

WOMAN'S PROTEST AND LIBERATION IN SOME SELECTED IGBO NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

For generations past and even present, women have always lived and are still living with the idea that they suffered, suffer and are still suffering both in the hands of men, their fellow women, their customs and traditions and even from nature. This issue has always elicited protest from women, though with caution. This notion is worse in African traditional society of which Igbo is one. This essay is motivated by the desire to showcase how women in Africa (Igbo) view these problems and their struggles to annihilate them. The work deploys deprivation theory and expository method of analysis to produce a thesis within the ambit of 'feminism' which postulates that women are not as brainless and as docile as they are taken to be. The data for this research are sourced from four Igbo novels: *Uwa bu nke onye*, *Mmadu abu Chukwu*, *Oge Chukwu ka mma*, and *Onye chi ya akwatughi* written by three Igbo authors: Obiageli Nsolibe, Stella Agwuna and Chinedum Ofomata. It was observed that African(Igbo) women are undergoing one torture or the other emotionally and most often physically, and that they protest these conditions while taking some as natural and, seeing them from the point of view of "women's world". It is also observed that they fight for their liberation from these suppressive conditions in whatever way possible within the norms of the society. To have a conducive society for men and women, I suggest that men should involve women as elemental part of the society who deserved some respect and should be treated fairly.

Keywords: Women, Protest, Liberation and Cohabitation

INTRODUCTION

Right from ages past and this contemporary time, it is believed from Biblical perspective that a man and a woman are created by God and placed in the garden of Eden to live together as cohabitants. Cohabitation occurs when a couple chooses to live together and form a romantic relationship while remaining unmarried. It is from this type of cohabitation that there may be marriage or no marriage.

Cohabitation is an arrangement where two people are not married but live together. They are often involved in a romantic or sexually intimate relationship on a long term or permanent basis (Martin, 2016). More broadly, the term cohabitation can mean any number of people living together in different societies for various purposes such as for governmental purpose, cultural purpose and others. There are many types of cohabitation, namely; limited cohabitation, premarital cohabitation, substitute marriage cohabitation, no alternative cohabitation, convenient cohabitation, government cohabitation.

Limited cohabitation occurs when a couple becomes romantically involved and begins spending more time together. Premarital cohabitation occurs when a couple decides to get married but desires a trial marriage period. Substitute marriage cohabitation involves an agreement between two people to live together as if they were already married without a legal ceremony. No alternative cohabitation involves couples who are not legally permitted to get married such as gay marriage in most states. Convenient cohabitation occurs when a couple chooses to live together as a necessary alternate to living separately. Government cohabitation is a system of divided government that occurs in semi-presidential system when the President is from a different political party than the majority of the members of parliament like in France (Poulard, 1990).

With time, cohabitation resulting in marriage led to procreation. People began increasing and dispersing to different places in the world having different cultures. These cultures have different norms and rules guiding their daily lives. Different sexes have different functions and duties peculiar to them as their society demands. During the early days in the classical period between 600 BCE and 600BC, many influential belief systems evolved and developed into more complex institutions which established law practices or customs. These institutions affect social structures like family and marriage which have a large impact on the lives of women.

In the past, women exercise comparatively less power than men. Based on information gleaned from primary and secondary sources, women exercised varying degrees of freedom and independence in the private and public spheres due to different belief systems, family relations, political contexts and social classes. Religion, philosophies and belief systems may be thought to exist in the world of ideas, but, they considerably affect people's lives daily. With time, concepts become parts of institutions that include rules and expectations for how people relate to one another, more especially how women live in relation to their men counterparts and to society at large.

