post; he feels he cannot stoop low to again begin job-hunting.
Even when he is offered a job, he considers it beneath him to accept what he considers is a
hand-out.

Tendo is the first son of Father and, like Mugabi in The First Daughter, he is a
disappointment to the family. He turns out to be useless while the girl, Alinda, takes up the
reins of taking care of her family. Kyomuhendo brings to the fore the inescapable reality that
the issue of son preference does not hold because in the given circumstances when both
Mugabi and Tendo were most needed, they were both selfishly only thinking of themselves
while the girls gave in their all. Just as Kasemiire in The First Daughter was thinking of how
to salvage her family from poverty, Alinda also selflessly forgets about spending time with
her agemates and plunges herself prematurely into the role of looking after the home.

Uncle Kembo is a brother of Father in Waiting. He is selfish, materialistic and opportunistic
to the point that he chooses to change his religion with a view to achieving wealth and social
status. He even threatened to disown his children when they refused to take up his new
religion and abandon their mother who had flatly refused to change. He became prosperous
for a season and then abandoned the religion to which he had converted when his businesses
collapsed. Kyomuhendo likens this action to the manner in which men treat women. Uncle
Kembo had objectified religion for a purpose, just like men tend to objectify women after which they discard them.

Sometimes men’s selfishness is scanned from both their materialistic tendencies and their attitude to women and daughters in particular as objects of commercial value. When Kyamanywa, the hunter asks for Abwooli’s hand in marriage, her father is very happy because he is going to receive bride-price (1996: 16), which portrays him as the epitome of the male who has objectified the female.

Similarly when Vera’s father learns that Vera is pregnant outside marriage he gets angry simply because she has brought him dishonour and above all, she will not fetch a high price now that she has had a child. This infuriation comes about as a result of looking at the female as an object of exchange for material gain, among others. Furthermore as a father, his move to begin selling off his land and property so that his children are left with no inheritance is not only a selfish act but is also the height of foolishness for a father to even contemplate:

> My father is busy selling his land for a pittance. He claims all his off springs have been disappointment and he is not going to let them enjoy what he sweated so much to achieve (2002:87).

His selfishness is also seen in the manner in which he treats his grandchild as, Vera narrates to us:

> My father is very hostile to this child and would rather give the milk he gets from his cows to the dog rather than to this kid. One time, I hear, he poured salt in the milk, which had not been sold that day so that the kid would not drink it. Surely? (2002:88).
The above behaviour not only depicts selfishness but also borders on mental derailment.

Some women, however, are both irresponsibly materialistic and selfish. They use men as tools for the acquisition of their desired goals as can be evidenced by Lisa, Vera's young sister and Jungu. Lisa is a beautiful, sophisticated and outgoing interior designer and lover of George Walusimbi. She is very instrumental in introducing him to a sophisticated lifestyle much in line with the new social status he had now attained. Despite her education, selfishness also gets the better of her. She uses her looks for economic survival and is also materialistic in all her dealings with the men she sleeps with. This is evidenced by the fact that besides the clothes and jewellery George bought her, she ensured that he also bought for her a piece of land in a suburb that was fast growing to house the rich. Kyomuhendo asserts that even with education some women will still look to men for dependency in pursuit of their selfish motives.

Vera's young sister has been overwhelmed by promiscuity to the point that she is now aggressively the hunter as seen in the manner in which she hounds Vera's driver. She has also lost any maternal feelings as seen in the manner in which she selfishly abandons her three-year old son. She is the typical representation of the female who flaunts her life as an object for pleasure and materialistic gain just as Lisa in Secrets No More does for survival.
Jungu is the thirteen-year old Indo-African school friend of Alinda. She has a mature outlook to things in her life as seen when she suggests to Alinda that Father could talk to her grandmother for a piece of land, and also the manner in which she would groom herself before she went to see Bahati. Furthermore, she even talks about how determined she was to go with Bahati, with whom she intended to have a child. Although she comes in and gives Alinda's family support, she selfishly betrays their trust when she leaves the home unannounced in pursuit of Bahati.

And finally in as far as female characters are concerned in this section, let us consider Sheila's female boss. She represents the case of the female fighting against the female. Kyomuhendo portrays that selfishness as one of the issues that militate against the improvement of the lives of women if they get incensed by issues such as petty rivalry, be it imagined or real, in terms of academic qualifications at work places.

3.4 Compassion

Compassion is the innate ability to empathise with another person. Kyomuhendo considers that this attribute cuts across the sexes as illustrated by the characters through which this is done. In her fiction, Kyomuhendo uses characters like Kasemiire, Steven Karungi, Bizimana, Fr Marcel, Mr. Magezi and Mrs Magezi, Alinda's father, the Lendu woman, Nyinabarongo and Winnie to portray the strong relational ties they had with all the people they dealt with. Despite the physical and psychological suffering she has undergone during and after her pregnancy, intensified by her father's hostile attitude towards her, Kasemiire still has a kind disposition towards both her father and Mrs. Mutyaba who both threw her out of their homes at her most vulnerable moments. Not only is she forgiving but also goes ahead to seek out her
father in a move towards reconciling the family. When she meets Mrs. Mutyaba also, feels sympathy for her instead of resentment.

Steven Karungi is a smart, rich and handsome young man and therefore seems to lack noth
He is the father of Kasemiire's son, Raymond. He is well educated having studied
Advanced - level at Nairobi and the Degree from America. Karungi is incredibly lovi.
generous, compassionate, and very responsible. We see this at the time when he learns t
Kasemiire is pregnant. He does not abandon her but tries to seek her out even after he h
completed his 0 - Level examinations. Furthermore, these character traits are revealed in t
manner in which he treats his son, Kasemiire and her relatives. He is also objective and
never taken up by petty domestic jealousies as seen when he unreservedly handles th
problems of Kasemiire and her family members amidst the complaints of his own family.

