

**LINGUO-LITERARY REFLECTIONS OF FEMINISM IN
THE WORKS OF IFEOMA OKOYE**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is the product of my research efforts, undertaken under the supervision of Professor Macpherson Nkem Azuike and that it has not been presented elsewhere for the award of a degree or certificate. All sources have been duly distinguished and appropriately acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work for this thesis and the subsequent preparations of it were carried out by Madu Amuche Uzoamaka. (Mat. No. PGA/UJ/00197/10) under the supervision of Professor M. N. Azuike.

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Madu, Amuche Uzoamaka.

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DEDICATION

To

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Abstract

The thesis is a feminist stylistic study which used the works of Ifeoma Okoye as a case study for a reassessment of the feminist discourse. It aimed at examining and unravelling how Ifeoma Okoye deployed language and style in her works to establish a non-radical and non-rebellious feminist message which preached complementarity of the sexes. It could be said that radical feminism had yielded little dividends in Africa and this was not unconnected with the fact that female radicalism, either in words or in deed did not conform with the African cultural values and realities. In view of this, there was a need to redirect attention to an alternative feminist stylistic approach which was devoid of radical and confrontational tendencies. Consequent upon this, the researcher sought to address the issue. Since language and style were the major weapons in the dissemination of the feminist message, the discussion in this thesis therefore centred on language, style and feminism. The objectives of the thesis therefore included; (i) to argue that Okoye was an advocate of complementarity feminism through a lingo-literary analysis of her works, (ii) to determine that the linguistic and literary features in Okoye's novels revealed her feminist concerns, (iii) and to reveal the author's theme of non-confrontational and non-radical feminism through a stylistic and textual analysis of her works, especially with emphasis on linguistic mechanisms and theories such as foregrounding, diction, authorial voice, sentence patterns, paragraph structure, punctuation and cohesion. These linguistic mechanisms and theories served as our framework. For the methodology of the thesis, the researcher adopted textual analysis of the primary sources which were the texts of Ifeoma Okoye as well as library and desk research to explore extensive literatures on the concept of feminism, language and style which constituted the research focus. In addition to this, the researcher also relied heavily on sources such as critical works, journals and other scholarly articles in the related areas. There was also an interview with the author under review to gather authentic information on her works. The research argued and found that Ifeoma Okoye's stylistic approach upheld a brand of feminism which was sensitive to African cultural values and tradition. It was concluded that this brand of feminism was workable in the African context and capable of rapidly advancing the ideologies of feminism.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Feminist stylistics provides an avenue for exploring and exposing the realities of social injustice against women in patriarchal societies and in the works of art. As a result of this, the literary scene, has in recent times witnessed an incredible influx of female writers globally. This trend can only be explained as a reaction from a new generation of feminist writers who are protesting the plight of the woman in a patriarchal society. The effort of these writers to salvage, re-create and even re-brand the image of the woman has culminated in a female literary tradition known as feminist stylistics. This distinct literary tradition cuts across all genres and has diverse styles of presentations; though with the common goal of sensitizing the women folk against their subjugation. Suffice it then to say that the emergence of African female writers was informed by a deep-seated desire to challenge patriarchy and the stereotype image of the African women in Literature where the female characters have been misrepresented as second class citizens. The work seeks to study the stylistic mechanism underlying this formidable literary tradition.

Feminist literature has offered the African feminist writers an arena to speak the forbidden in a style of their own. Afonja (2005) perceives African feminist literature as a “radical means of the transformation of the underdevelopment and poverty of women in the region” (2). Thus, the discourse challenges the dehumanizing socio-cultural practices which have underdeveloped the women in the traditional African Society.

Feminist stylistics challenges the notion that women are only comfortable with their roles as wives and mothers as they are portrayed in literature before the advent of feminism. It is a sensibility that is deep-rooted in a popular consciousness and mass awareness of the nature of human and social existence. Bradford (1997) says “feminist writers are particular about illuminating the unpleasant socio-cultural hierarchies in the society and therefore concern themselves with a peculiar style as an element of the more important agenda of cultural and ideological change and mutation” (13). Thus, the focus of this work is on this peculiar style—feminist stylistics.

Feminist writers adopt a radical and rebellious stylistic approach, characterized by a confrontational language use to decry issues such as marginalization, subjugation, subordination and violence against women. In order to achieve this, they favour conscious writing technique as a means of purpose delivery in their works. Perhaps, the basic ideology underlying feminism from inception may have informed its radical language and style. Therefore, language use in the texts under study in this thesis is of interest for its deviation from this radical trend. Nevertheless, all feminist writers write for obvious reasons. According to Fowler, *et. al.* (1979) the forms of language in use are a part of, as well as a consequence of a social process, and the linguistic forms of speech and writing express the social circumstances in which language occurs (26). This explains the fact that feminists are not only women but also men who write against the social ills in the society especially as they concern the marginalization of women for example, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Samuel Asare Konadu, Mongo Beti, Ola Rotimi among others. Tania Modleski (1991) in her

book *'Feminism without Women'* explained that the title can mean the triumph either of a male or female feminist perspective that excludes women. Feminist literature is thus loaded with stylistic mechanisms aimed at addressing the plight of women. The curiosity to establish this purposeful style in Okoye's works informs this study.

Feminist stylistics: A revolutionary style

Feminist stylistics has consistently and relentlessly challenged the old order of negative representation of the image of women by male writers. Chukwukere (1988) has noted in her work, "Images of Women in Contemporary African Fiction" that most early writers who are males gave women subordinate roles in their works. She laments that "female characters are made marginal to the plot of stories in male-oriented works". In effect, they are hardly celebrities or credible protagonists". (14). They can only be seen and not heard e.g. courtesy of Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*. Women are often portrayed in early literatures as prostitutes, wives or even decorative ornaments. This is attributable to some basic overall conception of women in the patriarchal society. However, the advent of feminist stylistics promises a woman's view of life, experience and emancipation in the literary world.