In the past, for instance, women were allowed more active roles in religion and very limited powers about their lives and what goes on in the outside world (Todaro, 1976: 63). Women are taken to be close to God because of their humane disposition and as such allowed to commune more with the gods and intercede for the family and the society. But about their private lives and involvement in what goes on in the outside world, they have to be directed by the men. Women's primary roles in many societies revolved around motherhood and managing a household. While women in many different places and at different times have this in common, there are significant differences in how women perform these roles depending on kinship relations (Todaro: 77). But suffice it to say that women were not comfortable for being relegated to duties confining them to the home. This leads to protest that started mildly and later grow, culminating in their struggles for liberation which in the Western world is termed 'Feminism'.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Right from time, women aver that they have never been fairly treated. They are also of the view that they are taken to be less than men physically, spiritually, and intellectually. These they say are evident in their private and public spheres of life. They are trying to resist and protest these situations and to disabuse the minds of the populace from these notions as well as struggle for liberation.

Protest according to Ahrense (2001:52) may be seen as, “A statement or action expressing disapproval of or objection to something”. It may also be a written declaration typically by a rotary public, that a bill has been presented and payment or acceptance refused. It is an expression of objection to what someone has said or done. Protest according to Dalton, R. J., Van Sickle, A. & Welden, S. (2010), cited in Wikipedia is an expression of bearing witness on behalf of an express cause by words or actions with regard to particular events, policies or situations. Protests can take many different forms, from individual statements, to mass demonstration by either males or females or a combination of both who, may be young or old. Protesters may organize a protest as a way of publicly making their opinions heard in an attempt to influence public opinion or government policy, or they may undertake direct action in an attempt to directly enact desired change themselves. A protest can also be said to be an expression of objection, by words or by actions, to particular events, policies or situations.

All over the world both in ancient and contemporary times, women protest for one obvious reason or the other. The protest may be for not enjoying many of the same freedoms and rights as men. Such as equal opportunity in the work force and free childcare, political rights for women and social equality in relationships such as marriage. In pre-colonial Africa for instance, patriarchal ideologies imagined African women as “beast of burden”, women who were sold to the highest bidder for the productive and reproductive labour. These conditions sparked off protests in various quarters.

Women in Liberia in 2003 for instance, had a Mass Action for Peace Protest led by Crystal Row Gawding and Comfort Freeman that worked to end the second Liberian civil war. This protest was embarked upon by both Christian and Muslim women from various classes who mobilized their efforts and staged a nonviolent protest (Reticker, 2008). This protest includes a sex strike and the threat of a curse. Mable Dove Danquah in 1951 in Freetown, led ten thousand women in protest against increasing food prices and, for government to allow market women to regain their monopoly of the trade in palm oil and rice.

There is a long history of collective protests by women in Nigeria. In the 1910s, women in Agbaja stayed away from their homes for a month because, they thought that their men were killing pregnant women. In Calabar, in 1924, three thousand (3,000) women protested a market toll that was required by the government. Nigerian women also protested against increase in school fees, corruption by local officers, forced labour as well as direct taxation. In 1929 in Nigeria, there was the “Aba Women Riot” or “The Women War” during the British colonial era. The protest came when thousands of Igbo women from the Bende district in Umuahia and, other places in Eastern Nigeria travelled to Oloko to protest against the warrant chiefs whom, they accused of restricting the role of women in the government. The Aba Women Riot was an anti-colonial revolt organized by women to redress social, political and economic grievances. The protest encompassed women from six ethnic groups (Igbo, Andoni, Ogoni, Bonny, Ibibio and Opobo). It was organized and led by the rural women of Owerri and Calabar provinces. The three lead figures were Ikonnia, Nwannediya and Nwugo. The protest led to the resignation of many warrant chiefs and about sixteen (16) native courts were attacked.

Liberation is being free from opposition or protest to traditional, social and sexual attitudes or roles. It is the action of setting someone free from imprisonment, slavery or oppression and or

release from social stereotype. In short, it is defined as being set free in thought or behavior. We are privileged to get all kinds of freedom to speak, to act, to learn, to earn and much more. But a set of people may feel that they are not free to live like others and strive to be liberated to live the way they see others they feel are free live. One of such group all over the world is women. In the bid to be liberated, a movement known as women liberation movement is born. The Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) was a political alignment of women and feminist intellectualism that emerge in the late 1960s and continued into the 1980s. Initially, it started in the industrialized nations of the western world and effected great change. It was the impetus for the founding of new institutions of psychological and mental health care for women. This move looks at the way women interacted with local politics and their attentiveness to racial and economic oppression. This is due to the fact that the pressure on them lead to a lot of problems like mental illness. The Women Liberation Movement was skeptical about the potential for women's distress to be cured by traditional institutions concerned with the mind, for these institutions were embedded in the very system that perpetuated inequality which is the onus of the women's problem warranting their fight for liberation.

