

Benevolent Sexism and Female Objectification in El Saadawi's *Woman At Point Zero* And Amma Darkor's *Beyond The Horizon*

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Abstract

Women in the African society have attributed and internalized the notion of being weak and inferior. This notion of inferiority perpetuated through negative socialization has blinded women from knowing their own capabilities and thrown them into a state of psychological subservience. This paper using Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) objectification theory examines the elements of negative presentations and marginalization of women particularly as a tool for subjugation by men. This paper embraces a qualitative research approach that is based on the analysis of EL Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* and Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. The paper assesses benevolent sexism as the cruelest form of sexism that impede the African Women's progress and the actualization of their dreams. It reveals the various forms of benevolent sexism as expressed in protective paternalism, complementary gender differentiation and Heterosexual intimacy that women suffer consistently as in wife battering, molestation and abuse. The paper contains that the novels, *Woman at Point Zero* and *Beyond the Horizon* draw attention on men's discrimination against women in the society that is patriarchy in mode and the compelling need for the absolute liberation of women from the shackles of patriarchy.

Key Words: Sexism, Benevolent sexism, female objectification, Patriarchy, Subjugation.

Introduction

Sexism and female objectification are products of patriarchy, religious fundamentalism and the skewed socio-cultural expectations on women. Sexism reveals actions of discrimination against women especially in language, behaviour, conditions or attitudes that are based on sex. It can also be considered as an individual's attitudes, beliefs, behaviour, organizational, institutional and cultural practices that either reflect negative evaluations of individual's based on their gender. The concept of ambivalent sexism gives rise to two areas of sexism; hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. While hostile sexism has to do with overt harassment subordination of women, benevolent sexism portrays or represents women through an evaluative lens that focuses on their gender or feminine position as mothers, wives, or girlfriends that require protection from men. While the subject of domestic violence a negative, abusive and threatening behaviour that may include intimidation, isolation and coercion, physical, emotional, economic and sexual violence suffered by a person often because of gender, position or socio-cultural beliefs. Objectification or sexual objectification in simple terms is treating an individual as a product, service or commodity or an object without respect to their dignity, human personality but only with focus on them as objects of sexual desire and pleasure.

Benevolent sexism is a kind of sexism that is considered as subtle and indirect. Women are presented to be confined to wifery and motherhood. The man is considered the Lord and master over the women and the women unknowingly feel comfortable being manipulated and controlled. Looking at the forms of sexism, benevolent sexism and female objectification will be analyzed using El Saadawi's *Women at Point Zero* and Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*.

In assessing Female Objectification, Kurt Gray et al reveal that "female objectification play out in such ways as dehumanizing, devaluing, marginalizing, brutalizing and subjecting the body mainly for sexual gratification. Female objectification is expressed as instrumentality, violability, commodification, projection and fungibility. It is an ideology that a person exists mainly as an object or tool to be exploited sexually, economically, biologically, materially and otherwise. For Immanuel Kant, "sexual love makes the loved person an object of appetite: as soon as that appetite has been stilled, the person is cast aside as one casts away a lemon which has been sucked dry" (qtd. in Gray 163).

Theoretical Consideration

Objectification theory is the theoretical background for this research work. Barbara Frederickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts objectification theory (1997), states that because of sexual objectification, women learn to internalize an outsider's view of their bodies as the primary view of themselves. This is explained in women, viewing their bodies as objects separate from their person. Objectification is based on the ideology that a person exists mainly as an object or tool to be exploited. It does not recognize the personality or group of personalities as spiritual beings with creative abilities and adventures tendencies.

Martha Nussbaum draws together the Kantian and feminist ideas about what it might be to treat someone as an object. She explains that objectification is a cluster concept, on her way of thinking, in which the idea of autonomy, denial and instrumentality are at the core; but they also include related notions of inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership and denial of subjectivity (249-291). While Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin idea of objectification is to deny women's autonomy in its depiction of "as objects, things or commodities" (4).

Benevolent Sexism and Female Objectification in El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*

El Saaadawi portrays through her main character and heroine Firdaus, how African women are caught in the stranglehold of patriarchy, religion, and marriage. Benevolent sexism comes into play when we appreciate the fact that Firdaus is seen as a mere object by the father. The father does not show any sign of paternal love or care towards her as a daughter but would rather consider her as a fly or pest that should be chased off or spanked for stretching forth a hungry hand to quell her rumbling hungry stomach. He did not see Firdaus as a child to be loved but an object to be discarded.

