

Of Ethnic Obsession and Female Identity:  
A Psychological Reading of *The Last of the  
Strong Ones* & *The Joys of Motherhood*

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Abstract

One of the challenges faced by the modern society is the controversy surrounding the status of the female gender. While some describe the woman as the weaker sex, others conclude that the female is the better half of the man. Both claims could be said to be rooted in cultural cum social or religious orientations of the people all over the world. To this end, many writers, male and female have written to either uphold, debunk or assert these positions in favour and disfavor of either of the gender. From social and historical perspectives, gender imbalances permeate society as both men and women could be said to be obsessed with these issues as may have evolved from ethnic or communal constitutions, practices and traditions. Akachi Adimora- Ezeigbo's *The Last of The Strong Ones* and Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* are two selected literary texts to treat ethnic issues and female identity as they define the status of women either in the past or in the modern day using psychological postulations as the theoretical background. The paper submits that the fight against gender discrimination in sociopolitical circles is sustained by and a product of psychological warfare on both sides.

Introduction

With Literature, society comes under the illumination of the artist whose role underlines the symbiosis between art and society. This can be explained from an interdisciplinary perspective bordering on the interplay of sociology and literature. While sociology encompasses the institutions of interaction referred to as methods by which we live our lives, Frank Kermode observes that the sacrosanct nature of literature is its capacity for critical evaluation of social order and its entertaining modes(3). Thus, the synergy between art and society is mutual as one begets while the other enriches or edifies. As observed by Dele

Layiwola, “in regard to method, both in the process of literary creation and in terms of its assessment, as well as in the making of culture, the task of literary criticism is clear.”(3) Artistic production evolves from societal experience which is interpreted or redefined through creative or critical enterprise.

That society is almost, always a complex cultural whole, with humanity being always the driving force of the epicentre.

Literature is, therefore, the starting point of both man’s attempt at the intellectual apprehension of his world and the practical attempts to invent, modify or change that world. In understanding the traditions of our world, we are invited to make sense out of it. (3)

The element or force at the centre of this creative exploits is the artist with his looming image as he puts his artistry at the service of the public. He/she could operate from both sides – creativity or criticism or combine both by redefining, codenaming, recreating, transposing societal experiences in conformity with aesthetic modes and constructing a vision for society.

The artistic exploration or critical evaluation of societal happenings and the polity by the artist is not usually carried out on literary podium alone but for specific and encompassing purposes. Literature has its utility as well as its decorations for man and his environment. In enunciating the essence of literary productions, Remi Raji-Oyelade codifies it as interventions.

By in(ter)ventions, the manner that I have troped upon the word, I mean to signify on three related layers of meaning, all referring to what we do in literary scholarship: giving meanings to the structures and signs of literary productions. In(ter)ventions is an alphabetic coding of the interrelated activities of invention (i.e. creativity and imagination), interpretation (i.e. functional and aesthetic analyses) and intervention (i.e. the critique of ideas, commitment or engagement).

...Literary scholarship, to be more direct, is all about the theorizing and the illuminations of the literary text, just as it is about the systematic interpretations of texts, spaces and phenomena in societies. In a generalist metaphor, Literature is about, in, and of the world of men, spirits, machines, inventions, legends, histories, myths, philosophies, calculations permutations and everything else that can be imagined. (5)

In the first instance, the artist is a cultural ambassador whose productive capacity or artistic fork is usually geared towards harnessing tribal or ethnic ethos, etiquette, mores, values and even lore for preservation and dissemination to

generations. As an artist, he/she often identifies cultural heritage which he seeks or strives to uphold, expose and preserve for mankind. This aspect of artistic production can be decorative or assertive.

