

Reconstructing Feminist Narrative for the 21th Century African

Literary Interpretation: The Example of Adimora-Ezeigbo's Snail-Sense Feminism

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Abstract

Modern African literature had emerged as a vista to privilege a patriarchy, male hegemonic treatise in the continent. The need to foreclose feminist mindset has ever remained pertinent in African cosmos hence, modern African literature finds a safe haven in this direction. The reason for this critical posture is not inadvertent: feminist epistemological standpoint has precluded its own adaptability to African critical engagement as a reliable model, particularly with the 21st century yearning for cultural revamping on which continental development can be premised. However, the preponderance of feminist strands which have emerged as counterdiscursive narratives can no longer be ignored despite their precipitous Western leaning. Therefore, against the backdrop of the resolve to reconstruct feminist polemic for African critical enterprise, as evident in Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*, this study seeks succour in Adimora-Ezeigbo's non-confrontational, non-combative, indigenous variant: *Snail-Sense Feminism*. This is consequent on the assumption that only a non-dogmatic African-centred theoretical alternative can be conveniently adduced in African critical domain. This would, invariably, produce a revamping of feminist theory from its overt loathsomeness to that which can be accommodated in the continent's creative and critical endeavours.

Introduction

African postcolonial discourse has been largely dominated by recourse to reclaim lost glory which slave trade and colonialism had done so much to undermine and confine to the trash-can of history. From about the late colonial period to the mid-sixty era of political independence in most African states, a nationalistic fervour had emerged to champion the continental cause through an interdisciplinary counter-discursive

interrogation of the bastion of western hegemonic standpoint on the one hand, and its overt claim to cross-cultural universality on the other. Amongst others, the socio-cultural commitment of African critics foregrounds the use of literature as a reliable medium for the repudiation of unsubstantiated criticism from western critics on a continent whose epistemology they do not consider worthy of a sustained scholarly inquiry.

Having realized the moral burden vested on them as African writers and critics, particularly with the twin phenomena of slave trade and colonialism which had propelled the emergence of modern African literature, it is not surprising that the earlier practitioners had produced themes which centred on cultural nationalism. The reason for this is not inadvertent: it is consequent on their determination to correct the misconceptions of African culture which had become the trade-mark of western critics who, though not committed to empirical investigation of African cosmos, because they perceived Africa as unworthy of any scholarly inquiry, yet assumed an omniscient pretention on African worldview! Thus in modern African literature, the quest has begun for a distinctive cultural identity, devoid of western taint, which would, invariably, galvanize a reclamation of Africa's pride and dignity which had been battered by western critics. However, the hegemonic predilection which privileged western culture above others, coupled with the untoward effect of the post-war influx of western ideals across the borderless world, without a corresponding dissemination of its African variant, has continued to agitate the minds of critics. They have, therefore, charged African critics to acquaint themselves with the core tenets of African worldview from where a credible African-centred theory for literary interpretations can be extracted.

Although male critics dominated Africa's creative and critical environment at independence, feminist critics soon emerged to challenge the so-called critical silence on women's plights and conditions by established male writers and critics. In no time, women writers took up the gauntlet to critique gender imbalance which was the hallmark of the perceived patriarchal world. Coming as an offshoot of the quest for equality for both sexes in all spheres of human endeavour, irrespective of class, race, culture and biological considerations, feminist rhetoric is anchored on the resolve to dismantle all barriers which inhibit women from attaining their full potentials

in a patriarchal society. Its practitioners had premised its argument on the assumption that gender imbalance is evident in social construct and the best they can do is to challenge all practices which subjugate women in the world. Suffice it to say that feminist dogma privileges a reconstruction of social strata in a manner which advances justice and equality in social engineering.

Feminist poetics predates the modern era. Evidence has it that Plato, in *The Republic* (1979), denounces family/ social configuration on the basis of sexual differential. Its modern usage, which was coined in the 1880s by Hubert Auclert, gathered momentum thereafter to demand for equality promised by the French Revolution. It, thus, gained its worldwide acclaim in Europe and America, emerging as a programmed renunciation of all impediments to equality and liberation in the world. From the early twentieth century, it became a western middle-class initiative for the interrogation of patriarchy. It blossomed with the publications of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Simon De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* amongst others.