Feminist stylistics emerged out of the concerns and sentiments over gender bias. The male writers' perspectives of the woman in the early works of art had, to a great extent, influenced feminist writers. Daly in Cameron (1985) has thus noted with disgust that "women inherited a contaminated language from their male counterparts".(1) This is because literary endeavours used to be an exclusive enterprise for male writers whose works have made a caricature of the

image of the woman. The female gender has inherited a debasing language. Most lexical terms define women in terms of sexuality and sex roles, negatively and derogatorily. Further evidence of this is the feeling of Fraust (1970) that men have used language very effectively to oppress women. He acknowledges the power of language as a political and social weapon of oppression and intimidation. Fraust has documented the myriad of abusive words that refer to women, in her words: “man’s ingenuity knows no bounds when he wishes to insult a woman and force her to see herself as he sees her”.(3)

When an abusive language is used on the man for example ‘bastard’ and or ‘son of a bitch’, neither of these is a reflection on the particular man himself but on his mother – a woman. Masculinity and femininity are attached to strength and weaknesses respectively. It is common to hear men insult each other as womanish: you run, walk or even talk like a woman. This is because it is generally believed that women are ‘girls’ forever – that means childish, incapable, in need of protection all the time. Disaster, diseases, epidemics are spoken of in the feminine. Although, feminists must admit that countries, wisdom and so on are referred to in the feminine gender as well. Reactions to issues such as these are capable of sparking sentiments that catalysed feminism as a literary movement and the resultant stylistic tradition that emanated from it. This feeling is made obvious as Omolara Leslie Ogundipe (1994) asserts that feminism is sensitive and resistant to the language, style and general attitudes of men towards women.

In all patriarchal societies, women are tied to domestic roles most of the time while men are the bread winners. Men dominate and control the ruling

organs of the societies while women are left with the domestic obligations and other economically unattractive jobs. In view of this, it is logical to assume that everything in that society will be tied to male expectations which extend to the use of language. Even though the situation is gradually changing, the status quo is maintained generally. Thus the popular saying – “it is a man’s world” or better still as Bessie Head (1974) put it, “there is only one god, and his name is man” (206). No wonder Friedan (1963) notes that the roles and behaviours believed traditionally to be acceptable and appropriate for women had also entrapped them and limited their opportunities. Traditional roles had prevented women from competing with men. It’s lamentable globally that women are tied to the home with very little variety of experience to divert their thoughts and they dwell on misfortune in a way unknown to them”. This is to say that they are occupied at home most of the time with house-chores and family issues and pressures, which in the estimation of their male counterparts render them mentally, socially, economically, politically, unproductive. This may have been the feeling of Alexandra Kollantin (1972) when he declares that bourgeois society cannot see a woman as an independent person from family unit and outside the isolated circle of domestic obligations and virtues. Nevertheless, the spirit of feminism challenges the notion that women can only find fulfilment as wives and mothers. It asserts that women gain new confidence and fulfilment when they can contribute mentally and economically to the society which they are part of.

The oppression of women no doubt permeates all aspects of human endeavours and has triggered a vibrant and formidable literary tradition for the documentation of the social, cultural experiences in a style known as feminist

stylistics. As feminism rapidly spread across the globe, African women were not left out of the enterprise. Although their themes are all targeted at the same subject, their styles of writing and modes of presentation differed according to their different backgrounds and personalities, experiences and contexts. African women like their counterparts in Europe, Asia and America emerged on the literary scene with a deep-seated need to primarily re-create the stereotype image of the African woman.

Feminist stylistics has become an element of contemporary Linguistic studies, drawing its methodologies and expectations from intellectual fields beyond the traditionally enclosed realms of rhetorics and aesthetics (linguistics and style). Consequently, the feminist writer has chosen to add various affective elements that partly reflect her ego and the social forces she is subject to. The task of stylistics is to examine those elements and study the means by which language expresses them and their mutual relation, as well as analyzing the total system of expression of which they are a part. This is central to this study as it analyses language in literature with particular emphasis on style as used by Ifeoma Okoye in her works.

According to Mills (1995) feminism implies ‘commitment to changing the social structure in the society to make it less oppressive to women and for that matter to men (4). She holds the view that feminism connotes a change of the social order. Feminist consciousness had led to the controversial question about sex and gender – whether gender is an issue of nature or nurture, nature or culture, inherited or learnt. Uchem, (2001) asserts that:

sex is a biological constant, in the sense that each one of us is born as either female or male, gender has to do with the roles expected of men and women in a particular society. Evidently, gender roles are learnt and vary from one culture to another and differ in matrilineal and patrilineal societies. (50)

Although, we must note that the roles are subject to change and because they are not permanently in-built in either male or female.

Feminists therefore, maintain that socially constructed gender roles and stereotypes limit women's opportunities and potentials.

The thought of change surely must be expressed and translated in language for actualization and concretization. Kristeva in Cameron (1985) urged women to realize that "the noble course of the feminist movement is a revolutionary struggle that must be backed with a revolution in discourse" (1) and true to her suggestion, today feminist literature and feminist stylistics can be branded as revolutionary discourse. According to Cameron (1985) language is a part of patriarchy. She advised women to see feminist literature not as an intellectual luxury but rather an essential part of the struggle for women's liberation (3). This suggests that in whatever aspect of the literary genres women choose to participate in the feminist crusade, the underlying message must portray the ideology of feminism. This notion certainly informed the diverse styles inherent in the works of feminists in all genres. Feminism is a literary theory where modes of presentation and styles target change in unpleasant cultures and in other aspects of traditional practices which weigh heavily against women in all societies. Enkvist, N.E. *et al.* (1967) cited Charles Bally who states

that language is a set of means of expression which are simultaneous with thought. A writer can give his thoughts impetus or an objective intellectual form which conforms to reality as closely as possible.(14) Cameron (1985) maintains that feminism itself makes women aware of language and its effective use. This is because language is at the heart of feminist theory, hence the evolution of feminist stylistics. In line with this thinking, Lee (1992) notes that “Language is an instrument for the assignment of the phenomena of human experience” (8). This is simply true as today’s feminist writers have no doubt inherited the view that language and its style of presentation in the feminist discourse are weapons and essential ones at that, for the propagation of feminism.