On the other hand, literature could be critical, dismissive and objective. Little wonder that every writer constitutes an ethnic or tribal vanguard whose profession is to safeguard the sanctity of the cultural heritage of his place. As a watchman or watchwoman, the artist knows that he/she can only be proud of his/her heritage if it does not disintegrate or depreciate and that it is beneficial to the generality of his/her people. He/she owes such cultural heritage an obligation to propagate, preserve and elevate through his creative outburst. Olu Obafemi attests that the synergy between literature and society is rooted in the fact that “literature helps us have authentic search for self-apprehension and selfactualization by any people, any nation and through culture.”(4) He goes further to say:

Literature tells the story of a nation better than history or any form of expression. Language is its poetics, its narrative vehicle. It is through literature and language, the thesaurus of conscience available to man, recording its mood, its songs and sorrows, its morals and values, its accomplishments and failings that culture remains the social and spiritual bond of man. (4)

### Psychoanalysis, Sexuality and Vision

For the theoretical premise upon which the analyses of the selected texts are based, two other terms are quite relevant even though psychoanalysis remains the umbrella theory. In discussing ethnic obsession and gender issues in *The Last of the Strong Ones* and *The Joys of Motherhood*, the terms as “sexism” and “vision” are quite relevant either from the perspective of authorship or literariness of the works. The thematic engagement of both texts revolves around gender and ethnicism, partly because the narratives are cultural materials reconstructed from a feminist conviction and more profoundly because there is usually a synergy between literature and society. This link is shrouded in the visionary drive of the authors purposely projected to make comment on social practice, historical course and political drift of a community. Thus a writer projects for the society based on his/her personal conviction. But his/her view point does not emanate from a vacuum or void, there is always an ideological camp to which he/she subscribes even without openly professing such. Rather than applying a blanket feminist bias

to the study of these texts, this essay applies a psychological reading because the approach helps in locating the meaning of a text from different angles such as writer's, character's and reader's and the creative process in entirety.

The selected texts are written by female authors while the focus of the works revolves around the womenfolk. For instance, *The Last of the Strong Ones* could be interpreted to be a fictional or historical reconstruction bordering on the communal image and roles of women in the pre-colonial and colonial Igbo society. On the other hand, *The Joys of Motherhood* aggregates stumbling blocks on the path of women especially as mothers either from cultural practices or mundane choices and personality as defining essence or otherwise of the female gender. These issues border on the vision of the gender of both authors and their characters. Thus sexism and vision are complementary in our choice of psychological analysis of the texts. The term sexism refers to the unfair treatment of peoples based on their sex. From a feminist point of view, sexism denotes prejudice or discrimination against women. That a woman is genetically weak and are usually seen to be discriminated against traditionally especially in the political or cultural setup.

Both Akachi Ezeigbo and Buchi Emecheta have chosen the creative platform to make comment on societal order by borrowing from their cultural archives. It is this medium which encompasses their vision for their immediate and distant readership. Every writer has or expresses a vision of his or her creative output in order to better or move the society forward. The approach to interpreting or coming to term with the vision inherent in *The Last of the Strong Ones* and *The Joys of Motherhood* is psychological using psychoanalytical apparatus. This helps our peeping into the state of mind or psychology of these authors in relation to the shared aesthetic, cultural and fictional materials of their texts. Psychoanalytical theory was postulated by Sigmud Freud (1856-1939) through his popular work *Civilization and Its Discontent*. A psychological criticism takes off from Freud's psychoanalysis as a theory of literary criticism. Sigmud Freud lived between 1856 and 1939. He postulated one of the most influential theories in scholarship till date. It must be noted from the onset that two other branches of psychoanalysis are equally relevant as adopted in the interpretation of the selected texts. These are Erikson's psychobiography and psychology of the character.

Sigmund Freud's postulation about man is that man is ever afflicted with unending desire as he becomes conscious of himself and his environment especially with the spread of civilization. The urge for good things of life which he calls the pleasure principle is the root of man's tragedy. The other affliction man experiences is the sensual energy where the difference between male and female comes into play. A male child develops the desire to kill his father, more or less like Oedipus Complex. On the other hand, a female child too goes through an affliction called *Eltera Complex*. As contained in Sigmund Freud's work which Saul McLeod reviewed,

Sigmund Freud emphasized the importance of the unconscious mind, and a primary assumption of Freudian theory is that the unconscious mind governs behavior to a greater degree than people suspect. Indeed, the goal psychoanalysis is to make the unconscious conscious.(159-204)

Whether man or woman, the insatiable or pleasure seeking spirit is borne out of libidinal impulse which must be overcome or repressed. As Terry Eagleton observes, the relevance of psychoanalysis is to uncover the hidden causes of neurosis in order to relieve the patient of his or her conflict or distress. In doing this, the id which is the source of basic urge and the most primitive part of man must be suppressed through the application of ego. Ego is the regulatory part of man that brings to man's consciousness the reality principle. Then a sense of morality and standards shrouded in superego is instilled in man through parental upbringing. As appraised by Fisher & Greenberg, Freud, in 1923 came up with what he (Freud) called "the psychic apparatus". The apparatus, according to the duo, illustrates a more structural model of the mind which comprises id, ego and superego. And it has to do with the important mental functions.