Feminist critical standpoint has, unarguably, provided a vista for a cross-cultural critique of the gender discourse. Feminist epistemology is premised on sexist prejudices and judgmental stance which foreground its intellectual foundation. However, despite its unhindered but pervasive influx across the globe in the post-war capitalist societies, its western middle-class lining has rendered its polemic redundant, particularly to a discerning African mind. The introduction of feminist theory to modern African writings has, no doubt, given impetus to the application of its "counter-discursive" strategy of deconstructive textual engagement in modern African literature. Feminist reductive political manifesto has foregrounded a "grand narrative" which assumes an all-knowing pretext about all cultures of the world, thereby sacrificing heterogeneity on the altar of globalisation. Since this alternative reading of canonical African texts is aimed at wholesale alteration of a perceived male-hegemonic treatise which feminist critics averred had become the stock-in-trade of established male writers, its proponents had assumed a cross-cultural understanding of all cultures, African inclusive.

The gender biases of feminist philosophical assumption had blossomed after the French Revolution in the 19th century Europe. It later assumed a political dimension as a cross-party propagandist stunt designed to

address the so-called subjugation of the rights of women in Europe and America. It, however, gained inroad into African literary environment owing to the nuances of the post-war unhindered information explosion on the one hand, and, most importantly, the perceived textual derogatory depiction of female characters by the established African male writers on the other hand. Perhaps to underscore their uneasiness at the perceived stereotypical depiction of feminine image, feminist writers propagate the resilience and indomitable spirit of feminine characters to attain equality of both sexes. However, the core assumptions of feminist discourse, which do not emanate from African traditional oral aesthetics, make it susceptible to repudiation by discerning African minds. Its absurd generalisation has foreclosed the practicality of its polemics being employed to advance the African corevalues which are germane to African cultural rebirth.

The crux of feminist theory is fraught with problems. To assume that all cultures of the world are patriarchy in nature may be a generalisation taken to a ridiculous extent. Although influences of a patriarchal world order are seen in several societies, a semblance of matriarchal is evident in the way some nations are tilting towards matriarchal social reordering. The Akan society in Ghana is overtly a matriarchal one which accords women the rights over children and properties. Besides, there is a proliferation of women associations all over the world. In Nigeria for instance, hardly do we have any professional association which does not have its women wing. The list is endless: National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Nigerian Association of Women in the Academics (NAWAC), Women in Technical Education (WITED), etc. Chinweizu's (1990) position is apposite here:

Contrary to feminist propaganda, which alleges that most human societies are, and have been, patriarchies, human societies are no exception to the rule of matriarchies operating covertly behind a facade of patriarchy. Indeed, patriarchy is a facade, most soothing to the male ego, for wife rule. That this is so is confirmed by women from some of the most dissimilar cultures in the world. (69)

Also in Nigeria's political landscape, some positions are reserved for women while men have to compete with others, including women, to attain political offices. While no man can become minister or commissioner for women affairs, women have presided over sensitive ministries like defence, police

affairs, justice, health, finance and other strategic ministries, parastatals and other government agencies. In fact, the erstwhile ruling party in Nigeria reserved about twenty-five percent of all appointments for women! The worn-out cliché that “what a man can do, a woman can do even better” is discarded at this time. Thus, it amounts to gender discrimination against men who are at the receiving end when women, who are not statue-barred to aspire to any political office, assume some positions automatically and conventionally. As women are accorded a dual opportunity to thrive in the society, feminist ideology becomes a handy tool meant to replace perceived male superiority with that of women. This perspective has, however, not failed to escape scathing criticism from masculinist critics. According to Chinweizu (1990), feminist critics situate their unconvincing gender treatise on the premise that men are accorded a pride of place in social engineering as the natural order privileges men above women. He, however, believes this assertion may not pass empirical test. In his view, an average man possesses a silly mentality and assumes he is naturally more endowed intellectually than a woman:

Among the most notorious of his beliefs are that women are weak and fragile; that men are cleverer than women; that women are fickle, passive, irrational, helpless and sentimental; that men are superior to women in the natural order of the universe; that women are mysterious. These beliefs are so palpably silly that any cleareyed and fair-minded observer can only agree with Marie Corelli who spoke of the "silly souls of men, by which women entrap them. A sober look at the actual world yields quite a different picture. (85)

This is self-glorification taken too far.