Bizimana was father to Marina and husband to Mukundane. He was a very loving and patient
man considering how he treated his wife with love and respect even after waiting for three
years into their marriage without a child. He loved and adored his daughter, always lavished
her with gifts and his attention whenever he was around. He was not disappointed that even
after the long wait the wife presents him with a daughter instead of an heir. He was a brave
man who decided to stay in his motherland despite the apparent threat to his life and family as
seen when he hit the Colonel who was raping his wife as a final attempt to put to a final end,
the horrendous ordeal she was going through. He was also patriotic, believing that his
countrymen would realize that the indiscriminate arrests and deaths of people on grounds of
ethnicity was grossly against human rights, but his optimism came to naught.
Through Karungi and Bizimana, Kyomuhendo presents a beautiful model of what is possible. They have chosen to be part of a community that values, respects and empowers women, much as this seems worlds away from the model in place today where the dominant culture reeks of sexism with strands of sexuality appended to it.

Father Marcel is the kind, caring and loving white priest who brings Marina from Rwanda to the orphanage in Hoima in Uganda. He becomes subjective in his treatment of the orphans. He develops a special attachment to Marina, akin to a bounden duty that he has to see her not face any pain in life again. To this end, he monitors her recovery progress. This is seen when he makes a request to Sister Bernadette that Marina should be given lighter work. When Marina makes a request to be sent to Hoima to continue with her education, he readily grants this. This favoured position is again extended to Rosario, Marina's daughter, to whom he bequeaths all his earthly belongings upon his death. Through him, Kyomuhendo presents her image of the few male feminists we can still come across in society.

The Magezis are the couple that adopt Marina and gives her a fresh start in life away from her past in Hoima. They are both kind to her and treat her as their daughter. Mr. Magezi also stands out as a male feminist with regard to the manner in which he treats his wife even after her act of infidelity that brings forth a half-caste child. He stands by her until death separates them. Whether this is brought on by his inadequacy as a man who cannot father children is left to our discretion. This trait in him is again magnified when he marries Marina and adopts her daughter Rosaria as his own. He is also one known for taking care of messy situations.
This probably explains why the story about Mrs. Magezi's child was not known. Mrs. Magezi makes this clear at the time when George is upset that Marina's past had been withheld from him. Mrs. Magezi, as already mentioned, treats Marina as her own daughter and tries to shield her as much as possible from any more pain. This is seen when she does not tell Walusimbi about Marina's past when he shows interest in her. Her kindness is further exhibited when she begs the enraged George not to hurt Marina and begins to think of how she can warn Marina when George storms out of her house.

Father is the father of Alinda, Tendo and Maya. He is caring and generous considering that he takes care of his neighbours. Even those not related to him at all are welcome to his home. Recent events in his household have left their markings on him: the death of his wife, Mother, and then the disappearance of his son with the liberators. He is also emotional as seen at the time of his mother, Kaaka and his wife's burials, during which he tried to make a speech but ended up crying so hard that he had to be assisted back to the house. When he learns that his son and Jungu have left home, he did not say anything nor eat anything and had tears forming in his eyes. Kyomuhendo once more reiterates that being emotional or compassionate has no gender marking.

The compassion of the Lendu woman is demonstrated through her kindness and generosity at the time she comes to treat Alinda's baby brother when he grows false teeth. She also brought for the baby some sugar which was one of the scarce commodities. She could have chosen to keep the sugar for herself considering that her husband had sent it all the way from
Congo. She is also forgiving as seen when she comes in to assist the sick child much as Father and other neighbours still looked at her as a witch.

Nyinabarongo is also compassionate. She assists Alinda look after the baby and manage their home following the death of her mother and grandmother. Kyomuhendo uses this trait to signal the fact that women are more level-headed than men in trying situations and are apt to take charge of situations promptly. In other words it can be said that situations do not, in many cases, have the women completely overwhelmed like men.

Lastly through a child Kyomuhendo shows that compassion is indeed inherent in every person. Having grown up in an environment that has discarded some of the societal dictates, Winnie finds her friend Prossy's stories fascinating though some get her filled with pity like having to walk in the rain to go to school or missing school to look after the young ones. Compassion and masculine valour, which we are going to address ourselves to in the next section, are incompatible attributes.

3.5 Masculine Valour
Masculine valour is a unique kind of courage or manner of handling issues that illuminate excellence, manliness, character and worth. Patriarchy has always considered valour as an exclusively male attribute. Kyomuhendo, through her female characters, puts this misconception to test through the portrayal of some of her female characters like Kasemiire, Marina, Lucy, Vera's cousin, Ben's mother-in-law and the Lendu woman possess an element of discreetness and vision. Kasemiire demonstrates the two elements when she opts to first complete school before she can begin staying with her boyfriend, Steven, without fear.
that she could lose him. Marina continues to see Dee despite the eminent risk of George finding out.

Lucy is a bank teller and a member of a club of thieves whose networking involves defrauding big accounts of huge sums of money. The club comprises people of all walks of life in the city who are of value to the club's dealings. She has masculine valour about her; she is able to fill George, the novice thief, with a burning ambition to get rich, with morbid fear before he is finally introduced to key members of the club. In the above mentioned illustrations, Kyomuhendo shows that women can be as tough as men even in jobs and ventures that hitherto could be considered a male domain.

Vera's cousin is representative of the marriage realm. When she is beaten by her husband, who was well known for being a wife batterer, she leaves her home and sets terms and conditions for her return to the marriage. The terms, which are all in her favour, are accepted by the husband without any objection. It is all a question of having the will to refuse any further onslaught of sexism and sexuality against the female. She is the radical woman of the day. Vera's cousin is a typical village woman whose distinct difference is in the line of her radical move against the tyranny of her husband. Through her, Kyomuhendo demonstrates that objection to any form of oppression against the female can be launched from any front not necessarily from the educated ones only.

Whereas Vera's mother did not want to be in close proximity with her son in law, Ben's mother in law came close to swapping places with her daughter. She is domineering as
demonstrated by her managing her daughter's life to the point that she went with her to the honeymoon.

The Lendu woman exhibits a unique kind of valour, one that can only be described as masculine. She single-handedly performed the amputation of the old man's leg, an act that sent all the men around her scampering in fear; Alinda's father was standing a short distance away and Uncle Kembo seated on a tree trunk holding his head in his hands! Here again Kyomuhendo begs the question whether the element of bravery should continue being accredited to men only.

