



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**WOMEN OPPRESSION AND EMANCIPATION THROUGH APPLICATION
OF AMAZONIAN AND MASCULINIST THEORIES IN SELECTED
NOVELS BY NAWAL EL SAADAWI AND BUCHI EMECHETA**

ABDULRAHAMAN ABDULWAHEED IDRIS

FBMK 2020 22



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By

ABDULRAHAMAN ABDULWAHEED IDRIS

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

January 2020

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Alhaji Idris Abdulrahman who passed away on Friday, 23rd June 2017. May your soul rest in *Aljannatul Firdaus*, amen. And my mother, Alhaja Rahdiat Abdulrahman. May Allah continue to spare your life in good health and enable you to reap sufficiently the fruit of your labour, amen.



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of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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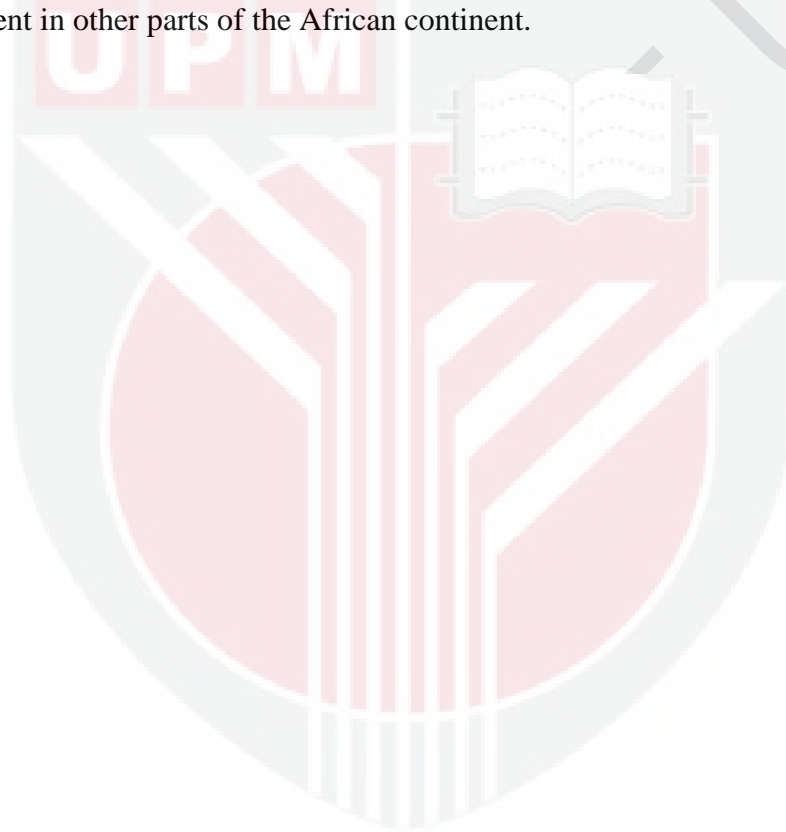
January 2020

Chairperson : Rosli Talif, PhD

Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication

Most researchers in the area of feminist discourse have focused predominantly on patriarchal oppression on women, socio-cultural, political, economic, racial and religious oppression on women. Attention has mainly been on the extraneous factors that bring about oppression and discontentment to the lives of the women. This current study focuses on women oppression by exploring the various aspects of maternal oppression on women as presented in the selected novels of Nawal El Saadawi (Egypt) and Buchi Emecheta (Nigeria). The two female novelists have been chosen for this study due to the sameness in their ideological pursuit of maternal oppression on women and the strategy for emancipation as distinct from their contemporaries who equally focus on women oppression but from extraneous perspective. This current study therefore, focuses on women's active contribution on the oppression, suppression, and brutality of their fellow women. The oppressive tendencies executed on the female victims by their fellow women resulted in misery, prostitution, perpetual unhappiness and untimely death of the oppressed women. This aspect has hardly been explored. This current study, through a textual analysis, intends to fill the gap by examining selected novels of two female novelists from Egypt and Nigeria through application of Amazon feminism of Thomas Gramstad (1999) and its concepts of *Androgyny*, or masculine-feminine duality of gender and Masculinist theory of Chinweizu (1990) and its concepts of mother power, bride power and wife power. The study examines selected novels of Nawal El-Saadawi's *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* (1989), *A Daughter of Isis* (2002), and *Woman at Point Zero* (2015) and Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1975), *The Bride Price* (2013) and *The Joy of Motherhood* (2013). The study aims to investigate how maternal oppression on women is perpetrated in the selected novels using the concepts of mother power, bride power and wife power as espoused in the Masculinist theory of Chinweizu. I aim to explore the representation of female characters as the primary architects of their fellow women's oppression within the patriarchal set-ups by employing Chinweizu's

Masculinist theory and its concepts as analytical tools. Lastly, the study aims to discover how the oppressed female characters reappraised their oppressed selves, which leads to their emancipation by applying Thomas Gramstad's Amazon feminism and its concept of "androgyny". The study highlights the different forms of matriarchal oppression on women, which are in the forms of female genital mutilation, preference for the male in all social matters, and showing rejection in all matters relating to the female. In this study, the role of *androgyny* is examined as the most suitable virtues required for the attainment of the goal of gender equality and emancipation of the oppressed female characters. The study further stresses that despite the perennial oppression of women as evidently portrayed in the selected novels, with determined reappraisal, the oppressed androgynous heroines have been able to change their oppressed status and attained emancipation. Further studies could be conducted on women's fictional narratives from East and South Africa to authenticate whether or not the phenomenon of matriarchal oppression on women is prevalent in other parts of the African continent.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENINDASAN DAN EMANSIPASI WANITA MENERUSI TEORI
AMAZONIA DAN MASKULIN DALAM KARYA TERPILIH OLEH NAWAL
EL SAADAWI DAN BUCHI EMECHETA**

Oleh

ABDULRAHAMAN ABDULWAHEED IDRIS

Januari 2020

Pengerusi : Rosli Talif, PhD
Fakulti : Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Kebanyakan penyelidik dalam bidang wacana feminis banyak menumpukan perhatian terhadap penindasan patriarki terhadap wanita, penindasan terhadap sosio-budaya, politik, ekonomi, kaum dan agama terhadap wanita. Perhatian lebih diberikan berkaitan dengan faktor luar yang menjurus kepada penindasan dan ketidakpuasan dalam kehidupan wanita. Tesis ini memfokuskan kepada penindasan wanita dengan meneroka pelbagai aspek penindasan maternal terhadap wanita seperti yang dipaparkan dalam novel-novel terpilih karya Nawal El Saadawi (Mesir) dan Buchi Emecheta (Nigeria). Kedua-dua novelis wanita ini telah dipilih berdasarkan kesamaan dalam ideologi mereka tentang penindasan maternal terhadap wanita dan strategi untuk emansipasi yang berbeza dari novelis kontemporari lain yang turut memfokuskan pada penindasan wanita tetapi dari perspektif luar. Oleh sebab itu, kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada sumbangan aktif wanita terhadap penindasan, pencengkaman, dan kekejaman terhadap sesama wanita. Kecenderungan penindasan yang dilakukan pada mangsa wanita oleh wanita lain mengakibatkan kesengsaraan, pelacuran, kesedihan yang berterusan dan kematian wanita yang tertindas. Aspek ini belum lagi diterokai sepenuhnya. Kajian ini, melalui analisis tekstual, bertujuan untuk mengisi jurang dengan mengkaji novel-novel terpilih daripada dua novelis wanita dari Mesir dan Nigeria melalui penggunaan feminisme Amazon oleh Thomas Gramstad (1999) dan konsep-konsepnya terhadap *androgyny*, atau dualiti jantina maskulin-feminin, dan teori Maskulinis oleh Chinweizu (1990) dan konsep-konsep pengaruh ibu, pengaruh pengantin perempuan dan pengaruh isteri. Kajian ini meneliti novel-novel terpilih karya Nawal El-Saadawi iaitu *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* (1989), *A Daughter of Isis* (2002), dan *Woman at Point Zero* (2015) dan karya Buchi Emecheta iaitu *Second Class Citizen* (1975), *The Bride Price* (2013) dan *The Joy of Motherhood* (2013). Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana penindasan maternal terhadap wanita dilakukan dalam novel-novel terpilih yang menggunakan konsep pengaruh ibu, pengaruh pengantin perempuan dan pengaruh isteri yang disokong oleh teori

Maskulinis oleh Chinweizu. Saya menyasarkan untuk meneroka gambaran watak wanita sebagai arkitek utama dalam penindasan sesama wanita dalam konteks patriarki dengan menggunakan teori Maskulinis oleh Chinweizu dan konsepnya sebagai metod kajian. Akhir sekali, kajian itu bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana watak-watak wanita yang ditindas itu menilai semula diri mereka yang ditindas, yang membawa kepada pembebasan mereka dengan menggunakan feminisme Amazon oleh Thomas Gramstad dan konsep *androgyny*. Kajian ini menonjolkan pelbagai bentuk penindasan matriarkal terhadap wanita, yang mana penindasan wujud dalam bentuk mencacatkan alat kelamin wanita, mengutamakan lelaki dalam semua situasi sosial, dan menyingkirkan wanita dalam semua perkara yang berkaitan dengan mereka. Dalam kajian ini, peranan *androgyny* diteliti sebagai sifat yang paling diperlukan dalam mencapai keseksamaan jantina dan kebebasan untuk watak wanita yang tertindas. Kajian ini turut menekankan bahawa walaupun penindasan kaum wanita berterusan seperti yang jelas digambarkan dalam novel-novel terpilih, menerusi penilaian semula, heroin tertindas telah berjaya mengubah status tertindas mereka dan mengecapi kebebasan. Kajian lanjut boleh dilakukan pada naratif fiksiyen wanita dari Timur dan Selatan Afrika untuk mengesahkan sama ada fenomena penindasan matriarkal terhadap wanita tersebar luas di bahagian lain di benua Afrika.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Rosli Talif, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Arbaayah Ali Termizi, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Hardev Kaur Jujar Singh, PhD

Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

ZALILAH MOHD SHARIFF, PhD

Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

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Name and Matric No: Abdulrahaman Abdulwaheed Idris, GS46205

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Signature: _____
Name of Chairman
of Supervisory
Committee: Associate Professor Dr. Rosli Talif

Signature: _____
Name of Member
of Supervisory
Committee: Associate Professor Dr. Arbaayah Ali Termizi