Espousing Indigenous feminism in African Literary Discourse

The inadequacies of western theoretical standpoint for the interpretation of distinct African worldview have been stressed in the works of Achebe (1997), Chinweizu *et al* (1980) and Soyinka (1976). These research efforts have shown that western theories of meaning, no matter their overt mega-status, are clearly at variance with the epistemological foundation of non-western cultures hence, inappropriate to advance development for a value-conscious African society. Whereas western critical standard assumes a cross-cultural all-knowing pretention about all cultures of the world, it is

evident that its theorists are either not committed to empirical investigation of African cosmos or engage in deliberate misrepresentation of non-western cultures apparently to justify their hegemonic agenda. In this vein, we aver that owing to hermeneutic incongruity, western feminism can only adduce development for western society, a culture whose ideals suit its adherents. Nonetheless, the need to redress gender-related imbalance foregrounds the emergence of diverse indigenous feminist theories in African literature. Thus, feminist creative writers of African extraction have advanced a plethora of indigenous feminist theories to promote their positions on the perceived cultural, economic and socio-political subjugation of women. Josephine Akhire (2014) attests to this claim:

Feminism in Africa has been a boiling pot of diverse discourses and courses of action. Far from being constructed in simple opposition to Western feminism, feminism on the African continent constitutes a myriad of heterogeneous experiences and points of departure (8).

Therefore female critics like Chikwenye Ogunyemi, Mary Kolawole, Molar Ogundipe-Leslie, Obioma Nnaemeka, Chioma Opara, Catherine Acholonu, Akachi Ezeigbo amongst others have articulated different indigenous feminist variants like womanism, stiwanism, nego-feminism, femalism, motherism, and snail-sense feminism. While giving credence to Ezeigbo's snail-sense feminist model as the opposite theoretical alternative for Nigerian society in his reading of Ezeigbo's trilogy, *The Last of the Strong Ones, Children of the Eagle and House of Symbols*, Femi Osofisan (2004) is comfortable with her preference for dialogue and compromise to advance the cause of women:

Vociferous as she is for the empowerment of women, and against their marginalisation in a male-dominated society, she is not for all that an iconoclast or phallophobist. She protests and denounces, but her goal is negotiation, compromise, reconciliation. Hence her preference is for dialogue, „nkolika“, and her advocacy for women's rights does not lead her into a hatred of men. (34)

Thus, Ezeigbo's snail-sense feminism informs this study.

Drawing largely from the accommodationist school of thought, Ezeigbo's snail-sense feminism advances an indigenous, non-combative, accommodating, „home-grown“ variant of feminism. A result of Ezeigbo's empirical and “in-depth research or investigation into the condition of

Nigerian women”, snail-sense feminism demands the spirit of negotiation and compromise to ameliorate the subjugation of Nigerian women. While not foreclosing the emergence of other models, its treatise is premised on a conciliatory approach to redress the subjugation of women in a patriarchy society. If women are to play a complementary role in national development, a gender-friendly theory is required. In their study of Ezeigbo’s *Children of the Eagle*, Omotayo Oloruntoba-Oju and Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju (2013) have likened her theoretical standpoint to reflect the non-combative disposition of womanist theorising:

The negotiation/survivalist model of representing African womanhood...corresponds to the dominant trend in African womanist discourse. The discourse resonates with the tropes of 'complementarity,' 'negotiation' and 'reconciliation,' and signals a departure from the mode of confrontational challenge that characterized earlier representations by first generation African women writers... The negotiation /complementarity model has been projected in womanist discourse as a rejection of western feminist postulations and, simultaneously, a projection of salutary African gender perspectives (16).

The core assumptions of womanist theorizing have largely informed Ezeigbo’s Snail-sense feminism.

Derived from the habit of a snail, the theory encourages women to imbibe the culture of negotiation and compromise to achieve the desired end. Although a snail is not a strong animal, it crawls over big objects like stone, and rocks with its well-lubricated tongue. Whenever danger looms, it renegotiates its way until it arrives its final designation. It never confronts nor struggles to achieve its goal. Ezeigbo (2012) puts it more succinctly:

The snail crawls over boulders, rocks, thorns, crags and rough terrains smoothly and efficiently with a well-lubricated tongue which is not damaged or destroyed by these sharp objects...If danger looms, it withdraws into its shell and is safe. This is what women often do in our society to survive in Nigeria’s harsh patriarchal culture. (27)

According to Ezeigbo, Nigerian women are “wise, sensitive, resilient and dogged or determined”. If these virtues are annexed and complemented with good education, they will go places despite all the odds militating against the

attaining of their full potentials. They will dominate their world, as Chinweizu (1990) affirms they already are, even in the murky water of Nigerian politics. Rather than being “reduced to the role of dancing and Asoebi wearing at political rallies” (34), as Shodipe (2011) believes they are fond off, it is high time they shook-off the lethargy and dispensed with what Oriaku (2012) and Chinweizu (1990) describe as “the myth of male superiority” (130), and “a noisy myth, a compensatory boast (92)” respectively.