Feminists believe that the subordination and marginalization of women extends to language use—resulting to sexism in the English Language. Coats (1993) observes that “women were prevented from contributing anything towards the transforming of the English Language”.(10) He that pays the piper dictates the tune. The English Language is genderised in favour of men. This calls for a reaction and a revolution in words and indeed from the women. Feminism frowns at sexism in language. Feminists reactions to it are very evident in their works.

Mary Vertterling – Braggin (1981) defines sexism in language as “a statement which contributes to, encourages or causes or results in the oppression of women” (2). The argument about how language influences our perception of the world is important to feminists. There have been many critical feminist surveys of English lexis (Nilsen, A.P, *et al*, 1997; Schultz 1990) which have argued that sexism is inherent in many of the labels which English speakers use.

Mills (1995) asserts that feminist stylistic analysis is concerned not only with the description of sexism in a text but also with the analysis of the way, point of view, agency, metaphor, or transitivity are unexpectedly closely related to matters of gender. It also seeks to discover whether women writing practices can be described (1). Language is not simply used for the communication of ideas but also for the creation and maintenance of an environment. Discrimination in Language – whether conscious or unconscious has direct implication for equal opportunities. An increasing amount of attention is being paid to terms which are described as sexist. Sexist language, Mills maintains, “is any item of language which through its structure or use constitutes a male – as a norm in the society. It trivialises, insults or renders women invisible. It can also be seen as language which makes an unnecessary and irrelevant reference to a person’s sex or gender,” (100).

Mills calls for the adoption of a gender-free language style in writing as she proposes a gender-language alternative in communication and queries the use of man in compound nouns, generic terms, noting that these examples imply that the group is exclusively male and gender-specific, e.g.

Give our policemen the officers they deserve

Instead of,

Give our police the officers they deserve.

Man is the most intelligent of the species

Instead of

Humans are the most intelligent of the species. (99)

She argues that the use of neutral alternatives for example, such as fire fighters for fire men, sales staff for salesmen, reporters for newsmen or pressmen do not make gender distinction. They accommodate males and females. Terms with the “man” affix, trigger images of male referents alone. The use of man to refer to people in general, Mills argues, excludes women from the reference. This is because there is a disparity between the way generics are intended to be used and the way in which they are commonly understood. Also, in reaction to the issue of sexism, Cameron (1990) laments that:

sexist language is not just the case of certain words being offensive, but of sexism entering into many levels of language from morphology (for example, word endings) which is usually seen as part of a language’s core, through to stylistic conventions in specific ‘fields’ or discourse, which are much less general, more conscious and more context-bound... “Sexist language cannot be regarded as simply the ‘naming’ of the word from one masculinity perspective: it is better conceptualized as a multifaceted phenomenon occurring in a number of quite complex systems of representation, all with their places in historical traditions. (14)

A brief insight into sexism in the English language at the morphological and lexical levels would surely justify a feminist study and its attendant literary preoccupation which seeks to impact a change.

At the Morphological level, the use of words like ‘man’ as a core morpheme to the compound ‘mankind’, (chairman’, ‘he’, ‘him’, ‘this’ as generic terms readily testify to the existence of sexism, precisely because of the

exultation of the masculine gender. This implies a second class status for women, thereby rendering them invisible. The word ‘chairman’ for instance, shows that the female gender is inconsequential with regard to leadership roles. The use of a compound like ‘master piece’ – ‘master’ (masculine) + ‘piece’ to refer to activities of both men and women means that excellence is typically a male affair. On the other hand the use of feminine morphemes as in examples such as:

Masculine	Feminine
Manager	Manageress
Actor	Actress
Prophet	Prophetess

does not really distinguish the sexes but rather connotes discrimination by portraying women as inferior, incapable of professional skills, as these are defined in relation to men’s sex. The question here is why the gender specification in the instances. At the lexical level again, the use of lexical items such as ‘man’ as a generic term discriminates against women because they express male superiority and female subordination, the feminists argue. For instance, ‘manpower’ instead of ‘work force’ or staff “manhood” instead of adulthood (the age of maturity) ‘mankind’ for ‘humanity’ ‘manning’ for ‘staffing’ or being in charge; ‘man hours’ for ‘work hours’ and so on. Also the use of ‘man’ as a suffix in occupational titles like, ‘states man’, ‘fire man’, ‘chairman’ ‘hang man’, ‘camera man’, ‘workman’ ‘press man’ gives the feeling that the woman is subsumed and invisible. Any attempt to substitute woman for man to alter the morphological arrangement, will be declared ungrammatical and

odd. For instance, ‘bands woman’. ‘chairwoman’. ‘repairwoman’, ‘hand woman’. Feminist asserts that any language that insinuates second – class status for roughly one half of the population – the female sex, ought to be changed. They demand a change in the way language is used even in the works of art Ethel Strianchamps (1971) a lexicographer, identifies unhappily; that emotive words acquire their connotations by reflecting the sentiments of the dominant groups in the society. For instance, in western culture so many things are sex differentiated from spectacles to cardigans, from deodorants to nappies, from birthday cards to weight training items; all are differentiated according to gender and this difference is marked and maintained in the language used for these items (352).

At the grammatical level, the use of ‘he’ to include female referents is simply sexist (Leland 1985). The generic ‘his’ as a sexist representation is a strategy to render the female socially invisible and irrelevant.

Fishman’s level of analysis of linguistic relativity has been linked by feminists to the endeavour on degenderising language in the works of art. It is in this regard that Martyna (1980) says that the moderate version of Sapir Whorf hypothesis is reflected in the feminist move for non-sexist language. This is because sexism in language use, especially in literature, is a strong psychological weapon against the women. (463)

For the same reasons, Vygotsky (1972) argues that “the relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought”. ‘Thought is not merely expressed in words. It comes into existence through them (125). It is in this vein that Charles Morris’s preparatory stimulus (cited in Cooper 1973:29) becomes

relevant to the extent that genderised language may be regarded as a preparatory stimulus which predisposes its users to think about and treat women as they are represented.

Similarly, other examples also abound of cases of the defamation of the woman in the works of art. Foremost indigenous writers such as Chinua Achebe and Ekwensi, gave women terrible subordinate roles in their works. Achebe holds the opinion in *'Things Fall Apart'* that women should only be seen and not heard. In *Arrow of God*, women are only good in house chores and child bearing. Ekwensi also presented women as prostitutes and life-time dependants in his works *Jagua Nana* and *Jagua Nana's daughter, People of the City*.