My father never went to bed without supper, no matter what happened. Sometimes when there was no food at home we would all go to bed with empty stomachs. But he would never fail to have a meal. My mother would hide his food from us at the bottom of one of the holes in the oven. He would sit eating alone while we watched him. One evening I dared to stretch out my hand to his plate, but he struck me a sharp blow over the back of my fingers. (*Woman at Point Zero* 18).

In *Woman at Point Zero*, this passage illustrates objectification by portraying Firdaus and her family as mere extensions of her father's authority, their needs disregarded in favor of his comfort. His entitlement to food, even when the rest of the family starves, reflects a patriarchal system where women and children exist to serve but not to share in power or resources. The mother's act of hiding food for him reinforces this hierarchy, showing how oppression is internalized and perpetuated. When Firdaus dares to reach for his plate, his violent reaction asserts his dominance, treating her as unworthy of even basic sustenance. This moment encapsulates the broader theme of dehumanization that Firdaus endures throughout her life, where she is repeatedly denied agency and reduced to an object of male control.

El Saadawi captures aptly the objectification and benevolent sexism that Firdaus suffers in the hands of the man who is supposed to be her father and protector but turns to be one who is more concerned with her commodification and commercial value. Firdaus describes her objectification by her father as one of the major areas of his expertise. She laments that;

My father, a poor peasant farmer, who could neither read nor write, knew very few things in life. How to grow crops, how to sell a buffalo poisoned by his enemy before it died, how to exchange his virgin daughter for a dowry when there was still time (*Woman at Point Zero* 10).

Firdaus father's perception of women as objects of no human worth is also portrayed in the general attitude of the father when his children die. As a father he is expected to show signs that he is bereaved at the loss of any of his children. This is not the case with the father of Firdaus. He would rather display a very high sense of nonchalance, negligence and lack of compassion even towards the dead.

When one of his female children died, my father would eat his supper, my mother would wash his legs, and then he would go to sleep, just as he did every night. When the child that died was a boy, he would beat my mother, then have his supper and lie down to sleep. My father never went to bed without supper, no matter what happened. (*Woman at Point Zero* 17).

The kind of sexism and objectification that Firdaus suffers here is the kind that most women encounter at the home front. It is saddening to underscore that Firdaus recalls that his younger ones died like chickens randomly and wantonly. As pitiable as such a situation is the father is unperturbed and expresses the deadliness of his conscience if he possesses one. It becomes a case of female objectification that Firdaus mother is beating severely and severally upon the death of any male child and when a female child that is intended to assist the mother and the father like Firdaus in washing his feet dies he shows outright lack of concern, sympathy and paternal love and

feeling towards her. Certain salient questions emerge from the above situation. Why disregard the death of a female child who is as innocent as her male brother? Why beat the woman (his wife) for the death of a male child and not do the same in the death of the female? What value is placed upon a dead male child that is lacking in a dead female child to warrant beating a woman and mother of both the male and female child? What is the parameter for the value of female and male children whether dead or alive? If there are no clear cut absolute answers to the above questions, then certainly it becomes a case of gender preference or sexism and objectification of the female.

It is not only Firdaus representing the young daughters/women and upcoming generation that suffers benevolent sexism and female objectification. Firdaus' mother representing the married, adult, and other women or female folks also suffer the same gender contagion. El Saadawi portrays the objectification of Firdaus mother in the hand of her father by making casual the case of wife battering, molestation, and abuse that she suffers consistently on a daily basis. Firdaus mother is treated in her marriage as the insignificant other that has no voice, identify nor position. She is merely an object in the marriage construction meant to bring satisfaction and pleasure to the man who is husband. The institutions of religion, marriage and culture use the agency of patriarchy to objectify and practice sexism against female folks in the Islamic society as portrayed in *Woman at Point Zero*. The network of these fundamental institutions also ensures the perpetuation of the socio-cultural practices of treating women as the minor and insignificant other. Firdaus recounts her mother's untold suffering in the hands of the man who society believes bears the responsibility of protecting, providing and preserving her entire personality and wellbeing.

How to grow crops, how to sell a buffalo poisoned by his enemy before it died, how to exchange his virgin daughter for a dowry when there was still time, how to be quicker than his neighbours in stealing from the fields once the crop was ripe. How to bend over the headman's hand and pretend to kiss it, how to beat his wife and make her bite the dust each night. (*Woman at Point Zero* 10).