3.6 Violence
Any intentionally physically aggressive behaviour against anyone can be considered as violence. In her fiction, Kyomuhendo presents this through characters like Kyamanywa Vera's father, the old man, Mrs. Mutyaba, Abwooli's parents, Colonel Renzaho and his men; Matayo, the old man and Richard Kalenzi's father. Violence is not confined to a particular age group or gender as exemplified through the above mentioned characters. Kyamanywa was always on the extreme side of things. His society was one which was strongly conservative on issues that reflected patriarchal authority.

Vera's father beats his brother's wife upon mere suspicion that she must have caused the death of her husband who died under mysterious circumstances. In another related outburst of violence at the domestic front, the old man in Waiting had gruesomely murdered his wife for giving out all the meat he had bought to her parents. This infuriated the public so much that they beat him very seriously leading to the loss of his teeth. Even after serving his prison
term, the public still regarded him considered a dangerous man. Kyomuhendo's condemnation of violence here cannot pass unnoticed.

Mrs. Mutyaba was the guardian angel of Kasemiire who had brought her to the city and into her home, with the hope that life could begin afresh. This move itself was an indication of her compassion as noted earlier. This attribute of compassion was, however, put to test when she is told that Kasemiire had slept with her husband. In a turmoil of violent emotions, she throws Kasemiire out of her house in the night (1999: 92 - 93).

Abwooli's parents were very conservative in preserving societal dictates. When Abwooli as a young girl is seen with a young man, she is severely beaten because her parents felt the family honour depended on how they dealt with it. They mete out violence in a way that inflicts both physical and psychological pain to their daughter because the parents were very ruthless in their approach.

Colonel Renzaho as noted earlier is a ruthless, cold-blooded merciless killer who has selfishly enriched himself from the loot of his unfortunate victims. His men are also characteristically endowed with a similar degree of ruthlessness and brutality, as demonstrated by the rape and subsequent murder of Marina's mother, Mukundane, and the brutal murder of [S]ister Petite and [B]rother Pierre. Kyomuhendo illuminates rape as the metaphor of the violation of women - the weak, by those who are stronger than them. Mukundane was helpless before the Colonel and his men just as her daughter Marina was with Matayo. Rape is a disgraceful
thing and society is supposed to condemn it. However, in times of conflict, as in the above mentioned case, the patriarchal system uses it to downgrade the female.

Matayo was an assistant to Father Marcel and later became a catechist. He is a handsome, tall young man with a good sense of humour. He is also adored by the people at the parish. He was always ready to help wherever there was need and he treated the girls at the orphanage as his daughters. He wins the trust of Marina to such an extent that he becomes the first person to whom she narrates something about her traumatic past. He however betrays this trust when he violently rapes her. Kyomuhendo magnifies the image of the male, giving him an exaggerated proportion of power in relation to the female as illustrated by Marina's failure to defend herself against Matayo.

George Walusimbi, as mentioned earlier, is a very selfish man, very unforgiving and ruthless in dealing with those who bruise his ego. This is seen in the manner in which Lisa meets her death - it is intricately planned, after he caught her cheating on him. After his experience with Lisa, he begins to use women as objects to gratify his ego (1999: 127). All the prostitutes he bought faced this. When he married Marina, she also faced this insensitive and violent treatment, which affected their sexual life as a couple considering that Marina as a child, had watched the rape of her mother and had also been raped at a tender age. Kyomuhendo decries the use of women as mere objects for the sexual gratification of men.

Kaaka is the grandmother of Alinda. She is a very courageous woman as seen when she stands up to the soldiers with a barrage of abuse as her only weapon. This is also an indication
that she is a no-nonsense woman who on several occasions had given her husband sound beatings until he urinated in his trousers whenever he accused her of failing to deliver their baby. Kyomuhendo presents Kaaka’s husband in a mirthful manner, for a man to be beaten till he urinates in his trousers is indeed incredible.

The father of Kalenzi. He was lazy, a trait for which he was despised by his the other men in the village, above all, was a poor hunter. He was a difficult man with whom it was impossible to sustain any form of relationship and as such, he had few friends. He was also a pugnacious drunkard who would start off a tirade of insults against his wife whenever he got back home. Ingratitude was second nature to him considering how he would react after his wife brought him his food. He was also a bully who was prone to violent outbursts that always saw Kalenzi on the receiving side of his punches. More to that, he was sadistic in his treatment of Kalenzi as demonstrated at the time when he hurled a big stone at Kalenzi who was following him.

In all the above cases, we have been examined characters whose acts and treatment are either an outcome of provocation or guilt. There is a final category, however, of innocent characters in Kyomuhendo’s fiction that have not been examined yet. These are the innocent ones considered in the next section.

3.7 Innocence

Innocence is an attribute that denotes little experience or absence of any form of deception, guilt or wrong. Through the epitome of innocence, Kyomuhendo uses Katuutu, Kenyange, Stella Maris, Alinda, Maya, Winnie and Richard Kalenzi to demonstrate this. Katuutu and Kenyange were Kasemiire's younger sisters, who were victims of circumstances. They suffer
the brunt of their father's anger at their sister's pregnancy, which resulted into their being withdrawn from school. This was particularly very painful for Kenyange whose class work had seemed promising but, unfortunately, her father did not give her the chance to exploit her academic potential. Both girls end up getting married at an early age of fifteen, which proved a nasty experience for them. Katuutu not only gets three children within a space of three years, but is also severely beaten now and then by her husband, who finally chases her away together with her children. Kenyange too eventually left her husband, much as she was a potentially strong girl. Their father's treatment had rendered both girls a bunch of useless non-entities in the household.

Stella Maris was a friend of Marina at the orphanage. She gets married to a catechist more out of loneliness than genuine love. Deeply enshrined expectations negate Stella Maris's innocence. Motherhood is both the epitome of womanhood and a stronghold of femininity that is also used as the very pillar that raises high the patriarchal foundations in society. However, Stella Maris is found wanting in this regard because, culturally, women draw legitimacy from having children. When she fails to give her husband children, she is chased away by her catechist husband. She ends up suffering emotionally and as such, Kyomuhendo castigates the catechist who, having embraced the new faith, should have dropped some cultural ideals like blaming a woman for being childless.