Freud assumed the id operated at an unconscious level according to the pleasure principle (gratification from satisfying basic instincts). The id comprises two kinds of biological instincts (or drives) which Freud called Eros and Thanatos. Eros, or life instinct, helps the individual to survive; it directs life-sustaining activities such as respiration, eating and sex .... The energy created by the life instincts is known as libido. (211212)

As a way of sublimation, Freud also prescribes the talking or writing cure. Both the reality principle and the repression of pleasure can only be effective if a man's energy is sublimated. The talking or writing is what writers adopt as a cure for their psychological obsession.

Invariably, Erik Erikson's psychobiography and psychology of character help to strengthen a critical appraisal of an author and the character. As retrieved by Saul McLeod, Erik Erikson's contribution to the development of psychoanalysis is contained in what he called psychosocial eight stages which an individual experiences from infancy to adulthood. The stages are ridden with psychosocial crisis which could have a positive or negative outcome for personality development. Saul goes further that Erikson emphasized the role of culture and society and the conflicts that can take place within the ego itself. The development of the ego, as postulated by Erikson, successfully resolves crises that are distinctly social in nature. By this, an individual establishes a sense of trust in others, develops or carves a sense of identity in society, and inspire the next generation prepare for the future.(245)

The criticism extends to the assessment of author's life in deducing the mode of representation, vision or dream and slip of tongue. The other aspect is character portrait, sexual conflicts and justification for frictions and actions of the characters as obtainable in creative works. By creative works, we mean works showing imagination, new idea, stories as may be reflected in prose, poetry and drama as genres of literature. Either from a reconstruction of history as we read in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones* or a redefinition of social role as in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, both authors are obsessed with ethnic concerns as borne out of feminist consciousness, and both authors people the fictional worlds through which they put across their vision to the public.

## II

### Aesthetics, Dialogue and Identity

Both Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Buchi Emecheta adopt the artistic platform to interrogate traditional ethos and historical antecedents to make comment on social situations and realities of the modern time. But unlike their male counterparts, the duo are concerned about the image and plight of the womenfolk either in the then Igbo or in the modern day Igbo world. Ultimately their vision is geared towards a global appeal as female writers on one hand and as crusaders of social justice, healthy and purposive life for both men and women. As Igbo women and writers, they borrow from the oral tradition which they transpose for meaning-making. They also project their immediate ethnic group by

injecting into their works cultural materials in terms of naming, borrowing from indigenous vocabularies, mythic stories and traditional values which they disseminate to their people for generations yet to come. But their primary constituency is the woman whose image and identity need to be ransomed and transformed from what they term low and denigrating traditions in their path to freedom and growth.

For Akachi Ezeigbo, her novel, *The Last of the Strong Ones* attempts to rescue the Igbo women from artistic denigration or presentation especially by the early Igbo writers. She attempts to rewrite the history of the Igbo women of the Pre-colonial and colonial time by restoring their valiancy and heroism. For her daring solidarity with her forbears, Akachi Ezeigbo's book has been bitterly and randomly criticized as feministic, phobic, superfluous and over-ambitious in narratives and vision. *The Last of the Strong Ones* in terms of date of publication is a post-colonial work but its aesthetics and narratives date back to the colonial time, obviously the pre-Nigeria Igbo society. The author represents the colonial experience of the Igbos with the women at the centre. The umbrella iconic image for the women as adopted by Akachi Ezeigbo is OLUADA and UMUADA while Umuaga village symbolizes a typical pre-Nigeria Igbo setting. The author is proud to recommend to modern Igbo and African women to take cue from the heroic display by Igbo women in history in her fictional work the roll-call which includes principal players or heroines such as Chieme, Ejimnaka, Chibuka, Onyekozuru. They are representative of Igbo women's heroism throughout the Igbo land as they evolved from the pre-colonial through the colonial to the present day Nigeria. The novelist cum feminist presents the heroic exploits of the Igbo women during the colonial time and she is proud to project such. By this exploit, Akachi Ezeigbo is unarguably in the class of writers who explore historical materialism as ingredients of their narratives.