There are five area of expertise that the word "how" in the passage above identifies. These area of expertise all have one thing in common, which is that they all are means through which the father, husband, and man who is married to Firdaus' mother derives some level of advantage, benefit, profit and pleasure. The first 'how' or knowledge and expertise that Firdaus father possesses is how to crop crops as a farmer. This is to satisfy his appetite of hunger by the provision of food. The second area of expertise is in 'how' to trade off his poisoned buffalo before it dies. Another appetite of Firdaus' father is the hunger of pecuniary gain. The man will stop at nothing to obtain the most financial gain from the dead and poisoned meat of a Buffalo. He is a financial desperado when it comes to money making. He hates to lose and uses every available opportunity to earn some pecuniary gain. Following the second 'how' is the third 'how' which concerns marriage as it were but for him, it is merely a business of exchanging his virgin daughter for a handsome dowry regardless of the deformity, age disparity, or threat to the wellbeing of the daughter that the man may pose. He is also reported to be knowledgeable in 'how' to steal from the fields than his neighbor once the crops were ripe. As the areas of his expertise as enumerated we begin to see that he is a clever and cunning fellow. The fourth area of knowledge that Firdaus lists that her father has expertise in is the ability to pretend that he is loyal and submissive as bends to kiss the hands of the headman. This picture represents to us a man that cares only for himself and does not bother about the welfare of his neighbour. Even if that neighbour is his beloved wife. Fifth and the final know 'how' is in the dastardly act of beating the wife for no just cause each and every night. The beating of his wife is such that he makes her 'bite the dust'. This is a graphic description of the level of torture and inhumane treatment that Firdaus' father gives to the mother every night when she is supposed to find solace in his arms. The father is a contradiction of terms, wicked as a father, murderous in intention as a husband.

Benevolent Sexism and Female Objectification in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*

Amma Darko does a splendid job in capturing the hellish condition suffered by women in African rural and urban centres as slaves, daughters, wives, and mothers. Whether the women are in polygamous or monogamous marriages, it makes very little or no difference as they are all victims of benevolent sexism and objectification. In the sad tale of Mara the heroine of Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* we meet yet another father who regards his daughter, wife and women as objects to be traded in order to fulfill his personal pleasure and sexual desires. Mara the young wife of Akobi having suffered several severe beatings, sexual molestation, humiliation and trauma sought refuge by going back home to her parents with the hope of seeking dissolution to the marriage by returning the dowry but it was not to be. She relates,

I arrived in the village next day but met with very little sympathy, as I had always feared. My father was not even interested to see me because he had taken on yet another wife, a young hot blooded widow who had so filled his head that mother even cried to me that she was certain that

their youngest rival had done ju-ju on father to cause him to forget and disregard his other wives...Father had used the goats and cows to remarry, and definitely was not going to agree to my wish (*Beyond the Horizon*. 28-29).

Mara's father is a classic case of an African polygamist. He has many wives and exploits the opportunity offered by Mara's marriage dowry to quickly get himself another wife. So, for him women are products to be traded, invested in for the production of brides and the accruing dowry therefrom for him to marry wives who will attend to his sexual, physical, and pecuniary appetite. Mara complains that her father did not sympathize with her regardless of the severity of the beating by Akobi and the resultant trauma, pains and in a condition of pregnancy. Her father was not interested whether or not the daughter he gave out in marriage was safe and sound but was more concerned with his new object of his fancy-the new wife. While the older other wives and daughter were totally disregarded.

The idea of benevolent sexism and female objectification is lucidly portrayed in the life and marriage of Mara and Akobi. The marriage of Mara was an exchange between two men or rather fathers on behalf of their son and daughter. This is clearly a pointer to the fact that the daughter being given out in marriage is treated as an object to be traded. She does not have a say whether or not she is accepting or declining the marriage proposal. She does not have the right to turn down the man in question nor refuse to be married at that very moment as the only single requirement for the marriage of Mara to Akobi to take place is the consent of both fathers to the terms of the dowry. Mara recounts her ordeal.

I remember the day clearly. I returned from the village well with my fourth bucket of water of the day when mother excitedly beckoned to me in all my wetness and muddiness, dragged me into her hut and breathlessly told me the "good news". Your father has found a husband for you, "she gasped, a good man". All I did was grin helplessly because I clearly remembered the same good news as this that mother had given my older sister two years before. Found too, by father. And my sister was now a wreck. Naturally, not all husbands made wrecks of their wives. Many women in Naka were extremely content with their marriages and their husbands and wouldn't exchange them for anything in the world. And some such good men still existed in Naka. But father, it appeared, had a different formula for choosing or accepting husbands for his daughters, which took more into consideration the number of cows coming as the bride price than the character of the man. (*Beyond the Horizon* 3-4).