Love (1971), says that when subjugated female take things "too" personally, she is responding with her feelings correctly to a given situation of injustice. A branch of women liberation movement known as "Radical Feminism" based on contemporary philosophy, comprised women of racially and culturally diverse background who proposed that economic, psychological and social freedom were of utmost importance for women to progress from being second class citizens in their societies. In the bid to achieving women equality, the women liberation movement questioned the cultural and legal validity of patriarchy and the practical validity of the social and sexual hierarchies used to control the limit and the legal and physical independence of women in the society (Rowbotham, 1976).

Women, both educated and uneducated were pivoted to liberation parties, although they were often pigeonholed with the less powerful women's wing of the party, if it had one. While they had little opportunity to be part of the broader organogram of these parties, leaders of the women's wing were able to demonstrate enormous leadership potentials (Cheryl, 1981). They led the liberation struggle for women. Women across the African continent played critical roles in political and social movements in the 21st century. For instance, in 1992, elderly women in Cameroon's Social Democratic Front (SDF), played a significant and critical role in bringing peace after the onslaught of post-electoral violence (Akhona, 2001). They led silent morning protest which include exposing their breasts and displaying peace symbols.

In Nigeria, when the British colonial officers refused to give permits for demonstrations, a woman activist, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, one of few women in the early 1920s, to receive post-primary education, used her privilege to coordinate the resistance against colonialism in Nigeria. She mobilized local market women for what she called "picnics" and "festivals". Their target was not only the British, but also the local traditional figure heads they used to enforce their rules. She also founded the 'Abeokute women Union' which she used to fight for liberation against unjust taxes, corruption and the lack of women's representation in decision making corridors (Falala, 2008).

In 1944, lady Oyinkan Morenike Abeyomi, formed the women's rights in Nigeria, fight hyper taxation without political representation of women in the government. All these were efforts made by women to show unacceptability of situations that are not favourable to their

existence in the various societies they found themselves in. Women are not only subjugated in groups and outside but, are also subjugated individually in their various homes by members of their families particularly their husbands. These situations abound in the texts used for analysis in this work.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In struggling against men's suppression, oppression, domination, discrimination, and subjugation in virtually all aspects of life, women have for a long time put up protests. Because these are problems prevalent in our patriarchal society, it underpins the use of deprivation theory with its varying objectives, nuances and perspectives in analyzing the data for this essay. Deprivation theory is a theory born under social movement. Deprivation theory is that people who are deprived of things deemed valuable in society, money, justice, status or privilege, join social movements with the hope of redressing their grievances (Soares, 2006: 84). Social movements are either political, or economic or cultural in nature (Buechler, 1995). Social movement is a loosely organized effort by a large group of people to achieve a particular goal, typically a social or political one. This may be to carry out, resist or undo a social change. It is a type of group action and may involve individuals, organizations or both (James, P. & Van Seeters, P., 2014: 27).

Starting in the 1950s, the US and Europe saw an explosion of protests and demonstrations against governments, government policies, and existing social practices giving birth to a lot of social movements. Scholars tried to develop theories to understand the origins of these movements and to predict the future course of these movements (Phongpaichit, 1999). Some of these theories are as follows; deprivation theory; resource mobilization theory, political process theory; structural strain theory; and new social movement theories.

From Soares insight, we take it that it is the view of deprivation of justice, status and privileges that this essay is particularly concerned with. That is because the views represent the type of protest against men's oppression of women that the essay seeks to portray its existence among Igbo women.