Furthermore, innocence as a pointer of lack of experience or knowledge is demonstrated through the children. Winnie innocently tells her friend that her mummy says these days everybody is allowed to eat anything! We can say that the societal dictates in modern settings
are dying out as seen through the lives of Winnie's family. It is important to note also that unlike her friend, Jungu, Alinda seems to be naive in all matters pertaining to sexuality exploits. She too is a younger version of Kasemire in *The First Daughter*. Maya is the nine-year old sister of Alinda. She is very short in stature and giggles quite a lot. She is depicted as one with an air of innocence around her. She is also naughty as seen in the manner in which she comments about the old man's missing teeth. Whereas Maya, as a typical child did not seem so bothered about the present circumstances, in another situation another young child Kalenzi, did not understand why his father hated him with such violence. The meaning of his surname Kalenzi 'small boy", speaks volumes about his status in the family which is given the opportunity to explode one time when Kalenzi is just twelve years old. His relationship with his father thus became an estranged one because he learnt that he was not his father's favourite one. His father bullied him as seen when he asked him to dance as he ate and at times just treated him as a piece of cow dung and constantly hit him whenever he had an excuse. All this caused him to have a strained relationship with his siblings as well. He is a meek boy despite the circumstances surrounding his birth and upbringing and this, perhaps, contributed to his determination to succeed in life and overcome his somewhat unhappy childhood.

Finally from all the above character analyses, we note that Kyomuhendo uses characters most of whom demonstrate attributes that seem to have particular gender markings. However, some do not expressly relate to any gender. By presenting both categories of characters, she prepares the ground for us to examine and determine which critical stance she subscribes to, if any, in the next and concluding chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

FEMALE EXPERIENCE OR MALE VILIFICATION?

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to establish whether Kyomuhendo glorifies the female on the one hand while vilifying the male on the other, with a view to establishing her critical stance. To start with, we have noted from the Literature Review that while gender issues take centre stage in various discussions by many literary critics, the issue of sexism and sexuality in Gorreti Kyomuhendo's works has not been treated as an area of special investigation by any critic.

In Chapter Two, we examined the pertinent issues that could be considered as the thematic concerns of Kyomuhendo's fiction and grouped them into two broad categories, namely: overt and covert forms of sexism and sexuality. Through this approach, it was realized that Kyomuhendo's fiction espouses interpretations that can be viewed as constituting both female experience at one level and male vilification at another. And yet, at another level, there are other aspects of interpretation that do not demonstrate either female experience or male vilification. This aspect constitutes a third dimension to the study, which is not easily noticed after a first reading of the works.

In Chapter Three, analyses of major characters in the various works under study were carried out and it was observed that Kyomuhendo abundantly demonstrates their experiences against the backdrops of their psychological growth and development through...
life. She further brings to the fore some other issues that call for greater scrutiny and leniency even as we summarily pass judgment on the actions of these characters. This analysis, together with the thematic examination in the previous chapter, propels us to another level in our study. What conclusions do we draw from the aforesaid analysis and thematic examination? This chapter focuses on the deductions and inferences that can be teased out of the last two chapters with a view to establishing credible justification for categorizing the various experiences in Kyomuhendo's fiction as "female experience", "male vilification", or something else. This will then form the basis for testing the truth or falsity of the given hypothesis: "that Gorreti Kyomuhendo does not deliberately champion any particular cause in her works, but portrays society as it is."

4.1 Female Experience

Female experience as noted earlier in chapter one, is taken to mean the way the female envisions her life in relation to her society. It foregrounds all those elements of the female that hitherto were either repressed or unexpressed under the guise of cultural or patriarchal myths. More so, it is to a large extent determined by the manner in which traditional values can be manipulated to subjugate the status of the female. The elements of sexism and sexuality have been used as a spy hole by Kyomuhendo to examine, on a wider scope, the societal and cultural spheres within which women are bound. Subjugation, as noted through some of the characters, makes the women lose confidence in themselves which further limits their contribution to either personal or societal development.

Through this kind of approach, Kyomuhendo transcends the possible limitations of subjectivity. She presents the issue of what it means to be a woman in society through two
models of the female in her works: as a dependent, the stereotype, and the independent, the liberated. Through the lives of her protagonists, who fall under the category of the independent, we see a recollection and rebuilding of memories and episodes as a deliberate act, by Kyomuhendo, aimed at facilitating us to see some of these women re-envision their own lives and experiences in light of a newly acquired sense of self-awareness and, ultimately, the female experience in a changing world.

Kyomuhendo's independent characters include Kasemiire in *The First Daughter*, Marina in *Secrets No More*, and Vera in *Whispers from Vera*. Their experiences have hardened them enough to compel them to revisit their lives and take on a perspective of determination to overcome any odds that may come their way. They resist any attempt to portray them as weak and totally dependent on men. They challenge the cardinal law of the day that women were to be seen, if they must be seen anyway, but not to be heard. At this point, Kyomuhendo emphatically demonstrates that this "norm" can no longer be sustained.

The above mentioned women are the strong-willed characters who do the bidding of their hearts. In *Whispers from Vera*, Vera proves that there is a place for a woman outside the domestic realm where she can have as much potential as men to compete and, above all, excel in all occupations. Vera's cousin is another one. Unlike Marina in *Secrets No More* who can no longer tolerate an abusive relationship and opts out of the marriage, she considers putting a stop to being battered by her husband and sets terms and conditions for her return to their marriage. According to societal expectations, it seems impossible to
leave a husband without causing a social scandal. A woman is expected to be constant in her love for her husband regardless of any mistreatment she might be subjected to. By such character portrayal, Kyomuhendo clearly illustrates that she would be happy with a provision in the law that allows for a marriage to be terminated on grounds of any abusive, or unfair, treatment from either of the partners. So Marina exhibits that strength of character which can be adopted by any other woman caught in an abusive relationship.