Amma Darko argues in the above passage that though it was extremely bad for parents to negotiate their children's marriage it is worst if such parents do not consider the character of the person getting married to their children. The author through the voice of Mara observes that whereas some good marriages have been negotiated in Naka, Mara's father's formula for contracting the marriages of his daughters was mainly driven by how much material gains could be gotten. The unfortunate result of the selfish, greedy and materialistic marriage contracts of Mara's father that did not consider foundational and fundamental factors like character is that it left the women in such marriage as wrecks. This is the unfortunate end of Mara's elder sister whose marriage was organized or arranged by their father. Mara as a woman was not only denied her right to consent or decline to marry, she was also denied the right to choose whom to marry. It is her father who introduces her husband Akobi to her, not she introducing her husband to her father. Mara's marriage is a very contrary manner of contracting marriage. Mara relates her surprise.

Who is he? "I asked mother, father's choice for me? „Oh dear child, mother said, " you know your father would consider it rude if I disclosed him to you before he did. Dress up, " she urged me, I am certain he will send for you soon. And he did. And make known to me that my chosen husband was the man named Akobi. And it astounded me, first that this man had settled on me as his wife, and second, that father had had the guts to approach his father to offer him his daughter. But I soon learnt that, yes, Akobi chose me as his wife, but it was his father who had had the guts to approach mine and not vice versa (*Beyond the Horizon* 4).

The benevolent sexism and female objectification of African women rural areas is captured in the manner in which Akobi's father, Mara's father and Akobi himself treat the traditional rites wedding ceremony of Mara. The men all treated her as an object of no special value but only to be bargained, and exchanged with cows, and tubers of yams and some Pound of money. Akobi displays no value for his wife by his absence in the traditional rites wedding. The way he came from the city and immediately took Mara away shows his lack of respect for her person. This kind of behaviour displayed by Akobi is like one getting acquainted with an object or parcel and not a person. Mara laments.

But like I said, Akobi returned to the city to work, the customs and traditional rites were got over and done with on his behalf. Three weeks later he came straight from work on a Friday

evening, arriving in Naka on Saturday, and left for the city on the same Saturday with me as his wife... and property! (*Beyond the Horizon*, 7).

There are certain pertinent questions that beg for asking from the above. Will Akobi agree to be married by proxy if the reverse was the case? Why did Akobi not find it worthwhile to be acquainted with his wife Mara before the traditional rites wedding? Would it be right to say that Akobi's behaviour towards his wife Mara is informed by the conclusion that she is his property and not a person with whom he is in relationship with? The third question seems to tie up neatly the reasons that inform the rash inhuman attitude of (patriarchy) men towards women in the society. Akobi heightens his disregard for the wellbeing of Mara his wife by refusing deliberately to live in a better accommodation and environment in order to make Mara suffer while he enjoys and sojourns with Comfort in comfortable quarters elsewhere. The narrator describes the shanty house and environment where Akobi lives with Mara in very crass terms.

...a cluster of shabbily- constructed corrugated-iron sheet shelters that looked like chicken houses, while all about and between them shallow, open gutters wound their way. In these gutters; due to the lack of any drainage system, all the water from dirty washing and bathing, and urine too, collected and stayed until it evaporated. And since the rate of evaporation was slower than the rate at which the waste waters collected, the resulting standing water not only stank, but also bred nasty shades of algae and generations of large fat mosquitoes that greedily fed on our blood at night. As if that wasn't enough, barely fifty yards away there was an unhygienic public toilet beside which was the area's only public rubbish dump. I was soon to learn that the rubbish was collected only once every two months or so. And so this also not only brought in swarms of flies in their thousands but polluted the surrounding air so intensely that one hardly ever woke up in the morning without either a splitting headache or a bleeding nose". (*Beyond the Horizon*, 8).

Imagine taking someone from the village with the promise of going to live in the city with such a person only to be brought to live in such a sordid God forsaken place. It is environmental, psychological, and physiological violence against Mara to stay and live daily in such an unhealthy place. It is not surprising when one considers that Akobi and his father and Mara's father consider her goods sold off and she sadly relates.

I later learnt that, drunk from palm wine and belching boisterously, he had proclaimed that he would have given me away even for one goat. But like I said, Akobi's father bought me off handsomely. And while Akobi returned to the city to work, the customs and traditional rites were got over and done with...arriving Naka on Saturday, and left for the city on the same Saturday with me as his wifeand property. (*Beyond the Horizon* 7).