SYNOPSIS OF THE NOVELS

Uwa bu nke onye

Family problem that hinges on land is not something one dabbles into carelessly because, it at times take lives, particularly, if some people involved are diabolical. Such is the fate of Aniudo, the father of Iheukwumere. Aniudo wants his younger brother, Chikata, to be given his own portion of land to build his house from the family land where others got their own lands from. His cousin Mefo, did not want that done saying that the land remaining is his. Trouble started from there culminating in his joining hands with Ikpechi, Aniudo's son's maternal cousin living with him at Akwanga to eliminate his cousin, Aniudo's son, Iheukwumere. Iheukwumere died in a motor accident and was buried. But after his burial, he appeared to Eziaku, his aunt in a dream and asked her to go and tell Urioma, his mother, that she should not go to where the corpse of her relative will be brought home that day. This Iheukwumere said is because, he has taken revenge on one of those who caused his death and, that he wants the mother of the deceased to experience the pain his mother Urioma, is having due to his death. The others involved in his death he said he will handle later.

After the burial of Iheukwumere in which his maternal cousin, Ikpechi, took part effectively to cover his involvement in the death, Ikpechi went back to Akwanga where they reside and,

resumed his business. A year later, he died in a ghastly motor accident also. Mefo, Aniudo's cousin also died when he fell down from a palm tree. Completing his mission for revenge warranting death, Iheukwumere, proceeded to punish Agbakpueziokwu, his cousin who, he brought to Akwanga as he did for Ikpechi, not that Agbakpueziokwu has a hand in his death but, because he stole his properties at his death including his bank cheque book. He also singled him out for punishment because Agbakpueziokwu did not actively participate in his burial ceremony as he should. Iheukwumere did not kill him but, he dealt him fate worse than death. Everything Agbakpueziokwu tried his hands on failed including his marriage until frustration killed him.

Mmadu abu Chukwu

Greed and avariciousness made Iheukwu to maltreat his late brother, Udengwu's wife and son. Izundu had hope of furthering his education which, his father promised to see him through to any level but, the cold hands of death shattered his ambition. After his father's death, Izundu approached his uncle, Iheukwu and begged him to sponsor his education. Iheukwu refused with the excuse that, he has no money. Izundu's mother Uduji cannot afford to pay her son's school fees in the secondary school. Izundu had to stop schooling after his primary education and was going to farm with his mother. To make matters worse, Iheukwu now trespasses into his late brother's land which, is the only source of livelihood for Uduji and Izundu her son, and is harvesting palm fruits from there. When Uduji confronted him, he forbade her from entering the land, that the land is his. Uduji refused to accept the order and it took the intervention of the king of their town, Igwe Ononankume, to settle the problem. Igwe now forbade Iheukwu from entering the land.

To make sure that Izundu never see the light of day, Iheukwu agreed to send Izundu to Bini with Ekeocha who, is on leave and returned home to look for workers who will work in the rubber plantation where he works. Anyone who brings a worker is given certain amount of money for compensation. Uduji refused giving her consent saying that, her son is too young to leave home but, Iheukwu insisted. Izundu begged his mother to allow him to go that God will see him through. Uduji reluctantly gave her consent and Izundu left with Ekeocha to Bini after, Iheukwu and Ekeocha has planned how they will be sharing Izundu's salary at the end of every month without giving Uduji his mother anything.

In Bini, Izundu found favour in the sight of the whiteman who owns the plantation. Mr. Wheetle after rebuking Maazi Ekeocha for bringing a child who is underage to come and do such tedious work, took Izundu to live with him. Mr Wheetle sent Izundu to school to continue his education. After Izundu's secondary education, Mr Wheetle sent him to England to further his education with the consent of his people. Of course, Iheukwu refused but, Igwe Ononankume once more intervened when Uduji took the matter to him and told Mr Wheetle to go ahead and help Izundu.