Signature: _____
Name of Member
of Supervisory
Committee: Dr. Hardev Kaur Jujar Singh

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Like all artists, I am interested in human relationships and their quality. This is what I explore in my work. Human relationships do not occur in a vacuum. They develop in the context of ecology, economics, politics, culture, and psyche. All these aspects of our society affect those relationships profoundly. These aspects are inseparable. They are connected with the most earthly. As an artist, you examine the most particulars to explore the interconnection of phenomena to open a window into the human soul. (Ngugi, 2004)

In literary creativity, the literary artist performs the role of a watchdog of the society. It is clearly established in the literary circle of different socio-cultural and political settings in different parts of the African continent that any creative writer, who avoids serious socio-cultural and political happenings in his milieu, cannot be said to be relevant to his people. Such a creative writer without a utilitarian function in his artistic production would be likened to what literary artists generally refer to as “an absurd man in the proverb who leaves his house burning to pursue a rat fleeing from the flame.” Incidentally, the two female novelists chosen for this study, Nawal El Saadawi from North Africa (Egypt) and Buchi Emecheta from West Africa (Nigeria) have been observed to be sufficiently relevant based on their intense exploration of the issues and ideas that are extremely crucial to the lives and well-being of the women in their socio-cultural, political and economic settings. This study, therefore, is an intrinsic and extrinsic explication of the women relationships with one another as documented in the selected texts of the two prominent female authors, Nawal El Saadawi from North Africa (Egypt) and Buchi Emecheta from West Africa (Nigeria). More so, the study is concerned with the level of commitment of the two writers in their presentation of women relationships with one another. The commitment of the two female authors in the identification and presentation of women oppressive tendencies towards their fellow women, which over the years has been a major source of severe traumatic experience to the affected women will be fully examined in this study. This current study also seeks to explore how these oppressed and traumatized women are later empowered by applying the concept of *androgyny and masculine-feminine duality of gender* as enshrined in Thomas Gramstad’s *Amazon feminism* for the main goal of attaining the desired emancipation that will finally engender an egalitarian society in their male-dominated patriarchal societies. Although, the current study is preoccupied with the examination of different forms of maternal oppression on women in the selected novels of the chosen female novelists, it is not unaware of the fact that for many decades, men have played a principal role as the primary oppressors of the women in their respective male dominated patriarchal societies specifically, in Nigeria and Egypt.

Meanwhile, due to the patriarchal practice, oppressive and unfavourable socio-cultural, political and economic system which women have experienced and still experiencing, exaggerated masculinity and women's objectification that are replete in male fictional writings, and misrepresentation of female characters in male-authored texts as witches, weak, servile housewives, passive, sexual tools, emotional, illiterates, over dependent on the male for sustenance, all these unpleasant circumstances under which women are presented in their male-dominated patriarchal societies which are evidently documented in the literary creativity of the male writers in different parts of the African continent, specifically, Nigeria and Egypt, led to the general submission of the feminists that men are the natural oppressors of the women. This general assertion therefore, results into the emergence of serious feminists discourse in different parts of the African continent. Therefore, many feminist writers in their socio-cultural milieu have been preoccupied with the exposition of the oppression, suppression, marginalization and second-class status of the women, which are evidently captured in the male fictional narratives.

It has been authentically observed that Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Wole Soyinka, Elechi Amadi, and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o are among the prominent Nigerian male novelists who in their fictional narratives, have penchant to portray androcentrism and a one dimensional and minimalized portrayal of women who are oppressed, suppressed, and marginalised due to the entrenched patriarchal structure in their geographical settings. For instance, in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) Okonkwo is presented as a legendary hero. A man who has fought many battles for his community, a man who for nine years has never been defeated in wrestling contests and a personality who is generally acclaimed as one of the wealthiest farmers in his community. At the end of his heroic journey, he immortalises his name by sacrificing his life rather than allowing the effeminate men at his watch to continue to allow the imperialists to subjugate his people politically, exploit them economically, culturally acculturate them, and while at the same time alienating them religiously. His wife Anasi on the other hand is presented as irrational, unorganised, and inexperienced at being a wife and mother in a typically male-dominated patriarchal society. Owing to her nonconformist attitude towards discharging her roles as a wife and mother by timely preparing the husband's meal and keeping the house clean and tidy, she is brutally oppressed by being mercilessly beaten by the enraged husband. Similarly, through Okonkwo's elevation and lavish celebration of one of his wives who three times consecutively gives birth to male children have made the other wives to feel traumatised and oppressed. They are subjected to feelings of inferiority and inadequacy as wives and mothers by not fulfilling their role of patriarchal expectation. This is simply due to the fact that other wives are merely endowed with only daughters. Similarly, Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* (1966) is an exposition of women oppression emanating from cultural practice among the people of the Southeast Nigeria. It captures the oppression and traumatic experience emanating from the practice of childhood marriage that a woman sometimes has to cope with in a heavily patriarchal society of Eastern Nigeria. Ahurole right from her childhood is betrothed to Ekwueme another boy in the community without their consent. Ahurole suffers oppression and unhappiness from her husband after marriage due to the absence of true love and affection between them. Ahurole in several occasions have to escape and seek refuge in her parents' house to avoid been battered by her enraged husband. What

is more oppressive and scandalous to Ahurole is when her parents are compelled to refund the bride price paid on her head to Ekwueme's preferred woman after spending several years in her marriage with Ekwueme. Additionally, Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) is yet another male Nigerian literary creativity that features women's oppression, suppression, and objectification in a heavily patriarchal society of Western Nigeria. The readers are bewildered when the writer presents a decadent cultural practice in which the King's horseman is all powerful in that, it is both socially and culturally permissible for the king's horseman to publicly seek amorous affair with a beautiful young woman who has just been given out in marriage to another man. All efforts of the woman leader, 'Iyaloja' to dissuade him from his scandalous request proves abortive. The shameless, chronic, lecherous horse-man thus unjustly defiles the newly wedded bride. His action is not only oppressive and dehumanizing to the helpless young bride, but also imbued in her with a permanent traumatic experience throughout her life.

The Egyptian male writers are not equally spared from the negative and derogatory presentation of their Egyptian or Afro-Arab women. Nawal El Saadawi in her reaction towards women portrayal in male fictional narrative affirms:

Among the male authors I have read, both in the West and in the Arab world, irrespective of the language in which they have written, or of the region from which they have come, not one has been able to free himself from this age-old image of women handed down to us from an ancient past, no matter how famous many of them have been for their passionate defense of human rights, human values and justice, and their vigorous resistance to oppression and tyranny in any form (El Saadawi, 1989:160).

An Egyptian Nobel laureate, Naquib Mahfouz in *Palce Walk* (1990) features male superiority and female subservience, passivity and female oppression by men. Ahmad Abd Jawad is presented as a man who in his family setting is too powerful and one whose actions are unquestionable by his wife, Amina. Amina's marriage to her husband, Ahmad Abd Jawad is filled with varied traumatic experience and oppression because it is a marriage in which she has been perpetually silenced. Her exhibition of absolute subservience in her marriage makes her to condone her husband's irresponsible behavior by staying out late at night moving from one entertainment house to another with his insatiable appetite for womanizing at the expense of his family. An attempt by Amina to caution her husband, Abd Jawad from his insensitivity towards his family is met with a severe threat from the husband. An Egyptian woman, Amina is therefore, made to live under oppressive, painful and regrettable marriage in an Islamic society of Egypt.

Another prominent Male Egyptian novelist, Mahmud Tahir Lashin in his masterpiece *Hawwa bila Adam* (*Eve Without Adam*, 1943) the novel is yet another male Egyptian narrative that aesthetically presents women emotional anguish, and psychological

torment emanating from the relationship between a male aristocrat and a woman of lowly status. Despite the unbridgeable gap between Hawwa and her aristocratic lover, Ramzi, Hawwa, an elementary school teacher from a very poor parentage who with great difficulty self-sponsored her education, falls in love with Ramzi. At the turn of event, with Ramzi's consent, his father marries a lady from another wealthy family for him. Consequently, Hawwa's abandonment by the man whom she truly loves, and based on her severe emotional distress and psychological torture, she takes her life by herself, she commits suicide. For many centuries now, in different parts of the African continent, specifically, Nigeria and Egypt, the same pattern of one dimensional female representation dominate the male fictional narratives. It is this unjustifiable portrayal of women in the male writings in different parts of the African continent, (Nigeria and Egypt) that has triggered the general assumption of the feminists that men are the only primary oppressors of the women.

Therefore, based on the foregoing discussion, the ideological conception of this study emanates from the general assumption from female writings in different parts of the African continent that "oppression of women in African literature is predominantly patriarchal." That is, men perpetrate women oppression in their socio-cultural, political and economic settings (Gohar, 2016; Abdullahi, 2015; Bryson, 1992). This study aims at representing a contrary notion and establish the fact that there exist matriarchal oppression on women in female writings in different parts of the African continent (Egypt) and (Nigeria). This means that oppression of women in the writings of an Afro-Arab, and Egyptian writer, El Saadawi and a Nigerian writer, Emecheta is equally matriarchal or intra-gender based. Evidence is presented through a critical reading of the selected works of the two female novelists through employment of concepts of *androgyny or masculine-feminine duality of gender* as enshrined in *Amazon feminism* of Gramstad (1999) and concepts of *mother power, bride power, and wife power* in *Masculinist theory* of Chinweizu (1990).

Different scholars and gender experts have defined the word "oppression" differently. For example, Bankston maintains that "oppression refers to the system of obstacles and the individual acts that maintain the privilege and authority of the dominant group" (Bankston, 2000; Jaggar and Young, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Roth, 2005). Similarly, in Barker's view, "oppression" is described as:

The social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group or institution. Typically, a government or political organization that is in power places these restrictions formally or covertly on oppressed groups so that they may be exploited and less able to compete with other social groups. The oppressed individual or group is devalued, exploited, and deprived of privileges by the individual or group which has more power (Barker, 2003).

In his own view of oppression, Johnson also affirms: "for every social category that is privileged, one or more other categories are oppressed in relation to it. The concept of oppression points to social forces that tend to press upon people and hold them down, to hem them in and block their pursuit of a goal in life. Just as privileged tends to open doors of opportunity, oppression tends to slam them shut" (Johnson, 2000a, P. 39). Awa Thiam also sees oppression as the result of Phallocratic system whereby, "it is not unusual to find battered wives"(Thiam, 1986 p. 476). From whatever standpoint we maintain, on a general note, oppression could refer to a relationship that is exploitative and domineering psychologically, economically, culturally, and socially. In this study, therefore, the word "oppression" will be perceived as any unjustifiable use of authority or power by either an individual or group, which perennially brings agony and discontentment to the victim (Mohammed, 2010).