Through the sisterhood - bonding, we see women giving each other moral support in otherwise trying situations. When Vera is almost indecisive about whether or not to take the job posting outside the country, her female friends in the sisterhood encourage her to take a bold step. Here Kyomuhendo indicates that when women help each other to achieve something that can positively improve their lives, then the battle against patriarchy can be taken to another level of defeat. Furthermore, if women do not remain self-seekers, only advocating for their individual interests, others in bondage will have the courage to reach out and put their potential to positive use. When Vera helps her sister to get a job, she is in effect helping her out of economic dependence. Across her canvass of characters, Kyomuhendo paints a unique blend of extraordinary women who flaunt self-pity and sound a clarion call challenging the existing status quo that they may also express their intelligence and spirit in all matters pertaining to their individual lives. The perfect hope for any woman caught up in any form of abuse or subjugation is self-realisation. Through the sisterhood, Kyomuhendo points out that women can make a determined effort to see deeper than the eye and, therefore, this calls for a patient pursuit of the untapped trapped potentials interred within them. As Toril Moi puts it:

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They instill a strong sense of feminine identity by portraying women who are self-actualising, whose identities are not dependent on men (1985:47).

We see this realized when Vera has to choose between her job and her family demands, and Sheila, when she has to choose between further education and her marriage. Sisterhood as seen in Whispers from Vera, therefore, offers help to women: enabling them come forward and shred the veil of silence and societal connivance that has allowed the culture of abuse thrive. Once more, Kyomuhendo denounces the patriarchal attitude that has steeped the society in a mind set that is both simplistic and misleading.

Subjugation is rooted in the desire to control women and to suppress their aspirations and voices. The dependent characters are, indeed, weak characters, afraid of making choices and hesitant to act, even when they see possible benefits out of their choices. Such characters in Kyomuhendo's works that fall under the category of those dependent on the patriarchal system include: Jacinta, Vera's mother in Whispers from Vera, Stella Maris and George's mother in Secrets No More and Abwooli, Anita, Mrs. Mutyaba, Katuutu and Kenyange in The First Daughter. Women endure violence in spheres that are familiar to them and in which they expect safety rather than assault in whatever form it might be, as evidenced in the lives of Jacinta, Marina and Vera's cousin.

Women are also entrapped within their homes by isolation and powerlessness so much that abuse builds around them irrespective of the age, as seen in the lives of George's mother, Jacinta and Vera's mother in Secrets No More and Whispers from Vera.
respectively. George's mother is still under the control of her husband and does his bidding as seen when he orders her back home when her son is hospitalized and has attendant. Jacinta has to leave her job because her husband says it is interfering with marriage. Vera's mother suffers to the point of being accused of infidelity by the husband when he was on his death bed, something which cannot be substantiated, after all dead cannot tell tales at that point.

Even where economic self-reliance, that can open pathways out of societal constraints, any form of abuse, has been achieved, some women might still harbour abuse in their lives that is manifest in one form or another. Sheila in Whispers from Vera is well educated at employed, yet her husband is in full control of her finances through the joint account they operate. Similarly, while Vera has financial independence, she has little control over her social life and domestic affairs because her husband does virtually most of the planning for their social life into which she is expected to fit.

4.2 Male Vilification

Male vilification, as noted earlier in this study, refers to the severe ridicule or serious contempt of the male by the female. Issues addressed that portray this include sexual assault, different forms of rape, financial abuse, domestic violence, son preference, denial of education among others. Kyomuhendo presents this through Kyamanywa, Abwooli's father, Mugabi, Mr. Mutyaba and Michael in The First Daughter, Vera's father, Ben and Jacinta's husband in Whispers from Vera, and Father in "Hidden Identity." Most of these male characters have been portrayed as antagonists in Kyomuhendo's works to possibly cast them in that light of people considered as being far from reasonable human beings.
Through excessive male patronage and over-orchestration of patriarchal norms and values, we see the males assert authority, and even grant meaning to assumed authority, which the meek respond to in complete submissiveness. Many assaults and other forms of abuse against women are perpetrated in the domestic sphere but, more often than not, they remain shrouded in silence and shame. Consequently, they can neither be denounced as egregious human rights abuses nor redressed at all. Much as Kyamanywa is the husband, the manner in which he executes his marital duties is not far from marital rape. While Kyamanywa wields this power over the womenfolk in his household, Mugabi construes power to mean suppression of women, whereas, ideally, power presupposes the ability to represent and articulate the real needs and interests of the individuals in society irrespective of gender. Mugabi pushes for the perpetuation of this oppression because he is a proven intellectual failure. In fact we are informed that his sister Kasemiire is brighter than him. This intellectual inadequacy incenses Mugabi with jealousy. How can a woman turn out to be better than him? It should be observed here, however, that the power monopoly, which Kyamanywa points out as being naturalized by the male, is invalid.

In addition to the above, women are seen as the custodians, as well as reflectors, of family honour, which makes them more vulnerable to various forms of abuse ranging from physical abuse to even murder usually at the hands of an offended male kin and often with the explicit approval of a female relative. Abwooli as a young girl of fifteen experiences this when her father sights her in the company of a man. She gets a severe beating from her parents for putting the family honour at stake. Kyomuhendo condemns this kind of abuse.
based on unsubstantiated suspicion. Women find themselves condemned to abuse without
the benefit of giving their side of the story, which is contrary to the law of natural justice.
And there is even no possibility of appeal.

These very things that the men initially take up as their rights and privileges are the very
ones responsible for their disfigurement, as vivified by Kyamanywa and Mugabi. The
philandering conduct of Kyamanywa leads to a breakdown of family values and social
harmony. It is therefore no surprise that Mugabi too begins misbehaving by eloping with a
woman much older than him. Besides this, Mugabi is overwhelmed by inferiority complex
because he cannot meet his father's expectations, thereby bringing to fruition the saying
that foolish children bring grief to their fathers and bitter regrets to their mothers.
(Proverbs, 17:25). And as a consequence of his inadequacies in the academic sphere, as
already noted above, he becomes jealous of his sister Kasemiire and further becomes
recklessly aggressive with life while hiding behind the transparent screen of his superiority
quest. Kyomuhendo underscores here the inescapable fact that an individual's happiness
does not necessarily depend on what others might think of him or her. Happiness is only
derived from living naturally, as opposed to slavishly subscribing to snobbish appeals. All
Mugabi needed to do was to be himself other than burdening himself with the expectations
of his father, family, or any other group of people.