The above clearly portrays that the men referred to the passage above all regard Mara and by extension women as commodities whose value could be measures by how much money they fetch, how much menial service they render and how much sexual pleasure they give to the men without recourse to their humanity or dignity as persons. Even when it comes to conjugal intercourse between Mara and her husband Akobi she is still regarded as a sexual tool of satisfying him but not for procreation. Akobi does not inform her of his intention of not making babies with her as he intends to either use her as a sex worker in Europe or leave her behind and travel with Comfort as his wife. Mara narrates the sexual violence of Akobi thus:

The first time he slept with me, when he started moving quicker and panting louder and sweating more, he suddenly at one stage removed himself very quickly from inside me and wetted me all over with this strange milk-white liquid coming from his manhood. At first I thought that he was sick and was throwing up through his manhood. But then he told me that it was to avoid something." (*Beyond the Horizon* 16).

Akobi discountenances the person, role, and support of his wife Mara in the success or failure of the family and their marriage. He rather maltreats her physically and molests or rapes her for his sexual pleasure regardless of her health or wellbeing. The 'something' that Akobi is avoiding is getting her pregnant. This is inhuman and cruelty of the highest form to marry a woman, use her for sexual satisfaction and yet not desire to procreate with her for no just cause. It could only be described as gender violence against women. While other women married and unmarried are out there looking for children Akobi beats Mara his wife for getting pregnant after sleeping with her. One may ask what her offense is. Akobi just wanted to use Mara as his housewife, sex tool and maid to labour and slave for him in order to prepare his journey to Europe and then leave her behind once he is in Europe. Akobi needs Mara so much for sex that even after beating her, he has sexual intercourse with her. Mara describes how her husband had sex with her even after a misunderstanding where she suffered severe physical and emotional pain from the beating he gave her.

He was lying on the mattress face up, looking thoughtfully, at the ceiling when I entered. Cool, composed and authoritative, he indicated with part of his hand on the space beside him that I should lie down beside him. I did so, more out of apprehension of starting another fight than anything else. Wordlessly, he stripped off my clothes, stripped off his trousers, turned my back to him and entered me. Then he ordered me off the mattress to go and lay out my mat because he wanted to sleep alone (*Beyond the Horizon* 22).

Akobi displays domestic violence, callousness towards his wife, and female objectification when he orders her off the grass mattress to sleep on the floor after satisfying his sexual appetite by sleeping with her. This height of disdain can only be shown towards objects not our fellow humans and above all one's wife. The nature and manner in which Akobi had sexual intercourse with his wife did not show affection, consideration for her condition of being pregnant with his child and love for her as his wife. Akobi displayed a strong detest for her person but for the sexual pleasure and menial services she offered him. Akobi in Amma Darko's depiction and portrayal is that of 'a close man, no one saw inside him' (*Beyond the Horizon* 21), a kind of stereotype of masculine monsters that we find in our society. Such men as Akobi are senseless, heartless, and careless about the comfort, safety, and feelings of others. Mama kiosk describes him as a bad man who could cause Mara pain. Mara lives with Akobi her husband in fear, and constant uncertainty of what will become of her. Mama kiosk refers to him as someone who is not mentally balance and capable of causing others damage. She tells Mara, "this ministries man, he is not only a bad man and bad husband, he has also got something inside his head. I only hope that he won't destroy you with it before you too start seeing red with your eyes like I do. (*Beyond the Horizon* 17) Mara herself in wonder queries "what African man gets angry because his wife was carrying a baby? And the first baby at that. (*Beyond the Horizon*.17). Amma Darko makes a clear case that female subjugation and objectification is not a local challenge but an international human challenge confronting women everywhere where there is a system of patriarchy in place. European women are like Gitte and Osey's German wife and Mara are all treated as second wives at one time or the other. The men manipulate and use the women to objectify one another. The women are employed to labour as prostitute for the men (Africans and Europeans) so that they can live with which ever women they choose to from time to time. Both the European wives and the African wives all labour using their physical, financial, material and emotional wealth to sustain the men in their lives. This indicates that female objectification and sexism is a universal challenge. Vivian tries to introduce Mara to the double wife prostitution racket which she has become part of in order to survive in Europe.