Different writers have presented the word 'oppression' in different forms, which include economic, political, religious, cultural, racial and gender, which are recreated in literary creativity as an artistic representation of human society. The focus of this thesis, therefore, will be on gender oppression. Oppression is a result of human interaction. That is to say, that, people in their day-to-day relationship with one another, come face-to-face with each other and form a collective identity called "primary group." A group, according to social psychologists, is "a plurality of persons who interact with one another in a given social context more than they interact with anyone else" (Sprott, 1958, p. 9). Such tightly knit groups of people include family members, the age groups, and village groups. One major peculiarity of each of these groups is the exclusive interaction they share with one another. As social interaction becomes more and more complicated, group identification becomes complex because every member of a group is at liberty to belong to as many groups of interest as possible. For instance, a woman can belong to her age group apart from her family membership, village group, sex group, occupational group, religious group, and other groupings, which are of interest to her.

Groups do not just exist in physical stratifications only; some doctrines govern the conduct of every member of a group. Sprott reveals that according to the Freudian concept, a group must have moral standards which will guide its members; while Morton Deutsch sees a group as pursuing a collective purpose of "interdependent goal"(11). It is, therefore; because of the pursuance of goals, that conflict of interest amongst members of the same group or one group towards another group can ensue. Conflicts of this nature usually result in the emergence of two opposing sides – the stronger and the weaker sides and it is usually by undermining the latter's essential human qualities of existence, that the former can exert its superiority. It then develops into a psychological necessity for both parties to believe that this kind of organization is due to some inherent differences between them. This behavioural pattern, however, transcends from the group to the individual interaction level.

The thrust of this study, therefore, is that the interaction between women who are members of a group produces the dominant member, which consequently results into the oppression of the weaker member of that group. Similarly, it could be deduced that

matriarchal oppression on women in the selected texts of the two female authors occurs as a result of the interaction between the women who are either members of the same group or of one group towards another. For example, the cruelty and oppression in the act of female “clitoridectomy,” female circumcision, has remained traditionalized in different parts of the Africa continent North and West Africa respectively simply because women themselves continue to insist on circumcision for their daughters. This and other forms of oppressive acts executed by women on their fellow women as captured in the selected texts of the two female authors under study would be adequately examined in this study. The two female novelists are selected from the different socio-cultural milieu, that is, North Africa and West Africa respectively, to enable the researcher authenticate the fact that matriarchal oppression on women has become a general phenomenon in female writings in different parts of the African continent, most essentially in North Africa (Egypt) and West Africa (Nigeria). The study employs *Amazon feminist theory* (Gramstad, 1999) and its concepts of *androgyny or masculine-feminine duality of gender* as enshrined in the theory and the concepts of *mother power, bride power and wife power* as captured in *Masculinist theory* (Chinweizu, 1990) for the explication of women matriarchal oppression and emancipation as captured in the selected texts of the two female authors under study.

The fact that women are disadvantaged in the patriarchal society cannot be overstressed (Baffoun 1994, p.7.), (Cutrufelli 1983, p.69), (Mazrui 1993, p.95), (Bryson 1992, p.198), (Frank 1987, p.31), (Learner 1977, p.xix). Also, S Walby (1986) conceptualizes patriarchy as “a system of interrelated social structures through which men exploit women” (P. 80) Just as J. Vock (1988) believes that patriarchy is “the rule of the father or the domination of women by men” (quoted in Bryson 1992, p. 81-96). Similarly, this thesis will explore the theme of women oppression by their fellow women as the necessary stimuli for their acceptability within the patriarchal society. As ironic as it may seem, the study will delve into the supposed oppressed status of women and will come up with the statement that women themselves rather than men are primarily responsible for their disadvantaged positions within the society. This is because gender researchers have theorized that women possess greater powers in comparison to men (Chinweizu 1990, p. 4-5, Ogun-dipe- Leslie 1994, p.14, Amadiume 1987, Acholonu 1995 p. 1-4). Rather than put their powers to beneficial use, they chose to victimize one another in the attempt to gain favours in the eyes of men.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Different researchers in their scholarly writings have preoccupied themselves exploring Nawal El Saadawi's and Buchi Emecheta's works as novels presenting socio-cultural, political, religious and patriarchal oppression of women. Less attention is therefore, focused on women matriarchal oppression in the works of the two female novelists chosen for this study. Giglio, E. L. (2005) examined three novels by Nawal El Saadawi: *Woman at Point Zero, The Fall of the Iman and The Innocence of the Devil*. In her analysis of the three novels, the primary narrators, Firdaus, Bint Allah, and Ganat are portrayed as silenced characters based on their oppression by both patriarchal power and religious authority (Islam). Religion is depicted as a

justification for the oppression and abuse of women in her three selected novels. Her study examined the fictional works of Nawal El Saadawi using the postcolonial, feminist theory of the subaltern. She employs subaltern theory as the basis for her analysis.

These works by Nawal El Saadawi, Giglio states, primarily focus on the lives of the oppressed women as she attempted in her works to bring attention to the silenced “others” in Egypt in particular and all other countries of the world in general. A point of departure between her analysis and the current study is both ideological and theoretical. Instead of superficially accusing the patriarchal powers and the religious authority as the major sources of oppression and unhappiness of women, my current study will primarily focus on the activities of women that are detrimental to the lives of their fellow women as the primary source of women oppression. More so, my thesis uses Amazon feminism of Thomas Gramstad and the concept of androgyny and Masculinist theory of Chinweizu and its concepts of mother power, bride power and wife power for the explication of women matriarchal oppression in the six selected texts of two chosen female novelists. In her comparative studies of the three novels, Giglio concluded saying that the three primary narrators qualified as subalterns because they find themselves submitting to the power and authority, without necessarily accepting it. Firdaus, Bint Allah, and Ganat are all subjugated and prevented from realizing their desired goals. Therefore, they belong to the category of the subaltern. The current study will neither see the patriarchal power nor religious authorities as the major obstacles that hinder women from achieving their goals, rather, the primary cause of women’s lack of fulfilment will be traced to the activities of their fellow women.

Porter, A. M. (1996) in his review of Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen* contends that the novel would be adequately perceived if studied as a work portraying the heroine’s struggle for personal development. Equally explored are the themes of love, marriage and the subject of student life overseas (especially in a hostile and unfriendly environment). He uses feminist theory as the basis for the analysis. Though Portal’s opinion may be a valid review of Emecheta’s novel, his analysis is absolutely at variant with the preoccupation of the current study. Rather than focusing on the themes of love and marriage and the life of the immigrant students in a foreign land, the current study will exclusively preoccupy itself with the examination of women’s active participation in the misery, and unfulfilled lives of their fellow women. Portal goes further in affirming that despite the feminist aesthetic achieved in the creative work, Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen* is not without some noticeable blemishes. In his criticism of Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen*, Portal examines the underlying weakness in Emecheta’s writing style, which has prevented many critics from understanding the artistic gap between Emecheta and her heroine, Adah. He contends that Emecheta’s criticism of African men is not only faulted for its generalization but also, unimaginably exaggerative which makes it altogether unconvincing. To substantiate his point, he draws attention to two paramount issues in the novel: When Francis, Adah’s husband approves his father’s disapproval of the heroine’s going to study in Britain, the authorial comment left the critics in bewilderment. Authorial narration reveals that “Francis was an African through and through. A much more

civilized man would probably have found a better way of saying this to his wife. But to him, he was the male, and he was right to tell her what she was going to do” (30). The male characters who have motivated Adah toward realizing her dream as a writer are never fully developed.

Considering the review of El Saadawi’s and Emecheta’s novels, neither of these researchers examines El Saadawi’s and Emecheta’s works as novels portraying women oppression by their fellow women nor have they combined and studied the selected works of the two female novelists as done by the present study. Furthermore, the current study combines and studies six selected novels of two female novelists from different parts of the African continent, North and West Africa respectively not only to justify the prevalence of women oppression by their fellow women in different parts of the African continent but also to arguably identify it as a general phenomenon in Afro-Arab Egyptian community and Nigeria. The current study seeks to address these gaps by examining three novels of Nawal El Saadawi from North Africa and another three by Buchi Emecheta from West Africa using the concepts of *androgyny* or *masculine-feminine-duality of gender* in Amazon feminism of Gramstad (1999) and the concepts of mother power, bride power and wife power in Masculinist theory of Chinweizu (1990) as the basis for the analysis.

Previous researchers have also studied the selected novels for this research separately usually in the forms of scholarly articles in a journal, theses, dissertation or chapters in a book. However, the major point of departure between this current study and the previous research is the fact that previous researchers have not comprehensively and analytically combined and discussed the selected novels of the two chosen female novelists, Nawal El Saadawi and Buchi Emecheta from the perspective of matriarchal oppression on women as will be done in this study.

Furthermore, few researchers have superficially addressed the issue of matriarchal oppression of women. For instance, Abdullahi K.A. (2015) in his A Sociological Critics of Gender Violence in El Saadawi’s *Woman at Point Zero* casually refers to the heroine’s exploitation, and inhuman treatment from her fellow women, Sherifat Salah. She oppresses and exploits Firdaus by luring her into the world of prostitution without reciprocating Firdaus’ services to the men, her customers with any financial benefit. Abdulqadir’s reference to women matriarchal oppression in the form of scholarly articles in a journal is faintly presented. His review examines women, not as the major forces or the primary oppressors of their fellow women, which is the primary concern of the current study.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill in the aforementioned gaps that exist in the study of women writings in Egyptian and Nigerian literature from the perspective of women matriarchal oppression and emancipation. The thesis employs the aforementioned theories of Amazon feminism of Gramstad (1999) and its concept of *androgyny* or *masculine-feminine duality of gender* and Masculinist theory of Chinweizu (1990) with its concepts of *mother power*, *bride power* and *wife power* as the basis for the analysis. Therefore, it should be observed that while the previous researchers have

focused extensively on patriarchal oppression of women or oppression of women by men from socio-cultural, political, economic and religious perspectives, the issue of maternal oppression on women, that is, women's active participation towards the oppression and agony of their fellow women which has been largely ignored in the previous studies will form the primary preoccupation of this current study.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This thesis aims to achieve the following objectives.