Furthermore, Kyamanywa shows that his first preference for a child was to have a son.
True to his wish, he gets one who turns out to be a big disappointment when he cannot
meet his father's expectations. Kyomuhendo in this presentation affirms that children are
just a blessing from God irrespective of the gender considerations. This is clearly demonstrated by Kasemiire, the girl - child, who becomes more successful than the preferred son despite the hurdles she has had to overcome.

Matayo, in *Secrets No More*, is representative of the depraved male hypocrite who indulges in devilish exploits like acts of fornication with the young girls at the orphanage and rape and defilement meted out to Marina who was only fifteen and still a protege at the orphanage. As the assistant to Father Marcel, he has been able to win the trust and friendship of the unsuspecting young girls in his care. It should be noted here that by presenting to us such callous characters as Matayo, Kyomuhendo is painting the dismal portrait of men who are out to satiate their lust regardless of the age of their victims.

Kyomuhendo further uses Matayo to stress how the perception of fault is even more important to the patriarchal system than its actual occurrence. When Matayo is caught in the act of fornication, it is the girl who shoulders the entire blame. She is victimized but, surprisingly, the manner in which Matayo is treated is next to condoning his despicable conduct. The premise that it takes two to tango does not seem to apply in the application of justice in such instances. While Father Marcel and Sister Bernadette may bask in the admiration of the community for having stopped the errant behaviour of the girl and erasing or eliminating its possible influence on the other young girls at the orphanage, Matayo is seemingly exonerated. Kyomuhendo, through vilification of the male, denounces this lopsided form of justice where the law is either lenient or partially applied to suit gender differences. Patriarchal expectations are so deeply enshrined in society that

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even the religious bodies which should strongly uphold the justice for all doctrine negate the saying that it is wrong for judges to be prejudiced (proverbs, 24: 24-25). By such portrayals again, Kyomuhendo draws our attention to the fact that sexism cuts across all walks of life.

Furthermore, Kyomuhendo ridicules the men for conspiring to deny women the right to their individuality as can be deduced from the village drunkards' generalization that education for a daughter is an unreasonable waste of resources. Kyamanywa takes this up when he gets his daughters out of school purportedly in a fit of rage. The girls' destiny is halted by such a selfish move that can at best be classified as an emotional outburst.

Throughout her fiction, it should be noted, Kyomuhendo presents men as weak and vulnerable who only hide behind the deceptive facade of socially ascribed pseudo - prowess. This is very well illustrated at the time when the old man in Waiting steps on a landmine and needs to have his leg amputated in order to have his life saved. It is the women who are quick to respond to the next course of action. When the time comes for the actual amputation, the men are a distance away cringing in fear! A woman does the entire operation and closely monitors the treatment thereafter. This experience is representative of the display of strength and bravery in the face of patriarchal designation of femininity as physical weakness.

Again Kyomuhendo illustrates the selfish double standards of the day in the treatment of women as an aspect of male vilification. When George Walusimbi in Secrets No More
suspects Marina of infidelity, he cannot contain his anger. But we are well aware that he has often been involved in acts of broad daylight adultery yet he expects his wife not to waiver in her love for him. He expects her to maintain this love blindly, tenderly and forever in the face of all the emotional, physical and all other forms of abuse that he inflicts upon her. Little wonder then that this double-sided reality drives Marina to seek her independence.

Absurd as it may sound, some women have been subjected to abuse and other forms of humiliation and degradation simply because their children do not exhibit obvious physical resemblance to their fathers. The fact that one can think of only physical features as the only indicator of a child’s paternity borders on the absurd or, to put it another way, abundantly illustrates the embarrassingly simplistic level the patriarchal intelligence can drop to. In "Hidden Identity", Kalenzi as a child, suffers untold anguish for he could not comprehend the depth of hatred his father had for him. Kyomuhendo ridicules such awkward situations to flaunt the skewed intelligence of the patriarchal system that has even infiltrated thought patterns.

Finally, I wish to conclude this chapter by observing that while most of the issues presented and discussed above, both thematic and stylistic, demonstrate female experience at one level and male vilification at another, there are other issues that Kyomuhendo has addressed in her fiction that do not fall under any of the two categories as earlier observed in chapter one and in the introduction to this chapter. These other issues form the core of our discussion in the next chapter which, indeed, leads us to the conclusion of this study.
CHAPTER FIVE

GORETTI KYOMUHENDO'S CRITICAL STANCE

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter special attention will be paid to understanding why characters behave the way they do. Are their actions provoked by circumstances or they are a manifestation of their innate characteristics? Through her works, as seen in the previous chapter, Kyomuhendo presents another twist to the commonly held belief by feminists that men are always the oppressors and women always the innocent victims. In her view, much as we live in a patriarchal society, it is not all gloom and doom for either the female or the male. This is well brought out through the presentation of particular incidents and characters as indicated below.

5.1 Domestic Violence as a Shared Vice

The manner in which Kyamanywa in The First Daughter beats his second wife for disobedience is uncalled for because in enforcing authority, one need not act like a lunatic or else there will be a thin line in gauging the degree of lunacy of the offender and the enforcer of authority. Kyomuhendo points out that no two people can live together in the closeness of a marriage and be spared from conflicts. Good marriages have a few nasty secrets, but many pleasures. A case in point is Kyamanywa's portrayal as a hardworking man, one who was wont to providing for his family in terms of their basic needs despite his apparent brutal treatment of his wives and children. It should be noted, however, that Kyomuhendo in no way suggests that violence and mistreatment of other people is a monopoly of men only. When Ngonzi, as a young girl, is seen in the dark with a man, the
hunter, she gets beaten by both her parents almost to the point of death as already noted in chapter two. It might seem incredible that parents can act so savagely as to wreak such pain on their own child but the important point to note here is that even the mother is equally guilty. Another case in point is the manner in which Kaaka in Waiting would beat her husband until he urinated in his trousers! A wife battering a husband, and not the other way round as is commonly believed! Kyomuhendo berates this action on grounds that more amicable means can be employed in ironing out misunderstandings or conflicts at one level but, at another level, she is vividly reiterating the rarely acknowledged fact that violence and battering of other human beings are not exclusively a male domain.