Izundu read Civil Engineering and also did his Master's degree before coming back to Nigeria to establish his own company. He got married to Ijeoma he met in London who he came back with. Mr Wheetle retired, handed over everything he has to Izundu and went back to his country. Izundu is now a very rich man. He brought his mother to Bini when his mother-in-law left after postnatal (Omugwo) visit for her daughter, Ijeoma, who gave birth to twin boys. Uduji stayed for one year and Izundu used the opportunity to go to his home town and build an upstairs, fenced and electrified the compound before taking his mother back home. Uduji's joy knows no bounds and Iheukwu's sorrow is unimaginable. Izundu did not

pay him back with evil despite all his efforts to eliminate him. Izundu helped in seeing his children through school and helped them to gain employment. Izundu took care of Iheukwu until his death and he helped in giving Iheukwu a befitting burial.

Oge Chukwu ka mma

Ulukanachukwu is a graduate working in Asaba. She is forty years old (40yrs), but not yet married. This condition gives her sleepless nights. She is never happy and to worsen the situation, she blames herself for her condition. This is because she rejected all the suitors in her youthful days, waiting to marry someone living in America or Germany or London as her friends advised they should do. They told her that she is too beautiful to marry someone living in Nigeria and she foolishly agreed without remembering that time and tide waits for no one and that, there is time in a woman's life when she will no longer look young and beautiful. Now, she is in her forties, suitors are no longer coming. For about eighteen years, no man ever asked her out, not to talk of asking her hand in marriage. She now regrets not heeding her father's advice in the past to get married to one of the many suitors that were coming. She is now looking for men to marry her instead of men looking for her to marry her.

Men noticing that she is in dire need for a husband, go to her, use and dump her. Telling her mother of her predicament, her mother took her to a native doctor who did some sacrifices for her, all to no avail. They did not know that it is her uncle, Mkpume, who is disabusing the minds of her suitors by telling them lies about Ulukanachukwu and her family. He is also using diabolical means to stop suitors from coming to marry Ulukanachukwu because, his eight daughters are still in his house, not married. Chiagozie, Ulukanachukwu's younger sister concerned about her elder sister's predicament, introduced Ulukanachukwu to God because, she is a born again Christian, and through prayers, Ulukanachukwu succeeded in getting a husband. His name is Arinzechukwu, a medical doctor living in USA. All Mkpume's efforts to stop the marriage failed. Emeka, who jilted Ulukanachukwu in the past after collecting her money and leaving her and getting married to another girl, came back when his marriage started failing, to beg Ulukanachukwu to marry her if she would accept him. Of course, Ulukanachukwu told him that she is now married to a medical doctor living in USA and cannot marry him.

Onye chi ya akwatughi

Uju married Osita after her primary education and went to live with him in Benin. Osita did not fulfill his promise to Uju to send her to school to continue her secondary school. Uju wanted to continue her education after her primary education in her father's house but, her father's death foiled her ambition. Obiamaka, Uju's mother, did not want Uju to get married rather, to stay in her father's house and have children as she is her only child. She did not want her husband's lineage to go into extinction but, Uju refused.

Osita took Uju to Benin after their marriage and, they started living together. He did not want Uju to go to secondary school because, he is afraid of losing her to other men. He told Uju that it is better to do business because, at the end of attending the secondary school that, it is money that will be paid to her as salary. He convinced her to enter into business but that, she has to wait until he finds a place for the business. Uju is living happily with her husband, Osita and, in a short time, she became pregnant. She gave birth to a baby boy, but, before Uju's mother could come for postnatal visit tragedy struck. The baby died. They were sad about this, but they are young and they believe God that another baby will come.

Uju started her business immediately after the death of their baby so as to be busy and, stop thinking about the death of their baby. Osita opened a beer palour business for her and furnished the place very well. Uju is doing very well in the business and very soon she became pregnant again. She gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. Obiamaka, Uju's mother came for postnatal visit. Just before the end of one month of Obiamaka, Uju's mother's postnatal visit and her getting ready to leave for home from her postnatal visit, another tragedy struck. The baby died again. Uju and Osita were devastated. When Osita took the corpse of the baby to his village for burial, his people suggested the baby should not be buried but burnt as he is an "ogbanje". Osita did as they said and went back to Benin.