- i. To investigate how maternal oppression on women is perpetrated in the selected novels using the concepts of mother power, bride power and wife power as espoused in the Masculinist theory of Chinweizu.
- ii. To explore the representation of the female characters as the primary architects of their fellow women's oppression within the patriarchal set-ups by applying Chinweizu's Masculinist theory and its concepts of *mother power*, *bride power* and *wife power* as analytical tools.
- iii. To discover how the oppressed female characters reappraise their oppressed self, which leads to their emancipation by applying Amazon feminism and its concepts *androgyny*, or *masculine-feminine duality of gender* as analytical tools.

1.4 Study Questions

The following are the study questions that should guide the analysis of the selected texts for this study:

- i. In what ways are maternal oppression on women perpetrated in the selected literary texts of Nawal El Saadawi and Buchi Emecheta?
- ii. How have the two chosen female novelists in their selected texts achieved the representation of their female characters as the primary architects of the oppression of their fellow women?
- iii. What role do the Amazon feminism and the concepts of *androgyny* or *masculine-feminine duality of gender* play in the process of reappraisal and emancipation of the oppressed female characters in the selected texts?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The emergence of this study emanates from the general concern in female writings in different parts of African continent specifically; North Africa (Egypt) and West Africa (Nigeria) that women oppression, suppression, exploitation, dehumanization, marginalization and second-class position in their socio-cultural, political and economic environment are primarily brought to bear by patriarchal construct. To these

revolutionary female writers, the pathetic and disgraceful situation in which women live can be attributed to the socio-cultural, political, economic and religion which are constructed to favour the male at the expense of the female. This study, therefore, is in contrast to the general proclamation of the women that men predominantly perpetrate women oppression in their male-dominated societies. This thesis is of tremendous importance in that it represents a contrary notion on the reality about women oppression by representing six selected novels of two African female novelists from the much talked about extraneous perspective to the intraneous with full utilization of literary writings of the chosen female, El Saadawi and Emecheta. As female writers' perception of women oppression from time on been established as patriarchal, this study is uniquely important because it provides a new way of exploring the oppression of women in the writings of female novelists emanating predominantly from male-dominated, patriarchal societies. That is, by examining women oppression from the matriarchal point of view. Essentially, the study has brought to the limelight a new dimension in the female literary creativity in African literature.

This study is uniquely significant in the area of gender studies. It demonstrates that women oppression in female writings in African literature is not only patriarchal but also matriarchal based. As evident in the creative works of the chosen female novelists, women have been examined as the primary oppressors of their fellow women contrary to the earlier affirmation of the previous researchers.

Furthermore, the significance of this research is seen in its comprehensive study of El Saadawi's *Memoir of a Woman Doctor (MWD)*, *Woman at Point Zero (WPZ)*, and *A Daughter of Isis (DI)* and Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen (SCC)*, *The Bride Price (BP)* and *The Joy of Motherhood (JM)*. The study, therefore, will fill the gap that exists in the study of female writings in African literature by reinterpreting women oppression not from the much familiar patriarchal perspective but from the matriarchal point of view. The study will tremendously contribute to scholarship by drawing the attention of the students, scholars, researchers, academics on the ideological standpoint of the selected African female writers chosen for this research.

It equally shows the forms of matriarchal oppression perpetrated on the oppressed female characters. The current study has also explored how oppressed women are able to emancipate themselves from their oppressed circumstances through Amazon feminist theory. Through an in-depth and logical analysis, the study will help the readers to have a logical understanding on how the novelists craftily represent their female characters as the primary architects of the oppression of their fellow women within the patriarchal society.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

In this study, the theoretical framework to be employed for the analysis of the chosen primary material is based on Thomas Gramstad's *Amazon Feminism* (1999) with its concept of *androgyny* or *masculine-feminine duality of gender* and Chinweizu's Masculinist theory (1990) with its concepts of *mother power*, *bride power* and *wife power*. The two theories are to be utilised as the analytical tools for the examination of the thematic concerns of the six selected texts of two female authors, Nawal El Saadawi, an Egyptian female novelist and Buchi Emecheta, a Nigerian female novelist. The suitability of the theories for the analysis of the selected works and their complementary in usage account for their choice as the most appropriate theoretical devices for the examination of the selected texts of the two female novelists chosen for this study.

The term *Amazon feminism* at the early stage of its conception especially from the perspective of Greek mythology refers to a branch of feminism that emphasises women's physical equality with men as a means to achieve the goal of gender equality and emancipation of women. However, for the Amazonian female hero to be able to face the contemporary socio-cultural, political, economic, and religious challenges of her milieu, Gramstad in his "The female hero: A Radiant Feminist Synthesis Feminist Interpretation Ayn Rand" redefines the term, *Amazon Feminism*. According to Thomas Gramstad (1999) therefore, Amazon feminism is a branch of feminism that emphasizes female mental and physical prowess as means to achieve the goal of gender equality and emancipation of women. It is concerned with women's mental and physical equality with men and it disagrees with the idea of gender role stereotyping and discrimination against women. It rejects the idea of how women are supposed to be, look or behave as if they are passive, weak and physically helpless. The exponent of the theory rejects the idea that certain profession or occupation is inherently masculine (or feminine). The adherents uphold, and explore a vision of heroic womanhood (Gramstad, 1999). The proponent of the theory strongly believe that women when specially determined are capable of venturing and excelling in all professions of human endeavours. The advocates of this philosophy are found in different fields or professions such as Military, Navy, Air force, Medicine, Engineering, Wrestling, Boxing, weight lifting and a host of other related fields that are said to be of the male preserved. The thrust of this theory is that with the mental and physical prowess of women, the proponents of the theory strongly believe that, women are capable of achieving not only the goal of gender equality but also, have absolute and unrestrained power to liberate themselves from all the forces of oppression.

Gramstad elaborately gives a highlight on what constitutes a new Amazonian female hero. For the Amazonian female hero to be able to break the barriers of gender role stereotype, Gramstad believes that she must necessarily be *androgynous*. Gramstad therefore, emphasises on the concepts of *androgyny*, *gender-nonessentialism*, and *masculine-feminine duality of gender* (Gramstad. 1999).

Sandra Bem, (1974), a prominent exponent of the concept of *androgyny* underlines that in every culture, there are positive and negative characteristics that are attributed to the male and similarly, there are positive and negatives characteristics that are associated to the female. An androgynous character therefore, is that new Amazon female hero with a high degree of male positive characteristics and a high degree of female positive characteristics. It is this new virtues that will enable the new Amazonian female hero to successfully venture into different fields and professions especially those that are said to be of male preserved such as in the military, navy, air force, wrestling, boxing, Medicine, Engineering, weight lifting etc.

The emergence of this concept, *androgyny* countered the ever long held opinion in the wider society and in the field of psychology that masculinity and femininity constitute bipolar ends of a single continuum that is masculine-feminine characteristics can not co-exist in one person, either a male or a female. According to the previously held assumption, a person is either masculine or feminine but can not be both. However, Bem (1974, 1975) affirms that masculinity and femininity are independent socially desirable variables, which can co-exist in either a male or a female. Therefore, According to Bem, the term *androgyny* refers to a combination of masculine and feminine characteristics or attributes co-existing in one sex either a male or a female (Bem, 1974).

Through gender socialization or interaction, Bem makes further clarification on four types of gender sex-role. Gender is based on the assumption that we do not have to possess male and female sex role stereotypes (we are strictly male or female, highly masculine or highly feminine), but instead, are socialized to possess different combinations of masculine and feminine behaviour. Gender socialization may occur early in life, or later in life as people modify their sex roles through interaction in their milieu. Bem and Feather have found that some individuals don't accept the sex typed roles from society, and instead assimilate both high masculine and high feminine traits, forming an *androgynous* sex role, which is called *androgyny* (Feather, 1984). Bem developed the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) to measure gender based sex roles (Bem, 1981a). Bem classified gender-based sex role stereotype attitude orientations based on different combinations of masculinity and femininity that people are socialized to possess. In Bem's four-fold classification structure for measuring gender-roles, people who possess high masculinity and low femininity are called masculine; people who possess high femininity and low masculinity are called feminine; people who possess high masculinity and high femininity are called androgynous (psychological androgyny), and people who possess low masculinity and low femininity are called undifferentiated (Bem, 1981b).

The Masculinist Theory: Chinweizu in his book *Anatomy of Female Power: A Masculinist Dissection of Matriarchy* sufficiently reveals what he refers to as the hidden power of women. Chinweizu has portrayed the fact that the woman is, in fact, the stronger of the two sexes because the female power as he stressed, is the "invisible six-seventh of an iceberg compared to the visible one-seventh which is the man's" (Chinweizu, 1990 p. 9). Chinweizu's assertion is complementary to the Amazon

feminist theory that absolutely rejects the idea that women are passive, weak and physically helpless. Chinweizu goes further by saying that “In human society, it is not the male power but the female power that is supreme” because “men may rule the world, but women rule the men who rule the world” (p. 4-5). If this applies to women, then it means that they need only to re-appraise themselves and their activities to attain full emancipation. According to Chinweizu, women’s power centres around their use of the womb, the kitchen and the cradle to get the men to do whatever they wish. Summarily, this is the principal message that the female novelists are putting across in their selected novels for this research. The premise of this theory is that since women have so much power at their disposal, if put into beneficial use, women are capable of emancipating themselves from all the forces of oppression and degradation. These two theories will be utilized as analytical tools to show that indeed women are not passive, weak and physically helpless. They are only required to reappraise their lives and activities to liberate themselves from their oppressors. Chinweizu in his book reiterates that rather than the much held notion that it is the men who govern and control women in every male dominated patriarchal society rather, he argues that it is the women who through their hidden power govern and control the men from birth till death. He clearly submits that despite the fact that African societies are phallogocentric and patriarchal, there lie behind the scene, the female version of the power in the same societies. This power of a woman according to Chinweizu is located from three different sources: “mother power”, “bride power”, and “wife power.” He stresses further in his theory that the female power to govern and control the men exist despite the patriarchal structure.

Because every man has as boss his wife, or his mother, or some other woman in his life, men may rule the world, but women rule the men who rule the world. (Chinweizu, 1990, p. 12).