### 5.2 Men’s Devilish Nature

I wish to observe, however, that there are incidents in Kyomuhendo's works that genuinely demonstrate the devilish nature of men and, as such, she cannot be castigated for the manner in which she portrays them. In the rape cases of both Mukundane and Marina in Secrets No More, the men involved have no regard or iota of sympathy for how helpless their victims are in their hands. This portrayal is further heightened when the soldiers in the company of Chantal, while still in Bizimana's house, suggest that Marina too could meet her death in the same way as her mother - after being raped! Later on, having heard of Marina's story, one would have expected Matayo to empathise with her and not make her go through such a traumatic replay of rape, the same circumstances under which her mother met her death.

Again in Secrets No More, Kyomuhendo presents the devilish nature of men in the manner through which George and his father related. George’s father disowns him simply because
of materialism. When George refuses to send his father money, the latter gets so angry that he chooses to disown his own flesh and blood for something so temporal. This is similar to the threat in *Waiting* that Uncle Kembo made to his sons on their choice about which faith to follow. When we also consider the manner in which children on the other hand treat their parents, we see the fruition of one of the ten commandments of the need to honour your father and mother so that you may live long in the land ... (Exodus 20: 12). In George himself, this devilish nature overwhelms him in his treatment of his uncle Ntambi, his father's brother who helped him settle in the city. When George chooses to steal the cheques from his uncle's office and thus places his job on the line, he in effect kills him. When Ntambi later dies from a heart attack brought on by hypertension following investigations on him, George is solely to blame. One would have expected George to remember his uncle for his act of kindness to him when he allowed him to stay in his house in the city. We see George at the end dies a miserable man, which can be considered an act of retribution.

Similarly, in *Whispers from Vera*, Samson is yet another child who fails to abide by this law of honouring parents. In trying to save money, he cuts ties with his family to the point that he does not even encourage visitors to his house. Much as he does not die a physical death, we do see that he lost almost everything around him on which his life was hinged - his job, his money and even the recently acquired acquaintances through the short - lived political tenure!
We also get to see a father mistreating his own flesh and blood. When Kalenzi in "Hidden Identity" is mistreated by his father for reasons he cannot fully comprehend - his doubted paternity, the child swears to return home only upon the death of his father when he gets the opportunity to study away from home. Vera's father in Whispers from Vera chooses to mistreat his grandchild who is just a victim of circumstances. That a father can choose to deprive a growing child milk which is essential for its growth is indeed absurd, and this shows the enormity that the devilish nature of man can take.

Furthermore, still in Whispers from Vera, the financial abuse that Sheila goes through also sheds some light on the nature of her husband, Samson. The fact that he even denied assistance to his own parents shows how this greatly impacted on his wife who was now solely dependent on him and, consequently, could not even send assistance to her family, let alone have them visit her.

When Kasemiire in The First Daughter drops out of school because she is pregnant, that in itself could be considered enough punishment for her. Her father however considers it as just a drop in the ocean. He labels her a whore and at every given opportunity hurls insults at her, probably as a reminder of her fallen state. Kyomuhendo points out that as a parent, Kyamanywa was failing in his duty of helping his daughter out of the situation. This was also clearly indicative of Kyamanywa's devilish nature rising to the occasion.

In Waiting, Uncle Kembo's threats to disinherit his sons should they fail to embrace his new faith can also be considered as an element that points to the devilish nature of men.
For the old man in Waiting, this kind of nature manifests in the form of greed for meat. He stoops so low as to quarrel about food which, as a consequence, brings upon his head the title of “murderer” as he hacks his wife to death. Kyomuhendo points out in all the above mentioned instances that the devilish nature of men has earned them such titles as rapists and murderers among others.

5.3 Provocation

It should be noted, however, that much as it has been realized that some of the actions of the males in Kyomuhendo's works are much a result of their devilish nature, there are incidents that clearly exonerate the men for acting the way they do because of provocation by women or by some other excusable circumstances. In The First Daughter the manner in which Kyamanywa reacts to the disobedient act of his second wife may also call for our understanding. Every social institution, the family setting inclusive, has a set of rules that members live by for social harmony. When this particular rule is violated, Kyamanywa in an effort to ensure that no one else does it again, enforces discipline albeit we castigate the magnitude of the nature of discipline. Furthermore when he attacks his first wife and accuses her of witchcraft and the subsequent death of his son, we can excuse him on grounds that he has been poisonously misinformed by his younger wife.

When we come to Whispers from Vera, we realize that Jacinta's husband behaves the way he does towards his wife, to a large extent, due to a bruised ego. The height of what he considers is Vera's interference in his household is when she even suggests to her sister Jacinta to consider putting a stop to increasing her family size by taking up the use of contraceptives! For a man of modest means and maybe little or no education, this was
indeed an affront to him. Unfortunately, it is Jacinta who ultimately bears the brunt of his misplaced anger.

Furthermore in *Secrets No More*, when we consider George Walusimbi's anger at Lisa, to some extent we can empathise with him. The fact that Lisa could sleep with another man in George's house was annoying. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that he is bridled with murderous rage because that act was tantamount to bringing a man in his own bed!

The experience in *Waiting* is another demonstration of understandable male misconduct. Perhaps if the old man's wife had given out only some of the meat and kept a portion for the husband, she would not have met her death in such a grisly manner. Having known the great love her husband had for meat, she should have been able to act accordingly. So Kyomuhendo brings up such instances to show that some of the male characters acted in the manner they did upon provocation.

### 5.4 Women as Their Own Enemies.

Turning to the women, we note that it is not only the male characters who act the way they do for one reason or another, but we do also see how some female characters act out in ways that beg the question whether or not it is only men alone that cause pain to women at all times. Do the women too inflict pain on themselves without the involvement of any man? Kyomuhendo highlights that the mistreatment of women by their fellow women takes on various aspects of psychological, verbal and physical abuse. In *The First Daughter*, we see this manifest in the lives of Ateenyi, Anita Nakabuye, the school girls at Duhaga Secondary School and Mrs. Mutyaba.
By being branded a witch by Ateenyi, her co-wife, Abwooli in *The First Daughter* suffers in the knowledge that she has now become the butt of the village talk, so this also affects her psychologically. Unfortunately for Ateenyi, through this accusation her husband, Kyamanywa, gets to know the bare bones of the paternity of the dead child. Perhaps if Ateenyi had not falsely accused Abwooli, this would have never come to light. In this way, her husband now began to look at her in a different light and sooner than later, starts getting other women, a clear indication of a lost love.