Akachi Ezeigbo's daring image laundering of the Igbo women has been interpreted by literary scholars in many ways. For instance, Ayinde Abdullahi refers to the work as "re-telling of the history with a large dose of creativity as the story renders men in Igbo land at that time insignificant"(3). Femi Abodunrin observes that by assigning superior position to women rather than being made traditional house keepers, the author of *The Last of the Strong Ones* attempts a recreation of the lives of women and men through elevation of the women and subjugation of the men who have hitherto enjoyed positive or negative painting

within the period under exploration (106). Sule Egya concludes that the reconstruction by Akachi Ezeigbo is a distortion of history in which men in Igbo land are relegated to the background.

Against our expectation, women not men, take the centre stage in tackling the dominating crisis the community is thrown into. Umuaga is facing a threat from the white colonial masters who are unnecessarily headstrong, uncompromising and irrational, they should therefore be crushed. (2)

The village of Umuaga, a typical Igbo setting of the colonial Nigeria has a crisis at hand, and as typical of Igbo society, the villagers under different age groups gather to find solutions. One of such and as expected is Ubuofo, the apex body in the land. The other groups being Oluada and Umuada both exclusively female groups. Unlike the usual history of leadership in Igbo land as we read in earlier works by Chinua Achebe. Ubuofo- though the highest body, it has both male and female as members. The author equally gives prominence to the other two bodies projected in the narratives. Expectedly, the story begins with the gathering of women. The narrator leads the readers into the story

All was not well with the land. The sky was overcast with heavy clouds and the rumbles of thunder echoed the chaos that threatened Umuaga. The People clamoured to be left alone. It was a season that called for meetings and meetings. At one of such gathering of Umuada, a thought struck me, hammering insistently, on the need to recall the past, record the present and all other events yet to unfold (1)

It is a colonial imbroglio where Umuaga is not in the good books of the colonial administration at the time. In finding solution to the problem at hand, it is the women we first see gathering to deliberate and proffer solutions to it. The second chapter is titled OLUADA-the female body who are gathered at one of the four principal women's home, Ejimnaka. The Umuada -young women learning roles from Oluada are at Ejimnaka's house to listen to deliberation by the older women on the crisis at hand. Now the women are speaking of Umuaga as having "a rich history, full of heroism: (p.1) and convening meetings urgently to deliberate on issues of communal dimension.

Before dawn, we had gathered at Ejimnaka's house for a meeting of Oluada. The message dispatched to each of us was been urgent and unambiguous. We had been told to be there by first cockcrow. (1)

By the style of character portrait, the Igbo woman is given prominence. Each chapter is devoted to a woman as women of great achievements. Four of these women are signposts of political and communal leadership from the four villages of Umuaga who represent the voice of women and the village. The inner council committee has sixteen members among who are twelve men and four women. But these men are suppressed while the four women are elevated, showcased and projected as heroines against the usual historical reality of Igbo patriarchal society.

The biographical painting of these women is equally instructive. All of them are Oluada through whom we get to read about their ancestral background and parentage. For instance, Ejimnaka is presented as the leader of the women in whose house the first meeting is held, her father Ezekwu of Agbaja family and a great warrior; Onyekozuru also an Oluada is portrayed as the mother of the land and the oldest of the four. Chieme is renowned and distinguished for her strength, and as the daughter of a warrior. Chibuka too is given as a woman of many parts who scales the Iroko tree without hitch.

During meetings, the Igbo woman is empowered to challenge her male counterpart as co-members of the apex body, Ubuofo. One of such examples is the quarrel that breaks out between Abazu and Onyekozuru. Onyekozuru now stands up to the man revealing dirty secret and deficiency of the man. All these „excesses“ are projected as heroic attributes of an Igbo woman who as we had earlier read could not even raise her voice in the Igbo setting of *Things Fall Apart* of Chinua Achebe. Okonkwo’s wives could not utter a word in their matrimonial home let alone look their husband in the eye or raise their voice against him. But Mary Kolawole regards Achebe’s narratives as artistic ploy to silence the Igbo woman and hiding them behind men and reducing them to the kitchen (189). She goes further that “Things Fall Apart undoubtedly been seen as one of the most canonized meta-texts of a writer African and indeed post-colonial and the world literature” but that