They went to so many places in search of solution to this problem, spending huge sums of money and offering sacrifices as instructed. After all these things, they had hope that the problem will end. Uju started her business again and very soon got pregnant again. She gave birth to a baby girl called Nwamaka and, they were taking very good care of her. Nwamaka is growing very fast and it did not take long before she started walking. One faithful day, what happened to their first two children happened to Nwamaka. She died. Her death brought catastrophe into Uju and Osita's family. They are no longer happy. Osita's parents now see Uju as an evil woman and want their son to marry another wife. Osita's attitude towards Uju changed but, he is still living with her. Uju got pregnant again and had a son and they named him Taagboo. Osita was just looking and hoping that he will stay but, one day, he died like the others and Osita started thinking of getting a new wife.

When Uju saw what was happening, she started saving some money because she knows that her days in Osita's house are numbered. She could not bear to live with Osita and another woman as his wife. Osita married a new wife, Adamma. Immediately Adamma came into the house, she monopolized Osita and they started maltreating Uju. Uju left the house and went back to her parents' house. She returned her bride prize and all Osita spent on her when Osita and his people came for it. Osita was not happy about Uju's leaving but there is nothing he could do about it. Uju later went back to Benin and with the help of her friends, finds a place and started her beer palour business again. She is doing very well and soon became very rich. Uju is now in her father's house and has three children, two boys and a girl. She has her own house in Bini and also has a car.

Osita's marriage with Adamma is not working out. Adamma has two children- a boy and a girl for him but, she is wayward. Adamma inherited Uju's beer palour business but, she uses the place to get and follow men. It brought problem to their home. One day, Osita beat her up and she told her boyfriend, Kunle. Kunle vouching to deal with Osita, brought her poison to put in Osita's food to kill him. Adamma, after administering the poison to Osita, her husband's food, left him and her children and ran off to Lagos with Kunle. Osita nearly died but, for the timely intervention of Chinwe, their former house help, now married who took him to hospital. Osita lost all he has including his car in the bid to save his life. Kunle later dumped Adamma in Lagos when he is tired of her and, being frustrated and penniless, she turned into a prostitute.

PROTEST AND WOMEN LIBERATION IN SELECTED IGBO NOVELS

Eziaku in Nsolibe (2018a), protests Urioma, her elder sister's problem of excessive soft heartedness and strives to talk her into doing something to liberate or free herself from that shackle. Urioma's late son, Iheukwumere, in a vision, reveals to Eziaku his aunt that his mother Urioma, should not go to their place, where the corpse of their relative will be brought

home that day. The late Iheukwumere, in that vision, says that he has taken revenge on who master minded his death and wants the mother of the deceased to weep as his own mother is weeping due to his death. Urioma, his mother, wants to go and condole with whoever has lost someone due to her soft heartedness, not minding whether the person is the cause of her son's death or not, but, Eziaku, her sister, who brought the message, refused to allow her to go, so as to save her from the problem that may arise if she goes contrary to her late son's instruction. Eziaku had to stay back to make sure that Urioma adheres to the instruction. Eziaku talked at length to Urioma to curb this problem of excessive soft heartedness so that she should start seeing things the way they are and act accordingly and be liberated from the bondage. Eziaku's action of not allowing the sister Urioma to do her wish, is the protest here.

In the same text, Igbemma, Ekwerekwu's wife, protests her husband's beating and maltreatment of her. Ekwerekwu is diabolical, and derives joy in eliminating anyone he dislikes or who offends him. The first time his wife protests his actions and advises him against this, she receives the beating of her life. When Igbemma could no longer bear Ekwerekwu, her husband's maltreatment, she takes all her children and leaves the home so as to liberate herself. This is how the author puts it:

Mgbe Igbemma dikatara ihe o na-ahu be di ya, ma o kweghizi ya edi, o hapuru di ya n'obodo kpokoro umu ya gbapu ga biri n'obodo mepere emepe. O no ebe ahu na –atu mgbere ahia were na –enye umu ya nri (pp. 63).

when Igbemma could no longer condone what she is passing through in her husband's house, she takes her children and runs off to live in the city. She is there, doing petty business and is feeding her children from the proceeds.

Igbemma's action of leaving her husband and their home with her children, ensures her liberation from her husband's maltreatment.