They also skilfully used linguistic forms and codes to carve out their own styles which transmit misconceptions of the female gender roles in their works of art. This is linguistic and literary oppression. No wonder Fraust (1970) says that 'man' has used language very effectively to oppress women – he knows the power of language. He knows that language to a large extent, can control not only behaviour but thought itself (3).

When we consider the dominant position of male writers in literature coupled with the damage it has done on the image of women psychologically, politically and more importantly, the socio-cultural factors that had long shackled women, the emergence of the female literary tradition would be appreciated.

As noted earlier, feminism as a movement would not have gone far if it was only conceived and not documented. It is a revolutionary struggle which requires a revolutionary discourse. Feminists readily realized that an exclusive discourse is good for the sustenance and maintenance of this struggle. The

peculiar stylistics discourse which developed from feminism is a major interest in this work. A literary commitment to challenge an oppressive social structure *has* therefore informed feminist stylistics. After all, Enkvist, N.E. *et al* (1967) are of the opinion that, the writer is part of the context of what he writes (32), thus, justifying feminist literature as a documentation of the social and cultural experiences of the female writers themselves. Feminist stylistics shares the view of discourse as something which transmits social and institutionalized prejudices and ideologies. This is our interest. It would be made more elaborate as the work progresses in subsequent chapters. It is worthy of note here that feminist literatures are not gender discriminatory. They have not been produced by only female writers. Many male writers are feminists as long as their works are in line with the basic ideology of feminism. Male writers who decry the plight of women in patriarchal societies are feminists but obviously not females. A part of our literature review will recognize and discuss male feminists.

This analysis becomes important at this introductory part of the work in order to provide us with better and broader understanding of the anguish and frustration that led to the radical and rebellious stylistic approach in the documentation of the feminists feelings in works of art. Feminist writers' literary revolution embraces radicalism to puncture male chauvinistic tradition in literature and language in order to recreate and reconstruct the battered image of the woman; this approach has not yielded the much sought result and effect expected of it by the feminists. The reason may not be unconnected with the fact that female radicalism in words and indeed, is in conflict with the African cultural values. Eagleton (2003) wisely suggests that:

we may deny the position of inferiority and insist that women are just as capable as men hence deserve equal opportunity; or we may valorize the subordinated term and claim that sensitivity and an emotional responsiveness is life affirming and more socially productive than brash self-centeredness. (155).

To this effect, the work seeks to deconstruct the radical and rebellious language which characterise the style of the popular feminist literature. The linguo-literary analysis of Okoye's text in this thesis is hoped to redirect the attention and interest of the reader to a feminism which is sensitive to the African cultural reality and values- complementarity feminism. The focus of our discussion in this thesis therefore revolves around three fundamental concepts of feminism, language and style.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The dominant, male-centered, age-long literary, stereotype of women in African literature and the marginalization and subordination of women in patriarchal societies have been a great concern to all those who believe in the equality of the sexes. This has given rise to radical and/or confrontational feminism which has often been used as a strategy by many feminist writers in their women emancipation crusade. This strategy has not always yielded the best result for the cause of the woman, in the African context.

Regarding the issue raised above, there is a need to redirect attention to a feminist stylistic approach which is devoid of confrontational and radical tendencies. Perhaps, feminism which embraces a symbiotic relationship between the sexes may yield greater and more effective results for the women. Since

language and style are the major weapons in the dissemination of the feminist message, this Thesis will examine and unravel how Ifeoma Okoye has deployed language and style in her novels to establish and sustain a female feminist message which preaches complementarity of the sexes.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Our objectives in this thesis are as follows:

- i. To argue that Ifeoma Okoye is an advocate of complementarity feminism who uses linguo-literary technique to deliver her feminist message.
- ii. To establish that feminist Stylistics is a revolutionary discourse which challenges the social-cultural practices of subordination and subjugation of women in the patriarchal society.
- iii. To determine Ifeoma Okoye's feminist persuasion from the linguistic and literary features of her novels.
- iv. To examine how the author uses elements of language to achieve artistic purpose and effect.
- v. To highlight the author's theme. (non-confrontational/non-radical feminism).
- vi. The study will also look closely at "what is often called stylistic variation; that is the different styles or varieties which are appropriate to different purposes/topics, social contents and gender" (Stubbs, M. 1986:13)

1.4 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to undertake a linguo-literary analysis of feminist texts as exemplified by Ifeoma Okoye's novels in order to ascertain and delineate her distinct style. The study will establish Okoye as a strong crusader

of feminism who has used diction, foregrounding, imagery as effective narrative techniques to create messages that are in line with the concept of feminism. However, the study will argue that Okoye is not a radical feminist although her works expose her gender sensitivity. We hope to use the study of Okoye's works to establish a workable feminism which upholds a symbiotic inter-dependence between the two sexes.

In view of this, the study seeks to concentrate on the linguo-literary devices which she has deployed to maintain a well orchestrated and patterned stylistic structure which exposes the plight of the woman. Nevertheless, the scope of the work will accommodate reference and analysis of the works of other feminist writers who share the same as well as contrary views with Okoye. The review of related literature on this work will draw attention to feminism as a global movement which has informed a formidable literary tradition and an exclusive style.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The work is significant because it does not subscribe to radical feminism, rather it upholds an ineluctable and symbiotic interdependence between the feminine and masculine gender which must be positively exploited. The modern African woman has discovered the need to cultivate this symbiosis, especially as she realizes that her success and fulfilment in the society cannot be achieved so easily without this all important deal. This is why Okoye's works become relevant and significant as she advocates this strand of feminism.