Chinweizu’s position in his theory is at variance to what many theorists (structuralist, modern, postmodern, and poststructuralist, feminist and postfeminist) argue, Chinweizu argues that female power exists and operates mainly in the marital settings¹, but not on a large institutional scale, because there is no need: “female power does not need those elaborate structures of formal authority which have evolved to control the large aggregates of persons required by the specialist activities of the male domain” (Chinweizu, 1990, p.111).

While still reaffirming his position that in different societies of the world, it is the female power that is supreme and not the male power, Chinweizu justifies this notion further by stressing that if the primary preoccupation of male power and authority is to pay tribute to women, then male power is merely tributary to female power. If, however wealthy, prestigious, and famous a man may be, If, however powerful, his sense of manliness, sense of egoism, pride and hardness a man may be, his power is used to serve the women in his life that would make questionable and incomprehensible the notion that men are masters or superior over women. Because, however the the statue and influence of a man in social hierarchy, every man has as boss his wife, or his mother, or some other woman in his life, at the social or physical

level, the men may be seen as the rulers of the world. In reality, it is the women who rule the men that rule the world. (Chinweizu, 1990)

If this applies to women, then it means that they need only to re-appraise themselves and their activities to attain full emancipation. According to Chinweizu, women's power centers around their use of the womb, the kitchen and the cradle to get the men to do whatever they wish.

Meanwhile, in this study, I will utilize Amazon feminist theory of Thomas Gramstad (1999) and its concept of *androgyny* and the Masculinist theory of Chinweizu (1990) and its concepts of mother power, bride power and wife power not only because they are complementary in usage but also because they are the most suitable for the characters examination of the chosen novels. Moreover, the concepts of *androgyny*, *masculine-feminine duality of gender* as enshrined in Gramstad's Amazon feminism will be equally be utilized for textual study. Similarly, the concepts of *mother power*, *bride power* and *wife power* as evident in Chinweizu's Masculinist theory will be employed in this study.

Meanwhile, it should be observed at this juncture that different researchers in the area of Management sciences and humanities have utilized the concept of *androgyny* as enshrined in Thomas Gramstad's Amazon feminism and the *Masculinist theory* of Chinweizu as analytical tools in their scholarly research. For instance, Edward F. Et al (1997), in their scholarly article titled "Values, Sex Differences and Psychological Androgyny" published in *International Journal of Value-Based Management* uses the concept of *androgyny* in their gender-based research. The research is an investigation into the differences in the values structure on sex (male and female) and gender (masculine, feminine, androgyny, and undifferentiated) of the military middle-level managers. The study investigated those differences in a stratified random sample of 200 military middle-level managers (125 males, 75 females). According to Rokeach (1979), values are classified into two, instrumental and terminal. Instrumental values deal with "a person's belief about ideal modes of conduct" while terminal values are the "ideal terminal goals" (p. 124). Instrumental values therefore, is the modes of conduct of an individual that guide towards achieving the terminal goals in any organization. The study investigates to find out whether there are sex or gender differences in the value structure (performance) of a random sample of middle-level managers. Using *Bem's four-fold classification for gender-based differences* as the basis for the analysis. The *BSRI* (Bem, 1978, 1981a) was selected because of its extensive use, its authenticity and dependability for sex and gender research, and its recommendation for gender related research by a myriad of researchers (Doran, 1993; Feather, 1978, 1984; Kent and Moss, 1993). The *BSRI* provides the respondent with 20 masculine, 20 feminine and 20 undifferentiated items to rate from. The *BSRI* was specifically designed to measure gender-based (masculine, feminine, androgynous, undifferentiated) sex role stereotype attitude orientations, called gender roles. The analysis is done as rightly prescribed by Bem and Feather as follows:

If a female's femininity score was equal to or higher than the female group mean score, she was classified as high femininity. If a female's femininity score was below the female femininity group mean, she was classified as low femininity. Males and females with high masculinity and low femininity scores were classified as *masculine*; those with high femininity and low masculinity scores were classified as *feminine*; those with high masculinity and high femininity scores were classified as *androgynous*, and those with low masculinity and low femininity scores were classified as *undifferentiated* (Bem, 1981a; Feather, 1984).

As it has been demonstrated in the study above, *Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)* which encompasses concepts such as *masculine*, *feminine*, *androgyny* and *undifferentiated* have been justified by different scholars as the most potent analytical tools for the examination of gender related research.

Mohammed Razinat's scholarly article titled "Maternal Oppression of the Girl-Child in Selected Novels by Buchi Emecheta" published in *African Research Review An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal* employs Amazon feminism of Thomas Gramstad and Masculinist theory of Chinweizu as analytical tools for the examination of women oppressive attitude on their daughters.

The paper is an examination of the roles that women, or mothers, play towards the agony and misery that their daughters pass through in the home. It has become an obvious fact that in different parts of the African continent, specifically Nigeria where the author, Emecheta hails, female children experience untold suffering from their mothers during their period of development. Accordingly, the amount of oppression that the girl-child suffers in the hands of her mother is often, directly responsible for the kind of up-bringing that her own girl-child or female children under her care will equally suffer. It is therefore, based on the exposition of this oppressive tendencies of mothers on their daughters that her paper is preoccupied. In her analysis of women oppression on their daughters in the selected novels of Buchi Emecheta, she contends that:

The theory that best suits the argument being pursued in this paper will be tripartite in nature: first, the Amazon feminist theory, which denies that women are passive; next the masculinist theory of Chinweizu, which argues that women are the most powerful of the two sexes and last, the matriachist theory of Ogundipe- Leslie, Acholonu and Ifi Amadiume, which emphasizes that women's roles are not determined by their sex. A combination of all three theories will enhance the intra-gender perspective that this paper hopes to highlight in Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen*, *The Joys of Motherhood*, and

The Bride Price (Mohammed, 2010 p. 463).

Daniel Danghyun Kim's Doctoral Dissertation titled: "A Study of the Relationship between Psychological Androgyny and College Adjustment Among Korean American College Students" presented to Andrews University also uses the concept of *androgyny* for the analysis in his research. Daniel's Doctoral Dissertation examines the process of adjusting to college requirement by Korean-American students. Many Korean-American face difficulty in adjusting due to the tension that exists between traditional sex roles against androgynous sex roles. Using Bem's sex roles inventory (BSRI), students' adjustment to complex challenges of academic, emotional, and social adjustment are examined. Therefore, the study investigates the relationship between androgynous flexibility and college adjustment of Korean American students. To achieve this scholarly investigation, Daniel reveals that:

The sample population consisted of 153 Korean American college students from six universities from the East and West Coasts of the United States who voluntarily completed two surveys, the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), Short Version, measuring psychological androgyny, and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), measuring college adjustment. Each subject's Bem score was determined. The score from the Bem indicated if an individual was identified as androgynous, undifferentiated, masculine, or feminine. Then, the adjustment scores for each individual was calculated from the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire. The four sex-role groups' adjustment scores were compared for significant differences at the .05 level by using t-tests (Daniel, 1996 p. 10).

At the end of his investigation, the result indicates that androgynous Korean-American students significantly adjust to college better than feminine and undifferentiated Korean American students. However, it further reveals that no significant difference is recorded in the level of adjustment to college between androgynous Korean American students and masculine Korean-American students.

Meanwhile, it has been clearly established in the forgoing discussion that an androgynous character has greater flexibility advantage over others gender such as feminine and undifferentiated due to the masculine-feminine characteristics co-existing in such an individual. It should be reiterated that one principal idea about the concept of *androgyny* whether in Management sciences, humanities or Science based research is that, it is used for examining gender based research. Moreover, in all these fields, it has continuously demonstrated that an androgynous female has greater opportunity of achieving her goal because of her attributes of combining male and female characteristics. All the previous researchers who have utilized the concept evidently demonstrated this in their research.

1.7 Methodology

This study is a textual analysis of six selected novels of two female novelists. The thesis examines three novels by El-Saadawi an Egyptian physician and a novelist, and another three novels by Emecheta, a Nigerian female critic, and a novelist. The approach to the analysis of these works would be essentially textual analysis. In other words, the study does a critical reading of the selected works using the theme of women matriarchal oppression as a guide. This study, therefore, relies on the chosen texts as the primary sources of information along with other relevant secondary sources. The primary sources shall be El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*, *A Daughter of Isis*, *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* and Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, *The Bride Price* and *The Joy of Motherhood*. Other non-literary sources such as relevant textbooks, scholarly articles from reputable journals, chapters from books, relevant theses and dissertations and internet sources shall be utilized to validate the novelty of the study.

The analytical tools for the explication of women matriarchal oppression in the six selected texts for this study are Amazon feminism of Thomas Gramstad (1999) and its concept of *androgyny* or *masculine-feminine duality of gender* as enshrined in the theory. Equally employed is Masculinist theory of Chinwezu (1990) with its concepts of mother power, bride power and wife power. The two theories and their concepts are utilized due to their complementary in usage and suitability for the textual analysis of the chosen novels for this study.

In the chosen primary sources for this investigation, using Chinwezu's concept of mother power, bride power, and wife power, I seek to study women oppression with an attempt to discover whether or not women in the selected texts play major roles in the oppression, exploitation, discontentment and unfulfilled lives of their fellow women. These will be examined in the portrayal of the heroines of the six selected novels. Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero*, El Saadawi in *A Daughter of Isis*, 'Girl' in *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor*, Adah in *Second Class Citizen*, Aku-nna in *The Bride Price* and Nnu-Ego in *The Joy of Motherhood*.

Through the employment of Masculinist theory, I seek to discover whether the two selected female authors in their selected texts portray women relationship with their fellow women within and outside the family to constitute the primary source of oppression and unhappiness to their fellow women. Through the application of Chinwezu's concepts of mother power, bride power, and wife power, the study examines the oppressive activities of women on their fellow women to discover whether the woman is to be established as the foundation layer and the primary oppressor of her fellow women in the selected texts. Through Thomas Gramstad's Amazon feminism, I have studied the concept of *androgyny* which believes that a modern Amazonian female hero should be 'androgynous' that is, possessing in addition to the positive feminine characteristics, other positive virtues in male. The new Amazon female hero with the masculine-feminine duality of gender according to Gramstad could easily achieve the goal of gender equality and full emancipation of

women. The concept of *androgyny*, therefore, will be applied to examine whether the oppressed androgynous female characters have the potential to get themselves emancipated through the masculine-feminine duality of gender as proposed by Thomas Gramstad. Moreover, I have studied Chinweizu's Masculinist theory, which emphasises that the woman is the more dominant and powerful of the two sexes to discover whether or not the said female have utilized their hidden power over their male counterpart for the good of their fellow female.