Nsolibe (2018b), shows how Uduji protests her brother-in-law's greed and avariciousness. After the death of Uduji's husband, Udengwu, his brother Iheukwu starts to harvest palmnuts from the late brother's farm. Uduji's protest comes in form of shouting for people to hear her voice and come and settle the problem. Her protest is thus portrayed in the text:

Mgbe Uduji ruru hui he na-eme, o juwara Iheukwu Na Onukawa nwunye ya ihe ha na-eme n'oru ya. Iheukwu bawara ya mba ka o si ebe ahu puo na ebe Ahu bu oru ya. Uduji hapuru onu ya aka, tikuo ndiObodo ha ka ha bia, na ewu na-acho ita ya igu n'isi (pp. 17).

When Uduji reaches and sees what is happening, she starts to ask Iheukwu and Onukawa his wife what they are doing in her farm. Iheukwu starts to scold her, telling her to leave the place. Uduji opens her mouth wide, beckoning on her people to come because the unimaginable is about to happen to her.

Of course, people harken to her cry, gathered and the matter was taken to Igwe's palace for settlement. Uduji gets her liberation, when the problem is taken to the Igwe's palace and after hearing from both parties, Iheukwu is warned never to enter the land again, not to talk of harvesting anything from there. The prohibition order to Iheukwu by the Igwe, gives Uduji freedom and liberation from Iheukwu's subjugation and maltreatment.

Another incident in the same text from Iheukwu to Uduji, sees Uduji protesting again. Iheukwu refuses to allow Izundu's master, the white man, Mr. Wheelte to send Izundu to London to complete his studies after his secondary school education. Iheukwu says that Izundu is the only child his brother has and should not be allowed to travel far. Uduji sees this as a ploy to prevent her son's progress. After all, Iheukwu sent Izundu to Benin to work in a rubber plantation when he is very young and tender. He knows very well that the job is tedious for a small child and still sends him out to work. He plans that one and a half share of Izundu's pay will be coming back to him, one share will be going to Ekeocha who brought the job, and the remaining half share is for Izundu. Their plans failed because on seeing Izundu at the work site, by Mr. Wheelte before their first pay, he stops him from doing the work on sympathy. He takes Izundu to live with him and sends him back to school. Iheukwu's first disappointment in carrying out his plans is from Ekeocha who, vows never to give Iheukwu anything from Izundu's salary because, he says that Iheukwu's plan is wicked. However, the opportunity never presents itself to carry out his plans. This is because even before Izundu's first salary is to come, Izundu is already living with Mr. Wheelte. Mr. Wheelte now saves Izundu's salary for his mother, who he finds out has nobody to help her. Uduji protests and refuses to accept Iheukwu's verdict that Izundu should not go to London to further his studies. The case once again is taken to the Igwe, who gives his consent for Mr. Wheelte to send Izundu to London to study. Igwe also warns Iheukwu to stay out of any matter concerning his late brother's family. This verdict gives Uduji the needed freedom from Iheukwu's interference in her life and family.

Series of disappointments such as being jilted by men severally in Ulukanachukwu's life in Agwuna (2006), makes Ulukanachukwu to protest and refuse to take such disappointments anymore. In Ulukanachukwu's prime, she had series of suitors and she refused all of them due to youthful exuberance. Now, she is getting older and suitors are no longer coming. She is now desperately looking for one to marry her. Men now seeing her predicament, come to her, milk her money, use and dump her. She protests of this treatment by men to her friend and her younger sister. To be liberated and free from these disappointments, Chiagozie, her younger sister helps her to become a born again Christian. She now takes her problems to God in prayers and becomes free from worrying and becomes liberated. She eventually becomes married, for, her uncle who always stops suitors that seek her hand in marriage diabolically could not stop Arinze, because God is with her and is fighting her battles for her now. She eventually marries Arinze and is liberated from the bondage of spinsterhood.

Emeka who jilted and disappointed her in the past comes back to ask for her forgiveness and ask for her hand in marriage. Ulukanachi protests his past treatment of her as well as rejects his renewed offer. This is the way the author showcases his proposal and her protest and refusal.