Okoye sees feminism in a country like Nigeria and Africa at large as not calling for identity of sex roles, but embracing the already existing culture and

marrying it with the western civilization where human right, not necessarily equal rights, is emphasized. She, like some of her counterparts in the western world, believes that feminism means the total woman. This work is significant as it focuses on, and highlights this brand of feminism and the style that asserts and tries to propagate it bearing in mind that Bradford (1997) says, 'The Style of the novel creates the message'. (93)

The educated African woman today finds herself involved in respectable feminine roles, while manifesting the new confidence that she can contribute positively to the social, economic and political growth of her society. It is in this new light, that she wants to measure her fulfilment as a human being. Her fulfilment is no longer measured by being a good wife and or by the number of children she has, but also by the identity she gives to herself in the society. With the technological changes around us today, she has seen the need to liase with the men and to be part of the arduous task of nation building irrespective of her sex.

Gender discrimination of roles has its hazards as it tends to diminish the cultivation of the woman's versatility and lessens a society's ability to change because in our particular situation women (if given the opportunity) combine masculine and feminine attributes for the good of the society. The ideal, perhaps more useful role is to cultivate this symbiosis and encourage excellence in each citizen. In this regard, the work is significant.

Okoye's heroines are the embodiment of versatility and creativity and a versatile and creative woman is a priceless asset to her society and will rekindle the creative spark that renews herself, her children, her man and the society at large. The study is also significant and relevant as the researcher establishes the

subtle but powerful style which Okoye uses to pass her message across. The work finally anchors its significance in the stylistic mechanisms and effects which uphold the non-confrontational and non-antagonistic type of feminism which Okoye professes. This aims at empowering the girl child in the society. Her crusade against the plight of the woman is only a humanist reaction but does not sacrifice our traditional and cultural values on the altar of radical feminism.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION

Do the linguistic and literary (linguo-literary) features of Okoye's novels support her claims of complementarity feminism?

1.7 METHODOLOGY

This thesis is highly dependent on library and desk research to explore extensive related literatures on the major concepts of feminism, language and style which constitute our study focus. Although the primary source are the works of Ifeoma Okoye, other sources include critical works, journals and scholarly articles in the related areas. We have adopted the method of textual analysis for the texts in the study. Linguistic mechanisms and theories serve as our framework. There is also an interview with the author which provides additional critical thinking on her and her works. This also serves as a confirmatory test of her attitude to feminism.

1.8 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Our justification for the study is anchored on the observations of Yankson (1987), who notes that the African student can be made to understand the essence and the matter of a literary work by focusing on the linguistic devices and patterns, semantic relations and syntactic organization of the literary text. This

actually calls for a stylistic analysis of literary texts. In view of this therefore, a linguo-literary analysis of Okoye's texts is justified. The study is also justified on the grounds that this will be the first time, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, that a full length Ph.D study will be done on this introverted feminist. Finally, Stylistics will naturally strike a balance between theme and medium. (The theme is feminism, and the linguistic style—feminist Stylistics is the medium that propagates it. Okoye's style which re-defines feminism to match with the African cultural values is worth a closer examination. These reasons provide the justification for this study.

1.9 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, is a pioneer full Ph.D research on the works of the author under review. Not much has been written on the author's texts. In view of this, the researcher is constrained by the scarcity of materials and critical works on the author. The study is limited to Ifeoma Okoye's prose works.

1.10 PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR UNDER STUDY

Perhaps, some insight into Ifeoma Okoye's background in this introductory chapter will enable the reader of this work to understand and appreciate what informed the researcher's choice of Okoye's texts for a case study on feminist stylistics.

Ifeoma Okoye is a prominent second generation Nigerian female writer, born in Anambra State of Nigeria. She does not like to reveal her date of birth. She is the widow of the late civil right activist and writer, Mokwugo Okoye. They are blessed with five children.

She was trained at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka where she studied English and at Aston University Birmingham in the United Kingdom where she obtained a postgraduate degree in English. Okoye taught English language at the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Enugu and at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. She is an Associate Member of the African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Okoye's testimony on the issue of feminism in Emenyeonu (2000) gives us an insight into her opinion on feminism. She says "as for me, the issue which my readers raised about my novels is my attitude to feminism ... they want to know why I do not claim to be a feminist. They want to know why I have not, according to them, used my "art to fight for feminism as other female writers like Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo, Flora Nwapa, Nawal-el-Sadawi.(354)." She continues that some readers have called her a womanist and others an accommodationist. She claims to believe in something that is more than feminism, but which incorporates feminism. She wishes to be called a *personist*. According to her, a personist abhors discrimination against any person, woman or man. A personist believes in the equality of persons and fights against the subordination of persons, women or men. A personist, in fighting to liberate all persons, fights to liberate women as well as men. A personist advocates compulsory free education for children.

This is not to say, however, that she is indifferent to feminism. She still believes in the fundamental issue that establishes feminism when she says "I acknowledge the awareness-raising function of feminism. I sanction the equality of men and women which feminism advocates. I accept that feminism makes

women think about their plight, that it makes them think about how to rise above all odds against them, and how to achieve self-esteem and self-actualization".(360)

Nevertheless, Okoye detests some aspects of feminist ideology for three obvious reasons. First, she does not approve of feminists who are belligerent and who use violent rhetoric to fight their cause. This will be buttressed in the analysis of her works in chapters four and five. Her belief is that aggressiveness puts people on the defensive, prevents them from listening to the voice of reason. It destroys both the aggressor and the defender and prevents them from working together for their common good. She claims to have personally, won "battles" in life without being aggressive, and has come to realize that love often times "disarms" the enemies more than aggression or violence does. If truly the style of an author is influenced by her personality, (style as an individual) then Okoye's heroines in her texts would be seen later in this work to be acting her beliefs.

Secondly, she does not support feminists who antagonize all men and who feel that any woman who does not antagonize men is not a true feminist. Not all men are chauvinist, not all men are against women and those who are not against women are for women. As a matter of fact, we have male feminists. Women should have solidarity with progressive men and as Lynne Segal quoted by Okoye in Emenyeonu (2000) rightly reminds us, "feminists, too, need to accept that part of their struggle must involve an alliance with men to transform the social inequalities and the dangerous and destructive technologies of existing

capitalist economy”(361). She also refers to Sharon Spencer in the same text as advocating this co-operation by her statement:

We are experiencing a period of profound cultural change. Nearly all writers who have undertaken to formulate the goals of feminist literature---whether imaginative or critical---agree that the eventual goal is unity of “masculine” and “feminine” capabilities: mental bisexuality (361):

In the light of this, Okoye believes that self-discipline, self-determination, self-confidence, self-esteem and self-actualization are the true essentials of women’s liberation, Instead of spending time and energy berating male chauvinists, feminists should flaunt and uphold women who have risen against all odds, who have achieved self-esteem and self-actualization in spite of poverty, discrimination, prejudice, deprivation and subordination.