Although this study is a critical examination of six selected novels from two African female novelists three novels for each of the writer will not dwell on a comparative analysis. I have carefully selected the texts from different parts of the African continent; North and West Africa respectively so as to enable me achieve authentic and all-inclusive results. For the in-depth critical study of the selected primary material for this work to be realized, I seek to utilize the library survey, relevant critical writings and opinion of scholars to ensure authenticity and novelty of the study.

Finally, in this methodology section, I have elaborately discussed the way in which the analysis will be conducted taking into consideration the primary sources, the secondary sources, theoretical scope, and more so, the scope and the applicability of the theories employed for textual analysis in this study.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

In order to enhance the chronology and easy accessibility of the material, this thesis is structurally presented in the following format. Firstly, six chapters are intended in this study: Chapter one focuses on the introduction to the topic of the research. It discusses the general background of the research, justifies it, provides the statement of the problem and gives the significance; the scope of the study, study questions, as well as the objectives of the study and the theoretical framework of the research, are all provided in this section. Chapter two deals with the review of the relevant literature related to the topic of the thesis. It presents the biographies of the chosen female novelists highlighting the socio-cultural and political situation, which gave birth to their style of fictional writings. A brief overview of the content of each of the novels is equally given to underline the ideological concern of the chosen writers. Significant attention has also been given to the ideological concerns of some selected Nigerian and Egyptian female novelists with a view to underline their contribution to the body of feminist discourse in their respective geographical settings. In addition, the examination of the fictional narrative of the contemporaries of the chosen female novelists, El Saadawi and Emecheta will help to validate the justification for the texts selection. The review of relevant literature on El Saadawi's and Emecheta's selected novels in this section further justifies the novelty of the study. Chapter three of this study is an examination of the Theoretical Framework. My discussion focuses on the conception of the theories and the suitability of their application on the selected texts of this study. In this section of my study, I have highlighted and discussed how the analytical tools for this study, Amazon feminism of Thomas Gramstad and Masculinist theory of Chinweizu were conceived. The latter part of this chapter tried to situate the

new Amazonian concept of *androgyny* within the context of the chosen texts and its conformity with feminist ideology. This section of the thesis has justified the suitability of the theories employed for the analysis of the six selected texts chosen for this research.

Chapter four deals with the textual analysis of three novels by El-Saadawi: *Woman at Point Zero*, *A Daughter of Isis*, and *Memoires of a Woman Doctor* with a specific focus on matriarchal oppression of women using the Amazonian and the Masculinist theories as the bases for the analysis. The fifth chapter will center on the explication of the selected texts of Emecheta: *The Bride Price*, *Second Class Citizen*, and *The Joy of Motherhood* focusing exclusively on women matriarchal oppression applying Amazon feminism and Masculinist theory for the analysis. Chapter six is the summary, conclusion, and recommendation for further studies. Theories of Amazon feminism and the Masculinist theory will be applied as analytical tools for the textual analysis of the selected texts of the two female authors with a specific focus on women matriarchal oppression, self-appraisal, and emancipation.

1.9 Scope and Limitation

Gender discourse in the contemporary fiction of women in different parts of the African continent has mainly been from inter-gender perspective where by, the men with the aid of their cultural construct are seen as the major obstacles to the happiness and fulfilment of the women. My current study therefore, will be preoccupied with the examination of women intra gender relationship. That is, in this study, attention will be focussed on maternal oppression on women through exploration of the women's active roles in the agony, unhappiness, and unfulfilled lives of their fellow women. The study covers critical examination of three selected novels by Nawal El-Saadawi: *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* (1998), *A Daughter of Isis* (2002) and *Woman at Point Zero* (2015) and Buchi Emecheta's selected novels: *Second Class Citizen* (1974), *The Bride Price* (2013) and *The Joy of Motherhood* (2013). The analysis in this study will be restricted to the theory of *Amazon feminism* (Gramstad, 1999) along with its concept of *androgyny* and *The Masculinist theory* (Chinweizu, 1990) with its concepts of *mother power*, *bride power* and *wife power* due to their complementary in usage and suitability for the textual analysis. The study will be restricted to the two female authors from North (Egypt) and West Africa (Nigeria) respectively covering their above-mentioned six novels because they form a representation of the authors' texts, which explore the objectives of the research. The study does not take into consideration the writings of other female writers in the same geographical location because it beyond the scope of the present study.

Specifically, attention is focussed on the heroines of the selected texts with the intention to highlighting the extent to which they have suffered from the oppressive activities of their fellow women. An attempt will equally be made to examine how the oppressed female characters are able to reappraise their oppressed status and eventually attain emancipation through application of Thomas Gramstad's *Amazon feminism* with its concept of *androgyny*. The female characters that are examined in

each of the studied texts include: Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero*, El Saadawi in *A Daughter of Isis*, “Girl” in *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor*, Adah in *Second Class Citizen*, Aku nna in *The Bride Price* and Nnu Ego in *The Joy Motherhood*. Specifically, the masculinist theory of Chinweizu will be applied to discover whether or not the woman is the more dominant and powerful of the two sexes. Similarly, the concepts of *mother power*, *bride power* and *wife power* will equally be applied to examine how the application of female’s hidden powers have elicited oppression and discontentment on their fellow women. All the heroines of the studied texts are examined because it is through them that the two selected female novelists portray the theme of maternal oppression on women. For instance, in El Saadawi’s *Woman at Point Zero*, aesthetically justified that the woman is indeed the more dominant and powerful of the two sexes because as we have observed through the plot of the novel, it is the woman’s decision that usually overrules or prevails over the man’s. This is evident when Firdaus’ uncle decided that he has to secure employment for her after completing her secondary school education and the wife decided that Firdaus must leave the house as her services are no longer needed and besides “she eat as much as two of the children.” It is the wife’s decision that prevails. Still further, she usurped her husband’s role by not only compelling Firdaus into an unplanned marriage but also by fixing or specifying the amount to be paid as a dowry on her head. Consequently, it is her misapplication of hidden power that has driven the heroine, Firdaus to suffer different forms of oppression from the forced marriage, other men, women, security agent, till the time of her pathetic and untimely death on a scaffolds.

While in *A Daughter of Isis*, which is an autobiography, El Saadawi unapologetically presents maternal oppression on women from a multidimensional perspectives. Nawal’s mother exhibits maternal oppression on her daughter through her persistence show of male preference. There is also the theme of oppressive activities of other women. It is clearly shown that women misapplied their hidden power there by causing pain and unhappiness for their fellow women. In this autobiographical piece, Nawal is informed by her grandmother, Siti Hajja, how she was left by the local mid wife in a basin full of water to drawn simply because she is born a girl. This murderous act, we are told is done with the approval of Nawal’s mother. This scandalous oppressive activities of women continue to linger and traumatize Nawal even after attaining a stage of adulthood. Ironically, through the plot of the novel, the same Sitti Hajja exhibits maternal oppression on her female children through her sheer display of double standard in her dealing with her male and female children. Therefore, different forms of maternal oppression on women are evident in the selected novels of Nawal El Saadawi.

Similarly, like El Saadawi, Buchi Emecheta also reveals in her selected works for this study, the different forms of maternal oppression on women in her patriarchal society of eastern Nigeria. Of particular importance is her autobiography, *Second Class Citizen*, in which the heroine unambiguously affirms that her greatest enemy who stands in the way of her progress in life is her mother. While the heroine’s mother allows a much younger brother of Adah to enroll in school, Adah, the heroine is kept at home to help her mother in various house chores. It is stupefying that through the plot of the novel, the same heroine, Adah exhibits preference for her male child which

perpetually serves as a source of oppression to her female children. Oppression of women on their fellow women is cyclical in Emecheta's *The Joy of Motherhood*. The author reveals a self-imposed oppression of the heroine, Nnu Ego due to her unexplainable love for the male child. Oppression is also perpetrated on Nnu Ego by her younger co-wife. Adaku, the younger wife oppresses Nnu Ego when she lures their husband to make love to her right in the presence of the senior wife, Nnu-Ego. Adaku's reaction and provocative utterances during their love making in their one room accommodation is aimed at oppressing and causing unhappiness to the older wife. Ona, the village beauty and Chief Abgadi's most favoured and loved woman (concubine) oppresses the chief Abgadi's wives through her amorous affair with him in their full view which has resulted to the illness and sudden death of the oldest or the most senior wife. The death of Chief's most senior wife mandatorily according to the tradition of Ibuza people, must result into the killing of her servant girl and finally, the unjust killing of the servant girl led to all the perpetual oppression, intimidation and tragic death of the heroine, Nnu Ego.

Essentially, this study focusses on the women's active contribution towards the oppression, suppression and unhappiness of their fellow women through employment of the *Masculinist theory* by Chinweizu and its concepts of *mother power*, *bride power* and *wife power* as analytical tools. While Thomas Gramstad's *Amazon feminism* and its concept of *androgyny* will be employed to discover how the oppressed androgynous female characters are able to reappraise their oppressed circumstance, which eventually lead to their emancipation.

The scope of this study therefore, is confined to the six selected creative works of Nawal El Saadawi from North Africa (Egypt) and Buchi Emecheta from West Africa (Nigeria) focusing specifically on the theme of maternal oppression on women. The theoretical scope of this study covers the application of Thomas Gramstad's *Amazon feminism* with its concept of *androgyny* and Chinweizu's *Masculinist theory* along with its concepts of *mother power*, *bride power* and *wife power* as analytical tools due to their complementary in usage and suitability for the textual analysis. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss, apart from the selected texts, other creative works of the chosen authors because the chosen texts are sufficient to explore fully the objectives set in the study. It is also beyond the scope of the present study to examine the creative works of the contemporaries of the chosen authors from North Africa (Egypt) and West Africa, (Nigeria).