The school girls at Duhaga Secondary School, traumatise Kasemiire through the physical and verbal mistreatment they mete out to her when she joins the school as a senior one student.

When Mrs. Mutyaba throws Kasemiire out of her house in the dead of the night without giving her a fair hearing, she in essence was throwing out what could have saved her marriage. The knowledge of what kind of husband she had would have perhaps better prepared her on how to deal with his philandering ways later on.

Anita Nakabuye, Kasemiire's best friend at Duhaga Secondary School, causes her friend emotional pain. She broke the communication between Kasemiire and Steven by feeding the lovers with a pack of lies that had them believe that the love they once shared was no more - Kasemiire all along thought that Steven had deserted her when she most needed him while Steven believed, that all was lost between him and her. Through this, Anita
hoped she would now have Steven for herself. Unfortunately, her plans fail and with great
disappointment, she opts for suicide. Here we clearly see Anita inflicting emotional pain
upon herself.

In *Whispers from Vera*, this is also expressed through characters like Martina's mother,
the mother of Ben's child, Eric's mother and Sheila's female boss. The manner in which
Martina's mother hovers around at the funeral of Eric's relative that gets Vera's in-laws
talking against Vera for not being as hardworking and social is just meant to give Vera
psychological blows. We actually see Vera determined to leave the place even before the
burial function is complete. Furthermore, the accusation of Eric's mother that Vera has
such absolute control over her son that he can no longer listen to his own mother, has a
psychological bearing on Vera.

When the mother of Ben's child is engaged in a brawl with Vera, short-lived as it was, it
tantamounted to mistreatment of one form or another. Another case in point is Ben's wife.
That she allows her mother to drive her marriage shows her stake in the marriage. She
absolutely had no independent stand right from the start of the relationship and, as such,
she could not attach any value to it. It is of little wonder that she is quick to file for
divorce proceedings.

A way from the domestic front, Sheila's female boss takes it to another level that ultimately
sees Sheila lose her job on grounds of jealousy - Sheila is better qualified than her boss and
possibly better looking!
In Secrets No More, Lisa's thoughtless actions cause her to meet her death, in an accident that was well planned by George. Lisa was a mistress of George and, therefore, by sleeping with another man within George's premises, she demonstrated insatiable lust that brought about her downfall.

5.5 The Humane Male

Although, most of the male characters portrayed are largely portrayed as being devilish either circumstantially or by nature, as the case may be, some are endowed with the milk of human kindness towards female characters. In The First Daughter, we see this in Steven Karungi, the father of Kasemiire's child. He seeks out Kasemiire and understands her anger against him. He stands by her amidst all the problems her family goes through even when he had not yet married her. He could have chosen to leave her as one having not only a personal problem but also family burdens that would weigh heavily on their marriage life. Despite attempts by his family members to stop him from getting involved with such a family that had numerous problems, he stands by the woman he loves.

Kyomuhendo further illustrates the humane nature of some men in Secrets No More. Bizimana exhibits an unnatural sense of patience and love for his wife who, even after two to three years in their marriage, has failed to bear a child. Far from blaming his wife incessantly, he actually co?-soles her that with time everything would be alright. Furthermore, Mr. Magezi's case is almost exceptional. That he continues to stay with his wife in a loving relationship, even after her act of infidelity, is extremely unimaginable. He
stays with his wife until, indeed, it is death that does them apart. Later on he marries Marina despite her troubled past and adopts her daughter, Rosario.

5.6 Conclusion

A close observation of the analyses of the relation between the male and female in Kyomuhendo's works gives pointers to a battle between the sexes for one reason or another. There are however a number of incidents highlighted about both men and women that make one wonder whether the works under study are written by a woman. Through her unreserved use of descriptive language, Kyomuhendo explicitly presents pertinent issues which perhaps may not have been broached by some female writers who are still under the hangover of sexism even in the use of language. This is well brought out in the presentation of sex in Secrets No More (1999) and Whispers from Vera (2002), war in Secrets No More (1999) and Waiting (2007), brutality in The First Daughter (1996), Secrets No More (1999), Waiting (2007) and "Hidden Identity" (1998) and death in Secrets No More (1999) and Waiting (2007) as topics for discussion. Culturally, in African societies, it is a social taboo, especially for the female, to get engaged in discussions of a sexual nature. It would be expected, as has been noticed in the works of some female writers like Jane Kaberuka in Silent Patience (1999) and Regina Amolo in A Season of Mirth (1999) that the subject of sex is never directly depicted, and that Kyomuhendo, being female, would not have handled it the way she does as seen in the presentation of the sexual exploits of Marina and Dee in Secrets No More and Vera in Whispers From Vera.

Furthermore, she depicts violence of the male-dominated cultural system by giving us horrendous accounts of the brutalities of conflicts ranging from the domestic realm on to a
wider societal scope. The presentation of the rape scenes of Mukundane and Marina in *Secrets No More*, the grisly murder of the old man's wife and the manner in which Kaaka meets her death in *Waiting* gets us, as readers, directly involved and, as such, we do empathise with the victims.

And finally, it has been observed from the chapter analyses that, much as the number of good men that feature in Goretti Kyomuhendo's works seems to be small, she in essence brings to the fore the fact that there are good men just as there are good women, and bad women just as there are bad men. It should be further noted that she also touched on issues that cannot be labeled as exclusively female or male but can have a profound effect upon the co-existence of both the male and the female. In her view, more could be realized if both men and women worked at fostering harmony between the sexes.

I wish to conclude, therefore, that based on the above considerations, we note that Goretti Kyomuhendo does not at all intents and purposes, concentrate on championing the women's cause while vilifying the male but presents society as it is. It becomes imperative, therefore, for us to realize that gender considerations should never govern our appreciation of literary works but, rather, what and how they communicate to us.
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