Achebe’s representation of Igbo women has been taken as the paradigm of male-female relationship in that culture. However, critics began to question Achebe’s female luminal space as opposed to the historical visibility of Igbo women. The challenge of minimizing women’s role in Achebe’s world motivated female writers who engaged as gender mouth piece in re-inventing women. (189)

By her aesthetic model, Akachi Ezeigbo is unarguably in the class of writers who explore historical materialism in projecting a vision for mankind. Her older Igbo women writers might not have been able to re-invent or reject the male portrayal of the Igbo woman in history as they could not go beyond aggregating and lamenting taboos and traditional bias and aspersion and such painting given credence and artistic projection by Igbo male writers. On the one hand, *The Last of the Strong Ones* could be seen as a feminist outburst; a proselytizing rooted in historical retrieval and communal redemption of the daughters of Eve who was created along with Adam through which God had populated the Garden of Eden. Even a biblical suppression of women in its account could not gloss over the heroic and spiritual roles of Deborah, Queen Esther on one hand, and Elizabeth and Hannah's triumph over barrenness and endowment with spiritual children and ultimately Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world.

There is a meeting point between Akachi Ezeigbo's reconstruction and the reality of the world of man. Man and woman or male and female are composite or complementary – a duality of sort as the polar sexes upon which the world is built. The modern day Igbo woman is like her global counterpart who must be liberated from hopelessness and given leverage to rise and succeed. Akachi

Ezeigbo's is a rebuttal of the narrative of suppression of the Igbo women, as she opts to give voice and identity to them. Her gospel is a beacon to the modern woman as she navigates the global village through socio-economic and political labyrinths where she competes favourably with their male counterparts at the global arena.

In a similar vein, Buchi Emecheta's *The Joy of Motherhood* raises realistic solutions to solving traditional cobwebs with which the Igbo women and any woman in the globe could be entangled. The focal point of her polemic is the plight of the woman in matrimony as inherent in the pre-modern and probably the modern Igbo society. It is not just the traditions which place limitations on the path of these women but the unyielding position of an Igbo man who conceitedly and chauvinistically immerse himself in such denigrating traditions to lord over and deprive her of the joys of life. Fundamentally, Emecheta raises a poser-what then is the Joy of Motherhood? The classical work has undergone serial interpretations in the hands of literary and non-literary scholars. The concession is that women, through traditions are reduced to objects of ridicule and victims in their matrimonial homes as certain traditional prescriptions do not favour them but

rather deprive them of joy and freedom; that women are not fulfilled given the socio-economic aura that is inclement to most women either in the rural or in the urban centres. Such a situation is always aggravated by primordial beliefs which men exploit to achieve their selfish and diabolical, nonchalant motives most of the times. Kolawole asserts that Emecheta is concerned with “the change in the patriarchal system by creating male characters that fail because they stick rigidly to the tradition of male dominance of the society. She goes further to claim that “such men are lazy and irresponsible but they are always ready to enjoy marital status at no cost”(159). In the story, women are pitched against traditions and taboos as interpreted and put into life by men. Nnanife, the husband to Nnuego, Adaku, Adankwo, Okpo among others, is at the centre of the story but neither as the victor or as the victim. The victim-heroine of the narrative is Nnu ego. And if Nnuego is adjudged the protagonist, then Nnanife is the villain.

Buchi Emecheta traces a journey of the Ibuza WOMAN in the labyrinth of matrimony with the many sides or implications which are nauseating for the female, all primordially instigated by traditions and cultural practices that subjugate and relegate the woman in favour of the man. Nnu ego is equally a product of unsavoury mating between Agbadi and Ona. Nnu ego is forced out of her first husband’s house mainly because she could not have a child. She is first banished and relegated before being sent packing. Thus Amatokwu’s first wife is thus persecuted for her inability to bear a child and she is thrown out in the process and banished to another hut. She is barred from her husband’s main apartment. For this, the husband takes another wife. But the issue is not just bearing a child; it is bearing a male child while the female child could be an addition. Were Nnu ego to be a male child, Agbadi would have lost claim over „him“. Even Adaku does not enjoy the total confidence of her in-laws who thereafter turn their back against her. It is the stigma which a woman or a wife who is unable to bear a male child is usually subjected to, and underscores the importance accorded a male child in Igbo land and of course in Africa. Adaku’s brother in-law’s conversation with Adaku conveys this.