1.10 Justification of Texts Selection

This study focuses on maternal oppression on women in the selected works of two female novelists, Nawal El-Saadawi from North Africa, (Egypt), and Buchi Emecheta from West Africa, (Nigeria). Nawal El-Saadawi is a female Egyptian Physician, psychiatrist, playwright, novelist and human rights activist from North Africa (Egypt) while Buchi Emecheta is a female Nigerian critic, poet, a novelist and an essayist from West Africa (Nigeria). There are several reasons that account for the selection of the texts of my chosen authors for this study. To start with, this work is inspired because

despite the fact that two prominent female novelists chosen for this study are in different parts of the African continent, (Nigeria and Egypt) but ideologically, they both focus on the crucial issue of women matriarchal oppression in their selected works for this study. The essence of selecting the texts of two female novelists from different parts of the African continent, Nigeria and Egypt, is to establish in this study the prevalence of matriarchal oppression on women especially, in North African (Egypt) and West Africa (Nigeria) as evidently captured in the selected fictional writings of the chosen authors. The texts of the two female novelists are selected because they both portrayed the existence of women oppression by their fellow women in their socio-cultural milieu, while unequivocally affirming that with a determined self-reappraisal, women are capable of liberating themselves from their oppressed circumstances.

Essentially, what informed the choice of Nawal El Saadawi and Buchi Emecheta over their contemporaries is the fact that the two novelists are directing their creative energy towards exploring the intraneous factors, that is, women direct involvement in the activities that bring oppression and discontentment to the lives of their fellow women. However, their contemporaries have solely concentrated energy on the extraneous factors that elicit oppression, misery, and agony through patriarchal oppression of women, socio-cultural, political, economic and religious oppression on women. Women's contribution and direct involvement in the oppression, suppression, brutality, and unfulfilled lives of their fellow women have not been their primary preoccupation in their fictional narrative. Therefore, Nawal El Saadawi's and Buchi Emecheta's creative writings could be said to be a turning point in feminists writings in different parts of the African continent specifically in North Africa, (Egypt) and West Africa, (Nigeria).

My choice of Nawal El Saadawi and Buchi Emecheta can further be justified through their exploration of similar thematic concern in their creative works. In their selected fictional narrative chosen for this study which include: El Saadawi's *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor*, *A Daughter of Isis*, and *Woman at Point Zero* and Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, *The Bride Price*, and *The Joy of Motherhood* all preoccupied with similar themes such as, the theme of male preference, maternal oppression of the girl-child and the oppressive activities of other women. These themes are commonly explored in the chosen novels of El Saadawi and Emecheta. For instance, the two writers explore the theme of male preference in their works. In El Saadawi's *A Daughter of Isis*, the novelist presents a shocking and paradoxical situation in which women outrageously display their abhorrence on their own sex in their male dominated Egyptian society. Being a victim of women's outrageous behaviour, she poignantly presents the different atmosphere that prevail at the birth of a male or a female child in her family. While the birth of a male child is extravagantly celebrated with merry making, with the shout of "yoo-yoo" by all the women present at the scene of the delivery, the birth of a female child is met with sheer display of despondency, grief, and hopelessness by the entire women present. The atmosphere is thick with depression and unhappiness as if a misfortune has just befallen the family. To further reveal the women's resentment on the birth of a female child, the innocent infant, El Saadawi, is simply left in a basin full of water by the local midwife to drown. This

murderous intention by the women is a sufficient justification that women ironically prefer a male child to the female, hence, their uncontrollable display of grief and unhappiness at the emergence of another female child in the family. Nawal El Saadawi feels oppressed and dehumanised as her paternal grand mother narrates the story of the incident to her.

Similarly, preference for the male child is equally displayed by Nawal's grandmother, Siti Hajja over the up bringing of her male and female children. In her exhibition of double standard in children's upbringing, she does not only deny the female children meal so that her only male child will have sufficient, but also, she kept the female children at home, denied them of enrolment in educational institution. They are compelled to assiduously labour on the farm to fund the education of her only male child whom she refers to as "the pride of my heart."

Like Nawal El Saadawi, Buchi Emecheta's in her *The Bride Price* similarly portrays maternal oppression of women through the theme of male preference. The author in this novel reveals the socio-cultural belief of her male dominated patriarchal society of Ibuza people of Eastern Nigeria. Male virtue is much celebrated and elevated so much that it is generally believed in this social milieu that a family without a male head is regarded as a family without head, a family without shelter, and a non existing family. And the fact that only the male child carries the name of his lineage from one generation to another, the birth of a male child in this community is usually heavily celebrated unlike his female counterpart. The heroine of the novel, Aku-nna also falls victim of this socio-cultural belief. As she acknowledges the fact that her birth in her parents' home can not be said to be a blessing but a misfortune which brings perpetual unhappiness to the family. In order to have some relief for the misfortune of their new born female child, Aku nna's parents name their child "Aku-nna" which means "father's wealth." It serves as a source of consolation to the parents. It is generally believed that the female child in Ibuza community is so insignificant that the only benefit parents can derive from such a child is when the bride price is paid on her head. Ironically, Aku-nna, the heroine, who has suffered oppression from her parents through their exhibition of preference for the male child over her, turns around to show double standard in the up bringing of her male and female children. She exhibits the same male preference by keeping her female children at home denying them of education while at the time allowing the male child access to education because "he is a boy."

Moreover, maternal oppression of the female child is also exhibited through the theme of male preference in Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*. Adah, the heroine of this novel recalls with sense of intense displeasure when she was about eight years or thereabout, the event that could have taken place after her birth. Like Aku-nna, the heroine of *The Bride Price*, is equally aware of the fact that because she is such an unimportant child to her parents that no one could have remembered to have a record of her birth preserved. She was such a "disappointment to her parents, her immediate family, her tribe, nobody thought of recording her birth" (p, 7). Having been born a girl into the society that wanted only male children, Adah has a disenchanted and

frustrated growth in life in favour of her much younger brother. While her younger brother is immediately registered in school after attaining school age, Adah who is much older is kept in the home to learn the kitchen cores and how to make a man happy. Left to Adah's mother, if she must have any education, a year or two will be sufficient so that she can learn how to write her name, count figure, and possibly learn how to sew. Meanwhile, in all the instances discussed, maternal oppression of women through the theme of male preference is replete in the chosen texts of Nawal El Saadawi and Buchi Emecheta. As it could be observed in all the texts examined that it is the women who denied the female children access to education rendering them unemployable and perpetually dependent on men for sustenance. Women therefore, become the primary architects of the oppression, suppression, and unfulfilled lives of their fellow women.

It has been demonstrated in this section of my study that the two chosen female novelists, Nawal El Saadawi from North Africa (Egypt) and Buchi Emecheta from West Africa (Nigeria) do not only explore women oppression from intraneous or intra-gender point of view but also explore similar thematic concerns in their discussion of maternal oppression on women in their respective socio-cultural settings. Therefore, their penchant to explore the theme of maternal oppression on women and their similitude in addressing similar thematic concerns account for the choice of the selected novels of the two female novelists, Nawal El Saadawi and Buchi Emecheta.

Meanwhile, it should be emphasised at this juncture that other prominent female novelists from Egypt and Nigeria who are equally preoccupied with crucial issues that affect women are not chosen for this study because they differ from my chosen authors both from ideological perspective and theoretical applicability on their creative writings. Some of these writers include: Flora Nwapa, Zainab Alkali, Hafsat Abdulwaheed, Catherine Acholonu, Bisi Adeleye, Abimbola Alao, Lesley Nneka, and Tess Onwueme (Nigeria), others are Latifat Al-Zayat, Radwa Ashour, Ahdaf Soueif, Sabrina Mahfouz, Miral al-Tahawy, Huda Sha'arawi, Aisha Abd al-Rahman, Hela El-Badry, Salwa Bakr, and Mansoura Ez-El din (Egypt). All these are prominent female writers from Nigeria and Egypt who have contributed immensely to feminist discourse in their respective geographical locations. Although all these mentioned female writers address significant issues that affect women, they are not chosen for this study due to the disparity in their ideological concerns and the focus of the present study, which is, maternal oppression on women. For instance, Flora Nwapa who has been acknowledged as the pioneer Nigerian female novelist has been preoccupied with subverting the androcentric and heroic representation of the male as evident in the creative writings of the pioneer male writers while at the same time reinventing or representing the stereotypical or a one dimensional portrayal of the women from the point of view of the feminist writer. Specifically, in a patriarchal Igbo society of eastern Nigeria, it is believed that "motherhood" signifies "womanhood" (Boyce D, 1986: 243). A woman in Nwapa's Igbo society is dignified and respected only if she is able bear children, especially, male children for her husband. A barren woman on the other hands who is not able to fulfil this social responsibility of procreation is ostracised, stigmatized, and in most cases, repudiated by her husband. In her popular novel, *Efuru* (1966), Flora Nwapa through her female character, Efuru, portrays the issue of barrenness of a woman from a feminist perspective. She portrays a woman who

is beautiful, intelligent, and hardworking and despite her barrenness still have fulfilment in life. We are informed that as the husband begin to womanize around showing unfaithfulness to his wife due to her inability to procreate, Efuru threaten to break away from the marriage despite the seemingly admonishment from her parents urging her to continue to be patient with her husband's infidelity. She therefore, rejects the idea of been docile, passive and suppressed simply to prevent her marriage from breaking.

Does it not occur to my mother-in-law, Ajanupu and my father that Adizua is quite satisfied with this woman and does not want me anymore? Need I to stay until he says: "Efuru, I don't want you anymore. Return to your father's house, and when you marry again, I shall come for my dowry?" Our ancestors forbid that I should wait for a man to drive me out of his house. This is done to women who cannot stand by themselves, women who have no good homes and not to me, the daughter of Nwashike Ogene. And besides, my face is not burnt I am still a beautiful woman" (p. 64).

Efuru, the heroine of the novel is empowered to enable her have a sense of achievement in life. For instance, in their partnership trade with her husband, she is the boss because she solely determines what to buy, where to buy and sell being the principal owner of the capital investment. Emecheta in her novel *Efuru* is committed to creating female characters who are strong, assertive and intelligent. Her ideological commitment therefore, is at variant with the focus of the current study which is matriarchal oppression on women.