Thirdly, she disapproves of feminists who expect every book written by a woman to deal with feminist issues and who judge the value of every book written by a woman by the presence or absence of feminist characters or themes. There are other issues as pressing, as important, and as interesting as feminism, which women writers can explore in their works. She concludes by saying that a writer is better writing about what she or he understands best, what she or he feels strongly about and not about what is “in vogue”.

Although, Okoye denies a feminist identity, her works center on girl’s and women’s reality. Her major pre-occupation is the redemption and revamping of the image of the Nigerian Woman. Though she highlights the Nigerian women’s self esteem, self worth and dignity, using her heroines she also focuses on male

characters that are gender sensitive and whom she believes are symbols of life's positive values. She presents various aspects of the human condition and addresses social problems in her works. Ifoema Okoye was motivated by her observation of social injustice, corruption, inequality and the desire to be the conscience of her society. Thus she claims to be a humanist and not a feminist. Ifoema Okoye's aesthetic vision is both a humanist and womanist and they stand out as her defining characteristics. Confirming this fact about her can only be done by a stylistic analysis of her texts, a task which the present study is determined to accomplish.

Her works *'Men Without Ears'* won the best fiction award of the Nigerian Association of Nigerian Authors in 1985. In 1985 also, she won the Ife book fair literary prize. She won the Commonwealth short story prize for the African Region in 1999.

Killam and Rowe, (2000) note that Ifoema Okoye is the most important novelist after Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta, the pioneer Nigerian female writers who are her predecessors. They assert that Okoye is the best prose stylist among Nigerian female writers; her language has a delicacy, vigour, and confidence and her style a precision and clarity that make it classical (197). To this effect, the researcher finds Okoye worthy of closer stylistic examination.

CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF STYLE AND STYLISTICS

According to Enkvist (1967) “The student of style cannot afford to neglect the historical study of Stylistics, particularly as many of its texts lie outside the modern period”. (83) Stylistics has a long history (stretching) over many centuries. This chapter therefore, provides a literature review of the concepts of style and feminism from a historical perspective through definitions, theoretical perspectives and discussions on related works. This would facilitate a better understanding of the analysis that will follow in the subsequent chapters of this work.

A historical unfolding of stylistics shows that the concept stemmed from three ancient sources of rhetoric, poetics and dialectics. Rhetoric is a derivation from the Greek word *techne rhetorike*. From the account of Missikova (2003), rhetoric was taught in the ancient Greek school for a purely utilitarian purpose of effective communication. Students of rhetoric studied the subject for the prestige of making good public speeches while poetics concentrated on the language activities such as artistic creation, problems of expressing ideas in utterances. Dialectics on the other hand, focused on the art of dialogue in language, the study of methods of persuasion in communication. Later, poetics developed into what we study today as literary criticism, while Rhetoric and Dialectics merged to result to stylistics (10).

The need for the effective use of expressive devices of language had been known to man from the pre-writing era. They are regarded as oratorical devices which include the use of words (diction) to create mental images, proverbial

expressions, vivid descriptions, rhythm, repetition, ellipsis, antithesis and parallelism. These properties of rhetoric later gave birth to what we study and analyze as stylistic techniques and elements. It is important to note that there is a relationship between rhetoric and stylistics. Graham Hough (1969) noted this:

The modern study of style i.e. stylistics, has its roots in classical rhetoric; the ancient art of persuasive speech which has always had a close affinity with literature, probably because it was regarded as a persuasive discourse too... classical rhetoric was prescriptive in that it provided guidance as to how to be persuasive, whereas modern stylistics is descriptive in that it seeks to point out the linguistic features that can be associated with particular effects. (1-3)

The traditional oratorical devices evident in rhetoric would later be given a thorough examination under the concept of style and stylistics in language study. In the light of this, criticism began to emerge to question to what extent rhetoric copes with the issue of the distinction between literary and non-literary texts when it comes to functionality. Bradford (1997) claims that Puttenham's thesis argues that: Literary and non-literary texts do not belong in the same category of functional, purposive language as the judicial ruling or the theological tract. (10-11).

This raised a contention which stylistics rather than rhetoric had to salvage. By the second half of the 20th century, the result of the re-assessment and the appraisal of rhetorics to handle all issues in literary and non-literary discourse led to the emergence of stylistics, semiotics and pragmatics. Modern stylistics emerged from a fragment of Rhetoric called Elocution. Elocution

covers the characteristic features of expression as well as the relationship between form and content. The French classical theory of style which advocated high and low styles for verbal works of art as grand and plain respectively, is suspected to be modelled on education. Perhaps, the reason is that the French classical theory of style regards style as a 'selection of expressive means'. Elocution later matured into stylistics studies after going through philological evolution.

In the submissions of Nnadi (2010), on the historical perspective of style, the emergence of stylistics from a comparative philological studies, gained acclamation with the works of Charles Bally (1909) who was a student of Ferdinand de Saussure. Charles Bally's works ushered in a new era of linguistic stylistics which centers on emotionally expressive conception of style. Bally is of the opinion that linguistic information comprises the language and the aspects of the person who interprets or introduces the information. Bally's stylistics model is writer-centered. It is widely acknowledged that stylistics studies began with Bally of the Department of General Linguistics, University of Geneva in 1905. The major concern of stylistic studies then was on the emotive properties of language and how diction affects the emotions of the speaker. Nnadi asserts that Bally's work on stylistics which was published in 1909 gave prominence, relevance and credibility to stylistics in Europe and beyond (17).