Heavily influenced by Alice Walker’s womanism and Clenora Hudson-Weems’ Africana womanism, Nigerian feminist critics like Chikwenye Ogunyemi, Mary Kolawole, Molar Ogundipe-Leslie, Chioma Okpara, Obioma Nnaemeka, and Catherine Acholonu have earlier articulated some indigenous variants of feminism. Ogunyemi (1996) and Kolawole’s (1997) womanism dispenses with the radical, individualistic posture of western feminism and, in its place, adopts a conciliatory, group approach to redress women subjugation in Africa. Chika Oduah (2008) is an eloquent advocate of womanist school of thought:

Womanism thoroughly understands the complexity of the human race, that it takes a woman and a man to create peace, happiness, perfection, that the delicate balance of the elements is what conducts progress and nurtures harmony, that I don't have to commit abortion to prove that I can make my own choices, that I do not have to alter my sexual biology to verify my flexibility, that I do not need a man's encouragement to feel important, that I do not need a lunch invitation from my male boss to feel "belonged" or "equal," that I do not need to wear a 4 inch miniskirt to feel beautiful, that I do not need to wear a double-breasted 3piece suit to assert my authority, that I do not need to be in the White House to demonstrate my Godgiven ability to lead, that hijab-wearing women do not need to shred the hijab to be "free"(4).

Thus, we aver that the accommodationist philosophy of womanist theory foregrounds the submission that men should be incorporated into the struggle for the emancipation of women because men are partners-in-progress and never the sworn enemies of the women (Mekgwe, 2008; Uko, 2004). Womanist theorizing elicits a very strong affiliation with the communal coexistence in Africa where all hands, regardless of sexual distinction, are required for the attainment of social harmony. Ogunyemi affirms that the

much-sought-after social harmony is predicated on the spirit of conciliation, collaboration, consensus and complementarity. However before this can be achieved, Kolawole advises that while being strong and assertive on the one hand, women should realise that the natural order had foregrounded the indispensability of both sexes for social harmony on the other hand. This is required for them not to become agents for the obliteration of African values. Ogundipe-Leslie's stiwanism (2007) is anchored on the premise that although women are subjugated in a patriarchal world order, the place of women as active agents for social change is assured. While advocating gender complementarity because of the belief that the strategy should be devoid of gender affiliation, stiwanism calls on men to join the crusade for women liberation from all culturally-sanctioned subjugation of the women. Stiwa-an acronym for "social transformation including women in Africa"- charges men not to be agents of destabilisation by opposing women in the quest for justice. In fact, a man is encouraged to be a "stiwanist".

Apparently owing to her conviction that "African worldviews and thought are capable of providing the theoretical rack on which to hang African literature (369)", Nnaemeka (2003) situates her African feminism within the confines of an indigenous, conciliatory and non-combative domain to redress gender imbalances in Africa. Aptly tagged nego-feminism, it advises women to imbibe the virtues of "negotiation" and "no ego" to achieve the desired end. It does not see men as enemies to be crushed but those with whom women should compromise and let go whenever the need arises:

In the foundation of shared values in many African cultures are the principles of negotiation, give and take, compromise, and balance. Here, negotiation has the double meaning of "give and take/exchange" and "cope with successfully/go around." African feminism (or feminism as I have seen it practiced in Africa) challenges through negotiations and compromise. It knows when, where, and how to detonate patriarchal land mines; it also knows when, where, and how to go around patriarchal land mines(369).

This can be achieved when the peculiarities of indigenous African environment are taken into cognisance in the formation and articulation of African feminism.

In the same vein, Opara's femalism (2004) is couched in the same conciliatory tradition. It adopts a more liberal framework to seek redress from

subjugation in a patriarchal society. In her brand of African feminism, Opara reiterates the essential „Africaness“ in feminism. This is to be differentiated from Alice Walker’s womanism which addresses the imbalance occasioned by the plights of black women all over the world.