Zainab Alkali's *The Still Born* is another fictional narrative which poignantly presents the different challenges that the northern Nigerian girls usually pass through during the period of their growing up to the time of womanhood, motherhood, or divorcee. In a patriarchal society of Hausa people of northern Nigeria, it is generally believed that at every stage of a woman's life, from childhood before she is of marriageable age, she is expected to have a complete obedience to her parents, then after marriage her obedience now shifts to her husband. Through Alkali's female characters, Li, Awa and Faku, over restriction of women's movement, cumbersome or unbearable house chores, husbands' oppressive attitude and unfaithfulness to their wives are aesthetically portrayed in the novel. Rather than allowing are female characters languishing in an unfulfilled marriage marked by oppression, suppression and unhappiness, Zanab Alkali empower her female characters Li, the heroine and Faku with education which enable them to take over the management and control of their family. Though, Faku has to indulge in prostitution as a means for sustenance after separating from her marriage with Garba, she immediately regains her independence, dignity and respect in the society after completing her higher education and with her employment as a social welfare worker. Alkali in her novel, *The Still Born* has aesthetically highlighted the coping strategy, and the way out for the women confronted with varied challenges in their Hausa patriarchal society of northern

Nigeria. According to Maina (2018), “Thus, to fight the voicelessness, Alkali uses the aesthetics of education which is, according to her, one of the major agents of women’s liberation and emancipation” (p. 183).

While reaffirming Li’s gender equality with her male counterpart and her total liberation from the yoke of patriarchy, Awa, Li’s sister in the course the burial rites of their mother, Kaka, remarks: “The mourners are outside and waiting for you. You are the man of the house now” (p. 101). It should be understood that, although Li, the heroine has not changed her identity as a woman, but she has fully assumed the roles of the male by performing the responsibilities that any responsible head of a household is expected to perform. It has been rightly explicated in this section of the study that other contemporaries of my chosen authors have not been selected because they address women oppression and unhappiness from inter gender or extraneous perspectives.

El Saadawi's translated novels have been selected, firstly not only because of their preoccupation on the focus of this study, that is, women matriarchal oppression, but also, because of their certification by ITS (International Translation Standard) as literary creativity worthy of scholarly studying. Still further, the two female writers are not only in conformity in their ideological conception that women matriarchal oppression have eaten deep into the system of their respective socio milieus, they also strongly believe that through a determined self-reappraisal, women are capable of emancipating themselves from all oppressive forces. Furthermore, the two female novelists have been selected for their aesthetics and objectivity in their literary creativity, and their contribution towards ensuring egalitarian societies, which have earned them several literary awards of excellence in their career as novelists. Other contemporaries of my chosen authors from Nigeria and Egypt with different feminist agenda will be discussed further in the next chapter under Literature Review to further strengthen the novelty of this study.

1.11 Definition of Terms

1.11.1 Amazon Feminism

According to Thomas Gramstad (1999), “Amazon feminism is a branch feminism that emphasizes female physical equality with men and is opposed to gender role stereotypes and discrimination against women based on assumptions on how women are supposed to be, look, or behave as if they are passive, weak and physically helpless.” Amazon feminism rejects the idea that certain characteristics or interests are inherently masculine (or feminine), and upholds and explores a vision of heroic womanhood. Amazon feminists tend to view that all women are as physically capable as all men Thomas Gramstad (1999)

1.11.2 Androgyny

The term *androgyny* is derived from Greek words andro (man) and gyne (woman). Sandra Bem in the early 1970s first formulated and introduced the term *androgyny*. The emergence of this concept countered the ever long held opinion in the wider society and in the field of psychology that masculinity and femininity constitute bipolar ends of a single continuum, that is masculine-feminine characteristics can not co-exist in one person, either a male or a female. According to the previously held assumption, a person is either masculine or feminine but can not be both. However, Bem (1974, 1975) contends that masculinity and femininity are independent socially desirable variables which can co-exist in either a male or a female. Therefore, According to Bem, the term androgyny refers to combination of masculine and feminine characteristics or attributes co-existing in one one sex either male or female (Bem, 1974)

1.11.3 Masculinist Theory

According to Chinweizu in his book *Anatomy of Female Power: A Masculinist Dissection of Matriarchy*, Masculinist theory refers to the belief that it is the female sex and not the male that is more dominant and powerful of the two sexes through the application of her hidden power emanating from three principal sources which are *mother power, bride power and wife power* (Chinweizu, 1990). While the male power according to Chinweizu is merely tributary because all that is achieved through male power is put to beneficial use of the female. The woman on the other hands through her hidden power (mother power, bride power, and wife power) govern and control the men from infancy to grave.

Chinweizu further affirms that “in every society of the world, it is not the male power but female power that is supreme because men may rule the world but women rule the men who rule the world” (1990, p. 4-5). It is based on this perception that textual analysis in this study will be conducted. Essentially, Chinweizu’s Masculinist theory is an indepth examination of feminine power and the way it operates socially.

1.11.4 Oppression

According to Awa Thiam oppression is the outcome of the phallocratic system whereby “it is not unusual to find battered wives” (Thiam, 1986, p. 476). Helene Cixous on the other hands believes that “the oppressed people of the world are those people who are employed by those in power to create and perpetuate their dominion” (Cixous, 1991, p.16). However, in this study therefore, oppression will be described as any unjustifiable application of power or authority either openly or covertly over somebody with consistent injustice and cruelty that makes the victims being oppressed feel troubled and discontented (Mohammed, 2010). The word ‘oppression’ can be viewed from several perspectives as amply defined by different scholars. On a general note, it means that in the course of human interaction, any act that is perpetrated by

the dominant member either covertly or otherwise that elicits pains and unhappiness in the receiver(s) of the misapplied power or authority constitutes oppression. Oppression can come in varied dimensions, which include political, economic, cultural, religious, racial and gender, which are artistically represented in the literature to reflect the the happenings in the society.

1.11.5 Matriarchy

Just as the word “Patriarch” denotes “father,” and in a patriarchal culture, legitimacy, acceptability or lawfulness emanates from the father based on peoples’ custom and law. Patriarchy provides the power of rulership to the men. Similarly, the word “Matriarch” on the other hands means “mother.” And in a matriarchal socio-milieu, legitimacy, rightfulness, acceptability or justice is derived from mothers through childbirth. Matriarchy refers to a social system in which women are entrusted with the primary power positions in the roles of moral authority, political leadership, social privilege and control of the property without the interference of the males – at least to a greater degree. The word “matriarchy” could also mean “family, society, organization dominated by a woman or women. In a typical matriarchal society, the females especially the mothers have the central roles of political leadership, moral authority, and control of property, but does not include a society that is occasionally led by a female for non-matriarchal reasons or an occupation in which females generally predominate without reference to matriarchy” (Samantha, 2013).

1.11.6 Women’s Self-Appraisal

Self-appraisal refers to the action of judging oneself in the area of quality, value or nature vis-a-vis the challenges of one's time and environment (Mohammed, 2010). Within the framework of feminist theories, especially such theories that emphasize the hidden powers of women, it becomes necessary for women to re-visit themselves and their roles in the oppression, suppression, and molestation that they suffer within the patriarchal society. To successfully do this, women need to reappraise their contributions to some of the traditionalized oppressive cultures that they have been living with. It is commonly believed that the male occupies a superior position in the society in comparison to the female, but recent theories and arguments have proven otherwise. Chinweizu's *The Anatomy of Female Power: A Masculinist Dissection of Matriarchy* amply reveals that the female is effectively the boss. He makes essential revelations when he states, “in human society, it is not male power but the female power which is supreme because men may rule the world, but women rule the men who rule the world” (1990, p. 4-5). Also quoted in Chinweizu is Patti Boulaye, the Nigerian expatriate actress who is credited with the statement that “most men are controlled by women” (Ibid, P. 6). In other words, women possess immense powers in spite of their seeming inferior position within patriarchal set-ups. If these statements are true of the status of women within the patriarchal society today, it makes one wonder why women continue to cry foul when in fact, they are in control. Essentially, the concern of self-appraisal in this study has to do with women themselves. Women

need to genuinely strive and redress their supposed inferior status through their behavioral attitudes if they are to emancipate themselves entirely.

1.11.7 Female Emancipation

According to Pilcher and Whelehan (2004), female emancipation refers to “Process, strategy and myriad efforts by which women have been striving to liberate themselves from the authority and control of men and traditional power structures, as well as to secure equal rights for women, remove gender discrimination from laws, institutions and behavioural patterns, and set legal standards that shall promote their full equality with men”. Emancipation of female implies the freedom of the women from all forms of oppressive condition be it socio-cultural, political, economic, religious, racial or gender. Within the framework of feminist activities women study, recent development and area of study in the women's assertive movement bring women around the world to learn and indeed, investigate academically, their well-being within the patriarchal society preparatory to self-emancipation. Furthermore, since it is commonly believed that knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, women having realized the reasons for their second-class status in the society, decided to create mass awareness in their fellow women through the academic investigation as a means to complete emancipation. And through such centers, women writers and scholars have stated and argued in their works and papers that rather than a one dimensional approach of seeking libration from the men, it is their fellow women from whom emancipation is required.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter offered a background information in which an introduction to the pattern of female portrayal in the fictional narratives of some selected male writers from Egypt and Nigeria is provided. The essence of this is to justify the notion that, there truly exists the idea of patriarchal oppression on women specifically in Egypt and Nigeria as evidently observed in the writings of the male writers in their respective social milieus. In an attempt to redefine the already battered image of the women as captured in the creative works of the male writers, the commitment of some selected female Egyptians and Nigerians writers towards subjectification of female characters or representing women's stories from female viewpoint have also been provided. In this chapter, I have also justified what necessitated the choice of the two selected female novelists from North Africa (Egypt) and West Africa (Nigeria) over their contemporaries who are equally genuinely concerned about the plight of the women. The main argument of this study, that is, maternal oppression on women in the selected novels of El Saadawi and Emecheta is also provided in this chapter. Equally addressed in this chapter are, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, study question, the theoretical framework, research methodology, scope and limitation of the study.

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BIODATA OF STUDENT

Born at Nguru local government, in “the young shall grow” Yobe state of Nigeria. Abdulwaheed was educated at the University of Maiduguri where he received bachelor’s degree in English literature and master’s degree in African literature with specialization in Dramatic Literature. Abdulwaheed has served in Yobe State Teaching Service Board and Federal Polytechnic Damaturu before joining the services of Yobe State University, Damaturu in 2007. Before his current academic journey to pursue a PhD programme in English Literature at University Putra Malaysia, he has served as the Head of Department, Departmental Overseer and Faculty Examination Officer at Yobe state university. Some of his publication include Feminist Tendencies in Nigerian Literature, Theme and Style in Onwueme’s The Reign of Wazobia, Theme and Style in Soyinka’s Selected Plays and other unpublished works. His areas of interest include African drama and prose, gender studies and Oral literature.



LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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