In the later part of 1960s, Michael Halliday introduced his own approach to the study of stylistics in Britain. He spear-headed the structural linguistic analysis of literary texts. This approach gained popularity and acceptance in Britain and USA in the 60s. This stylistics, till date, studies and describes the

formal features of the text, that is, the levels of expression vis-a-vis the content, in order to bring out their functional significance for the interpretation of the work. It is in this sense that Crystal and Davy (1980) remark that:

The stylistician, ideally knows three things which linguistically untrained people do not; he is aware of the kind of structure language has and thus the kind of feature which might be expected to be of stylistic significance; he is aware of the kind of social variation which linguistic features tend to be identified with and he has a technique of these features down on paper in a stylistic way in order to display their internal patterning to maximal effect (12-13).

Maximal effect from the above context must be understood to mean the level at which the relevance and the message of a given literary text is established through stylistic analysis. This justifies the intention here to analyze the texts of Ifeoma Okoye in order to establish some feminist concerns in her works. This obviously involves a linguo-literary stylistic analysis. Every linguistic stylistic analysis involves a text whether literary or non-literary but here we are dealing with literary texts. Geoffrey N. Leech and Michael H. Short (1995) observe that: Stylistic selection involves the relation between the significance of a text and the linguistic characteristics in which the significances are manifest (69-79)

On the other hand, the process of stylistic analysis as recommended by Crystal and Davy (1980) is therefore one which ordered selection and comment carried out within parallel framework: one stylistic and the other linguistic (87). Also, in Busse and McIntyre's (2010) submissions, another important strand of influence in the development of stylistics comes from Eastern Europe involving

Roman Jakobson, I.A. Richards and other groups of linguists who began to develop what became a very influential aspect of textual study in later stylistics called foregrounding theory. This theory will be used for the analysis of the texts under review in chapter three.

Busse and McIntyre added that the formalist and structuralist work of Jakobson and others is not without problems, it should be clear that its value is in the insights that it generated and the later approaches it inspired. Indeed, insights from formalism have proved essential for modern stylistics, with the concepts of deviation, parallelism and foregrounding still acting as the linchpin of contemporary approaches to the discipline. Willie Van Peer (1986) provided an empirical support for Mukarovsky's (1891 - 1975) notion of foregrounding while Geoffrey Leech demonstrated convincingly that foregrounding in texts is intrinsic to literary interpretation. The connection between analysis and interpretation is strengthened by Leech's concepts of congruence and cohesion of foregrounding, which goes some considerable way towards refuting accusations of interpretative positivism often levelled at stylistics by its critics and robustly defended by a stylistician, Mick Short. And in recent works in cognitive stylistics, foregrounding has been related directly to the cognitive concepts of figure and ground. Nearly a hundred years later, this approach is still very influential in schools and universities around the world. It gives rise to the kind of critical essay where writers make a claim about what a text means, or how it affects them, and then quote a textual sample and perhaps discuss it to illustrate the view argued for. Stylistics has thus come a long way since its beginnings and it should

be clear that it is very much a forward-looking discipline, (Summarised from Busse and McIntyre, 2010: 3-14)

Since stylistics draws so heavily on linguistics, a history of its development would not be complete without some reference to the works of Noam Chomsky (1948, 1957). Although Chomsky's concerns were never with literary texts and their effects, his influence on the development of linguistics inevitably impacts on stylistics. The works of Thorne (1965), and Ohmann (1962) are examples of early stylistics that are based on the assumption that literary texts constitute instances of linguistic transformations of some underlying structure. To these, we can add Levin's work on linguistic structures in poetry. Indeed, Graham Hough wrote in 1969 that the contribution of linguistics to literary study is virtually confined to semantics and syntax', therein reflecting the dominance of Chomskyan linguistics at the time he was writing.

2.2 BRIEF EXPLORATION IN NON-LITERARY STYLISTICS

While stylistics had so far concentrated on using linguistic tools to explain literary effects, it had also been the subject of criticism for its eclecticism, its lack of a methodological and theoretical foundation, and its alleged base in literary criticism. A major focus on poetry also caused some suspicion in linguistic circles. In the 1960s and early seventies these criticisms were addressed in part through the development of a branch of stylistics that focused particularly on style in non-literary language. The works of Crystal and Davy, and Enkvist(1971) are particularly important here. Crystal and Davy's concern was how particular social contexts restrict the range of linguistic options open to speakers and writers, while Enkvist proposed that this could work the other way too; that

means, that a speaker's stylistic choice could affect the context for his or her addressees (think, for instance, about the informal lexis and grammar often used in advertisements, and how these are designed to effect a context of informality for customers). Work in non-literary stylistics, however, appeared to stall at this point, and it was not until much later that it picked up again. The reasons for this are perhaps the lack of linguistic frameworks able to deal with the contextual issues at the heart of Crystal and Davy's and Enkvist's work. The whole historical evolution and metamorphoses of the concept of style will not make sense to any reader without a practical application of style as stylistics. This is our emphasis and duty as we explore various techniques of stylistic analysis in this work.

2.3 THE CONCEPT OF STYLE

The definitions of style are inexhaustible considering the inherent nebulous nature of the concept. Style in literature is a recognizable but elusive phenomenon. It is a concept which though widely used and multifariously defined yet evades precision. This difficulty of precise definition need not, however, lead us to abandon the concept. The same problem arises with many of the abstract generalized concepts without which neither humanists, nor scientists could proceed far in the tasks of analysis, comparison and validation of hypotheses. This is especially so where qualitative evaluation of phenomena is involved: when the phenomena cannot easily be quantified, mathematically precise definitions are unlikely to be forthcoming. So it is to a high degree, with style. Suffice it to say that style is indeterminate.

If we may borrow the words of John Middleton Murry as quoted in Enkvist (1967), where he claims that the word style ‘if it were to be pursued with only a fraction of the vigour of a scientific investigation, would inevitably cover the whole of literary aesthetics and the theory of criticism. Six books would not suffice for the attempt much less would six lectures’ (10). He however advised that some definitions of styles culled from critical works, linguistics studies, dictionaries and encyclopedias of different periods show that such definitions allow for much overlapping and should be classified under a manageable number of major heading. Enkvist (1971) observes as well that ‘style as a concept is notoriously slippery and difficult to codify into concrete terms that allow operational study’ (50).