Unlike other variants of African feminism, Acholonu’s motherism (1995) sets out to reposition rural women as the agents of change in the quest to redress the subjugation of women in Africa. While advancing a gender bias theory which reignites the traditional, age-long emphasis on the role of women as mothers in gender configuration, it clearly distinguishes along sexual divides, in line with western feminism. However, its overt preference for the rural women without a corresponding interest in the role of the educated urban women in gender reconfiguration in Africa renders its polemic redundant. This segregation along gender and class divide is in sharp contrast to the advocacies of African feminist theorists who adore the politics of cooperation and understanding to address all forms of socio-cultural imbalance.

So Long a Letter and Snail-Sense Feminism: The Point of Convergence

Mariama Ba’s *So Long a Letter* (1980) is a semi-autobiographical account of the life and time of a recently-widowed Senegalese school teacher, Ramatoulaye. Employing an epistolary form to document events in the trials of Ramatoulaye, Ba advances the feminist rhetoric to reflect on the behavioural nuances of the maligned woman in a patriarchy society. In line with the Afro-feminist theorising, the novel expresses the coping strategists of women in the so called men’s world, particularly in a predominantly Islamic society.

The marital bliss which accompanies the marriage between Ramatoulaye and Modou is short lived as Modou takes a second wife, Binetou, a girl in the same age group with his daughter, Daba. Having abandoned his twenty-five year-old marriage and twelve children, Modou’s attention shifts to his new wife and mother-in-law unto whom he commits his entire resources. He obtains a four million Francs loan through a ten-year mortgage of Villa Fallene, where Ramatoulaye lives, purchases SICAP Villa for Binetou, pays her a monthly stipend of fifty thousand Francs and bankrolls her parents trip to Mecca. Left with nothing except her professional

calling, Ramatoulaye has to nurture her children all alone while remaining a dutiful wife. She refuses all forms of entreaties and advice from people, including her children, to seek divorce. Instead, she keeps faith with the Islamic injunction. When Modou passes on due to a heart attack, Ramatoulaye participates actively in the burial and traditional mourning practices. Although she laments Modou's abandonment, she observes the mandatory funeral rites and stays in seclusion for four months and ten days as sanctioned by Senegalese culture. She however refuses advances from Tamsir, Dauda Dieng and other men who seek to „inherit“ her. She devotes herself to the upbringing of her children all-through.

A highly opinionated lady, Ramatoulaye is nice and compassionate. Despite the neglect and ill-treatment she receives from Modou and the members of his family, she remains faithful, obedient, affectionate and committed to a man she marries without dowry, despite the disapproval of her parents. A dutiful and generous wife, she picks her bills herself and lavishes gifts on her in-laws. At Modou's demise, she has compassion for Binetou who had married Modou owing to pressure from her mother. In Binetou, she sees a violated, used and dumped innocent soul who should be pitied. Although she suffers psychological trauma and depression on account of Modou's resolve to cut off family ties, she is able to live above board. Unlike Aissatou who relegates her in-laws to the background, she endears herself to all and sundry. She showers gifts on them and continues in her coping strategies. Despite the humiliation, she smiles at last as Daba wins back the possession of SICAP Villa after a law suit.

But for Ramatoulaye's survivalist strategy and her conciliatory approach to keep her home and train her children, she would have considered divorce like her bosom friend, Aissatou or suffered nervous breakdown on account of Modou's abandonment. To this act of betrayal, she keeps calm because she so much believes in the institution of marriage and the position of tradition and Islam on polygamy. She faces her career squarely, tolerates her in-laws, prays for her husband and children, and rebuffs all entreaties to make her walk away. When Modou dies of heart attack, her first consideration is the fate of the innocent Binetou! Apart from playing her part in the burial arrangement, she obeys all traditional and Quranic injunctions on funeral, remaining in seclusion for four months and ten days. When Aissatou,

is impregnated by Ibrahima Sall, she remains a caring and understanding mother. She admonishes her trio (Arame, Yacine and Dieynaba) to quit smoking and refuses to fight the man who accidentally breaks Malik's arm. Her friendly disposition endears her to all. Ba justifies her repossession of the SICAP villa.