Our life starts from immortality and ends in immortality. If Nanife had been married to only you, you would have ended his life on third round of his existing on earth. I know you have children but they are girls who in a few years” time will go and help build another man’s immortality. (166)

On the other hand, Nnuego is loved and embraced by Nnanife and her in-laws because she succeeds in bearing a male child. This traditionally confers on Nnuego rights and recognition. For instance, she is qualified to head or act as the head of the family when her husband joins the Army in search of job.

But beyond this traditional recognition of male children, Buchi Emecheta raises other issues emanating from the ethos or a taboo which relegates the girl child in Ibuza traditional setting, a similar practice embraced in most communities in Africa. She identifies patriarchy or patrilineal authority as the bane of communal growth. Under this practice, the male child is given power and right traditionally to dominate and lord over the female child. Emecheta uses Ibuza cultural setting for her illustration. The implication could be and is often great for the female children and indeed for the community and humanity. This is because, the male child is exercising his power and authority to subjugate, oppress and deprive his female sibling and kin their right to life. Even Nnuego, inspite of her bearing a male child is not spared or insulated. She could not give her child a name on her own which she bears in her husband's absence:

She wanted to call the child after him but she did not know how to tell Nnanife's people, for fear of being regarded as over civilized woman who choose the names of her children by herself, just because the husband was fighting in the war. (155)

Unfortunately, the patriarchy does shield or is used to shield Nnanife from receiving blame for his liability or inability to provide for his family. The tradition and its upholders or custodians do not see anything wrong in a man marrying more wives in the search for male children even when he cannot cater for the children. Or in the search for libinal pleasure. What a paradox! Nnanife is more of a figure head as he is being fed by his wives; while the wives also shoulder the responsibilities on his children. But he indulges in tradition's immunity as he inflicts more injuries on the women who come across him as wives and property. It is a phallus supremacy that I am a man and the husband. The author probes into the social and economic situation of the woman whether of Igbo, Yoruba or Efik stock, or not against the backdrop of traditions which by implication seek to consign her to lameness and hide her from the public glare. The public glare here is the socio-economic limelight, liberation and growth. Nnanife is as inhibiting and lame as the tradition which he and his people champion to the detriment of not just the Ibuza women but womenfolk and

humanity as a whole. Both Adaku and Nnuego have to take to trading before they can feed and train their children, male and female, and prepare them for the future. Buchi Emecheta's visionary thrust is her conviction that „the Joys of Motherhood“ reside in a woman rising to the challenges of life, matrimony and leadership. The ability, vision and preparedness of a woman to break through the shackles of poverty and smearing traditions on her path to greatness confer on her the expectation and fulfillment of being a mother.

Nnuego, the heroine and victim of the novel, eventually rises above her ordeal by sending her sons to school through self-sacrifice by selling her valuables and taking to petty trading. She trains her girls in trading and sends her male children to school. With the acquisition of western education, the girl-child has succeeded in conquering religious, traditional or economic taboos likely in her way. Through the acquisition of trade skills or western education, the girl-child becomes an accomplished citizen, mother, wife, gender and human being. The kind of burial given to her by her sons is a reward for her sacrifice even though it might appear too late. It is the psychological conviction of the novelist that unless the women accept responsibilities for their emancipation, men, under the guise of traditions, will continue to restrain them

### Conclusion

Akachi Ezeigbo and Buchi Emecheta are of the opinion that certain taboos, traditional practices or agencies be reexamined and the narratives behind them reconstructed. To these authors, they are ever on the side of a woman to rescue herself and her ilk from inhibitions of various kinds. The advocacy by the duo is to extricate women from all forms of mundane limitations. They locate the history of struggle of the womenfolk through the noose of traditions, religion and gender ego. They write from their position as women, feminists, advocates, crusaders and global citizens. Their platform has been literary where they provoke polemics and engage fellow artists, critics, scholars and ordinary citizens in dialogue for positive outcomes. The freedom of men and women under gender identity and growth cannot be wished away on the altar of taboos hence their advocacy and reconstruction via the potency of literature.

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