Uluu m, "J aime tu" (Ahuru m gi n'anya.) O buru na i ga-ekwe, m ga-
alu gi. O buru echi, ka ma bia mee ego n' isi gi ozigbo ozigbo shap...
shap!! ... N' ezie, Ulukanachi na-ele ya anya a na-ele onye ara...
"Leenu onuku, nwoke anamachoru kedu ebe o luuru mu na gi ugbua?
(pp. 64-65).

My Uluu, I love you. If you will agree, I will marry you. If it is tomorrow, I will come and pay your bride price immediately, sharp sharp!! Honestly, Ulukanachi is looking at him as if he is mad. Look at this fool, job seeker. Where do I compare myself and yourself now?

To liberate herself from Emeka's future disturbances, Ulukanachi gives him money in form of help to use it in starting something like business so as to be self-reliant and desist from disturbing her as she is already married to Dr. Arinze who is based in U.S.A

In Ofomata (2002), Uju, Osita's wife protests her husband's second marriage. Osita marries a second wife because Uju is having the problem of infant mortality. Osita and Adamma, his new wife, do not behave as if Uju exists in their house. Uju seeing the situation, saves some money from her beer parlor business, leaves her husband and returns to her father's house. Osita and his people go to Uju's people to collect the dowry and all other monies he spent on Uju, thinking that they could not pay him back. Uju pays back all the money and becomes free and liberated from the negligence, humiliation and maltreatment from Osita and Adamma his new wife.

In the same text, Adamma, Osita's new wife, protests her husband's suspicion and constant questioning of her movements. She is having an affair with one of her customers in the person of Tunde. Due to constant disgrace Adamma's action is bringing to Osita, he beats Adamma up and warns her to desist from such behavior. Adamma to be free and liberated from her husband's interference, reports his deeds to her lover, Tunde who brings poison to Adamma which she poison's Osita with before leaving him and going to Tunde. She becomes free and liberated from Osita's suppression.

CONCLUSION

It is gathered from this work that men and women inhabit the same planet earth and do things together but, not on equal capacity. Women all over the world, in their dealings with men see themselves in the past and present as either maltreated, suppressed, humiliated or subjugated. This is so particularly in Africa (Igbo) which is patriarchal in nature where men are the ultimate and women do not find this acceptable. This necessitates their always protesting and fighting for freedom and liberation from men who incidentally are the architect of most of these conditions. However, there are some of these problems caused by nature, some by culture while some are caused by their fellow women.

Uduji's problem in *Mmadu abu Chukwu* is caused by her brother-in-law, Iheukwu who is bent on dispossessing her of her husband's properties, and also by nature which took her husband away through death; Urioma's problems were caused by her husband's cousin, Mefo and nephew, Ekwerekwu, who master minded the deaths of her son, Iheukwumere and her husband, Aniudo in *Uwa bu nke onye*. Ulukanachi suffered in the hands of men who use and dump her because she is desperate to get married. She also suffered in the hands of her uncle, Mkpume who, prevents suitors from coming to marry her in *Oge Chukwu ka mma*. Finally, Uju in *Onye chi ya akwatughi* suffered from nature that kept taking her children through death and this she could not fight because one cannot fight nature. She also had problem with her husband who brought in another wife due to Uju's problem of infant mortality and, he neglected Uju after marrying the new wife, Adamma. Uju's problem here is cultural because, culture makes it possible for a man to marry as many wives as he chooses to and there is nothing the woman can do about it. Uju also suffered in the hands of a fellow woman and she is her co-wife, Adamma. Adamma monopolizes Osita their husband and made sure that Osita never did his duty by Uju as his wife. These women protested these problems and in various way fought and liberated themselves where they could.

African society of which Igbo where this study hinges on, is patriarchal in nature, and most of these actions on women are viewed as cultural and therefore, not seen by men as maltreatment on the women. But suffice it to say that some of these cultures are not to the good of the women and, this always place them on the defensive which culminates in protest and fight for freedom and liberation.

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