The lesson here is that women ought to sheath their sword against men and engage fellow women to advocate for solidarity and cooperation among themselves. As they pursue what Nnolim (2009) calls "misplaced hostility (144)", they leave the substance and chase the shadow. We make bold to posit that for every polygamous household, a woman i.e. the second or third wife is guilty. Imagine a world where no woman agrees to be a cowife, mistress or girlfriend! Thus while justifying Nnolim's classification of African feminist tradition as "a house divided" which cannot stand, Nwahunnya (2016) bemoans the tyranny of feminist theorising:

The claim feminists have not tired in making is that women have perpetually laboured under the weight of the load placed on them by a patriarchal culture where the shots are called by men, and where everything in society is structured to favour men, to the disadvantage of women. This tyranny has been so orchestrated that most sympathizers with feminism have tended to overlook the role women themselves have played in encouraging this tyranny, if it really does exist(2).

The point being made here is that even if economic and socio-cultural imbalance in the society can be traced to the domineering tendency of men in a patriarchal society, women are not determined, not dogged enough to effect social change. This lack of consensus or dearth of unity of purpose is a major impediment to women liberation. Needless to say that women are their own worst enemies. In this vein, if Binetou's mother had not compelled her to marry Modou for pecuniary consideration, if she had not agreed to be a wife to a man old enough to be her father, if Modou had not obeyed the dictate of his mother, if Aunt Nabou, in her revenge bid, had not arranged Young Nabou for Mawdo, both Ramatoulaye and Aissatou would have enjoyed marital bliss, and not heartbreaks. On the other hand, if the widowed Ramatoulaye had agreed to marry Tasir, if she had positively considered Dauda Dieng renewed proposal, other women would have gone through similar emotional trauma.

It is a truism that women subjugation is alien to traditional African society. If it exists at all, it is a western construct occasioned by the contact with western civilisation. In several traditional pre-colonial African societies, women are the backbone of the patriarchal social order. Yoruba history is replete with the pride of place accorded the Iyaloja (head of the market women) and the Iyalode (a titled traditional chief). A case worthy of note is the enormous influence wielded by the dreaded Efunsetan Aniwura, a one-time Iyalode of Ibadan land. This perhaps explains why Fubara (2013) situates women subjugation in the context of western worldview. Pre-colonial African society accords women a pride of place in the society:

Societal compromise of women's rights, dignity and equality has been maintained to a point of reflex. It however has not always been so in the African primordial and pre-colonial setting. Women had recognized authority graced with dignity. (13)

It is in the light of this that this study recommends Ezeigbo's snail-sense feminist model for the reconstruction of African indigenous thought system which western feminism has misrepresented because of the limited knowledge of African epistemology by its practitioners. It is the requisite indigenous variant which falls in line with the dictate of a quintessential African cultural norm. Even if we agree that African culture is neither monolithic nor homogenous, recourse to a non-combative, dialogic, indigenous alternative will not be out of place for continental development.

Conclusion

The plethora of indigenous feminist variants in African literary discourse is a step in the right direction. This fact underscores the quest to ameliorate imbalance and all acts which subjugate women in a patriarchal society. Like other indigenous variants of feminist theories, Ezeigbo's conciliatory approach is recommended. However for the snail-sense African feminist theory to have global credibility and acceptability, it must „liberate“ itself from any tendency to suppress or malign other cultural idiosyncrasies. If western feminism is „accused“ of totalitarian parochialism, its indigenous African alternative should not tow the same line, else parochialism becomes an albatross to theory formulation. It should not condemn an act, only to promote its alternative. For this to be achieved, less emphasis should be

placed on the alleged „superiority“ or otherwise of African culture, race or gender. Rather, the positive attributes in the pre-colonial cultural idiosyncrasies should be espoused for all to see. To attain this lofty height, women writers, scholars and activists need not adorn the toga of misogynists, male-haters or „penis-envy“. Now is the time to put strength together in forming an alliance to achieve liberation from all forms of discrimination.

Nnolim (2009) has charged women to be their “sisters“ keeper”:

Until women get more friendly with one another, until they begin to empathize with those that have been abused among them, until indeed they really unite to fight their battle, not much women emancipation would be achieved beyond mere rhetoric (14).

Thus, instead of fighting men, it is high time African feminists realise that genuine liberation from all forms of subjugation lies in the realisation of the enormous strength which lies in the unity of purpose. This all-inclusive conciliatory approach should be devoid of gender prejudice.

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