Look, it is the same with me and Osey. We are very happy. I live here and at my other place and he lives with his wife in town. She believes that I am his sister, and we get on fine. No problem. Look, even this nightgown I lent you; it was she who gave it to me. Ah, she gives me plenty things; lipstick, eye shadow, pants, this, that. And in return, I go on enduring her. I just shut my eyes to our rivalry and then it is simple. I don't see why it should be difficult for you to do so. What should you have done if you were at home and Akobi had taken a second wife? (*Beyond the Horizon* 79).

Vivian indirectly acknowledges that even far away in Europe their African husbands consider them as commodities that can be bought or sold off without seeking for their consent. The helplessness of the women resonates through Vivian's question asking what Mara or any other woman would have done if they were at home and their husbands choose to marry a second wife? The women are made to compete among themselves for the attention of the men and therefore become and see themselves as rivals. Even when the women were cheated upon, deceived and not consulted by the men because they love, care and desire to live peaceably with others they continue to tolerate the injustice and selfishness of their men. Whether in Africa or Europe the men consider marriage first as an economic transaction before any other advantage is considered. Osey relates;

Yes, so you see, Mara, Akobi and I, when we came, we didn't have any money to pay some woman to marry us. You get what I am trying to say? So we had to marry seriously ... that is to say for false love. Like we loved the women; you get me? Even though we don't love them. You understand? I didn't and I said so. That irritated Akobi. It is this; he came in impatiently in a no-nonsense tone. Turning briefly to Osey, he said to him, Osey, let me tell her straight and direct. Mara, I have married a German woman. That is what Osey was trying to tell you all this while... (*Beyond the Horizon* 78).

From the above passage it may seem true that there are men who are not capable of love. Imagine the men Osey and Akobi telling their wives without any iota of feeling that they married European women as wives for the economic reason of getting valid citizenship papers and not because they love the women. It is disheartening to say that this objectification of the women by the men who profess to be their husbands and yet do not love them (the same way they do not love the European women) reduces and compels the women into a life of prostitution

in order to gain their liberty and freedom from the men who have exploited them mercilessly without even a second thought that they are their wives.

Conclusion

Fwangyil's " *Cradle to Grave: An Analysis of Female Oppression in Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero*," critically examines the pervasive subordination of women within patriarchal societies. She argues that female oppression is deeply ingrained in cultural and religious traditions, which perpetuate male dominance and suppress women's autonomy. Fwangyil highlights that from infancy, women are subjected to various forms of discrimination and violence, including female genital mutilation, forced marriages, and domestic abuse thus, these oppressive practices are often justified by cultural norms and religious precepts, making it challenging for women to seek liberation without challenging long-standing traditions. Fwangyil concludes that such systemic oppression hinders women's social, economic, and personal development, and calls for a reevaluation of cultural and religious practices to promote gender equality. This paper analyzed Benevolent Sexism as it evolves in women's experience and condition through female subjugation and objectification which has aroused a deep sense of awareness in women's self worth and functionality against being objected to arrive at a point of absolute freedom.

From the study of the novels by El Sadaawi and Amma Darko, there are interpretation of Benevolence Sexism and female objectification that emerge in the novels. The women in the novels as heroines are presented as dutiful, loyal and humble wives, innocent and adventurous who are unlucky to fall prey to heartless predators masked as men. The ordeal and queer treatment of the women in the two novels are not different from the experiences or the kinds of relationship the woman in the family and the society undergo.

The authors of the novels brought to lime light the grim reality culture and tradition as well as religious play as a major role in dehumanization of women and since the society remains ignorant and unperturbed over the issue, it then clearly shows how woman are relegated to the background as second class citizens, commodity or objects that can easily be bought and discarded. One great thing is that the perception of the women and the society always differ. Firdaus sees herself as a person of great prospects and potentials but the uncle had her aspirations dashed to the wall by asking himself how the society will look at him when he allows Firdans to sit side by side with men (37). The society, culture and religion are perceived to have truncated her dreams because in the struggle to survive in a society where no one cared and genuinely loved her, she ends up debasing herself for survival.

Mara in *Beyond the Horizon* was not opportune to be educated though she had her dreams and height she hoped to achieve but these dreams of hers was so shattered by her own husband who stopped at nothing in debasing her by stripping her off whatever humanity that was left in her after taking her to Germany.

This paper argues that the pursuit of a certain status is a significant challenge for the African man. In his desperation to achieve this, he often resorts to actions that defy logic, creating a conflict between himself and his conscience. To foster societal development, both men and women should have equal access to opportunities that will greatly enhance Africa's progress.

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