Nevertheless we shall attempt a wide range of the definitions of the concept of style since the main concern of this work is on style. Perhaps one way to approach the definitions of style is to classify them according to the basic stages of communication process as suggested by Enkvist (1967). The first three are definitions based on the point of view of the writer. Here style is regarded as a higher, active principle of composition by which the writer penetrates and reveals the inner form of his subject. Secondly, there are definitions that deal with characteristics of the text itself, attempting analysis of style entirely in terms of objective investigation of textual features. Thirdly, there are definitions based on the impressions of the reader (10-11). These are extremely common in most works of literary criticism and literary history that characterize individual or group styles. The impression of the reader cannot be objective without a marriage

of the three groups of definitions. Therefore, our analysis took note of the inevitability of the combination.

Turner (1979) believes that style entails proper words in proper places while Kenneth Burke (1954) says style involves the right thing in the most effective way (50). It is an undeniable truth that feminist stylistics is the most effective way to do justice to the injustice against women. With this style, feminist writers have said the right things against the social ills in the society. That is the reason feminism as a literary concept has flourished and is still making an impact.

Enkvist (1967) summarized style as follows:

- vii. A shell surrounding a pre-existing core of thought or expression
- viii. As the choice between alternative expressions
- ix. As a set of individual characteristics
- x. As deviation from a norm
- xi. As a set of collective characteristics
- xii. As those relations among linguistic entities that are stable in terms of wider spans of text than the sentence (12).

Quincy (1952) sees style as having an independent value apart from the content, and that it may perform either an absolute or a ministerial function (36). To this effect, we can say that feminism as a literary tradition with its distinct style has ministered to the human race against the plight of women. Feminist writers challenge the image of the women in the work of their male counterparts. The style of introducing a female heroine that emancipates in the patriarchal society

and succeeds, ministers great message to the human race and the women folk in particular.

Enkvist's (1967) rich chronicle of different views and opinions on the subject of style in his work, accommodates reasonable definitions of style by many linguists. Style is defined as the writer's choice. For Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren (1943:605), a modern version of the very frequent view of style as choice is considered in terms of selection and ordering of language (15). Also Gottingen (1953:61) adds that "Style is a definite emotional effect achieved by linguistic means in a text" (15). Emotional effect is created with language use. This language effect is the bedrock of feminist styles.

Similarly, Jeremy Warburg (1959:50) in his work *Some Aspects of Style* published in *The Teaching of English Studies in Communication* upholds that "good style consists in choosing the appropriate symbolization of the experience you wish to convey, from among a number of words whose meaning-area is roughly but only roughly the same" (19). Style therefore, does not only involve words, but other linguistic features as well. Many writers, particularly feminist writers are known for their rich inclusion of symbolisms and imageries in their works for aesthetic effect. The analysis of Okoye's works will reveal an elaborate exploitation of symbols and imageries drawn from the African cultural background.

Further submission by Enkvist include Stockholm and Erik W.(1948:18) who opine that "style could be regarded as that way of presenting a subject which differs more or less from the average and which is motivated by the character of the subject, the purpose of the presentation and the writer's personality" (23).

Having said this, the analysis of Ifeoma Okoye's texts will definitely reveal her similarity and peculiarity of opinion on the ideology of feminism, which may likely be informed by her own peculiar experience, background, belief and above all, personality.

For Hockett (1958:556), style as choice is simply the context-bound use of style markers. The aim of stylistic analysis is to take inventory of these style markers and a statement of their contextual utility and spread. We may further distinguish between micro-stylistics and macro-stylistics. Micro-stylistics is the study of style markers and stylistic sets within the sentence or within the units smaller than the sentence, whereas macro-stylistics is the stylistics of sentence sequences. These we hope to identify in the texts under review.

Style is one of the points where linguistics, pragmatics and aesthetics readily overlap and interconnect. More often than not, feminist writers combine these three to achieve their desired goals. Nevertheless, part of the difficulty in discussing style arises from the temptation to attempt simultaneous answers to linguistic, pragmatic, and aesthetic questions which are concerned with different levels of, and attitudes to the communication process. Essentially, stylistic analysis can be conveniently approached in terms of the stages or levels or methods, which should be inextricably fused in the classroom. Every utterance has a style determined by contextual probabilities, but there are many utterances that are poor literature. It is also stylistic analysis that determines such good or bad style, Azuike M.N. (1992).

Style as a concept has an inherent tendency for diversity. This opinion is supported by Sharpiro as quoted in Azuike (2006). Style has such a wide range of

application (language, literature, art, music, dance, clothings, coiffure, behaviour generally, yet paradoxically, it has never been studied globally (77).

Similarly, Sir Arthur Quiller Couch (1920) has assembled some sensibilities by defining style “as the power to touch with ease, grace, precision, any note in the gamut of human thought and emotion. But essentially, it resembles good manners” (248). As many are linguists, so are the definitions of the concept of style. Therefore, providing a generally acceptable definition of style has become an arduous task. However, the business of dealing with the concept of style is not completely hopeless. There is a possibility of narrowing the concept down to sets or compartmentalizations for easy grasping.

According to Azuike, the casual user of the concept of style on the other hand regards style as a myriad of characterizations and associations. He defines style “as a fascinating and intriguing subject that has an irresistible pull about it linguistically and literarily speaking” (79). He equates style to pattern, mode, manner, way method, techniques, design of doing something and gives corresponding sentential examples on each of them as follows:

1. I like the way she dances.
2. His jumping technique is unique.
3. Her mode of dressing has influenced many young girls in the village.
4. His method of heading the ball with the back of his head has attracted the attention of other professional footballers.
5. The tailor has been making the same pattern of wedding gowns for almost twenty years.

6. That manner of addressing Heads of State is now outdated and considered offensive.
7. The design of the stadium is a good example of state-of-the art architecture.

Summarizing briefly, Azuike maintains that all that merry-go round still has the subject of style at the centre anyhow you look at it (79).

Style as an element of literature deals with the way the various elements of art are organized into a structure that makes up the form of the work. It is the sum total of the various ways (techniques) of expression of thoughts and the general characteristic of an author. This is what Crystal and Davy (1980) call “singularity” (76). In the real sense of it, when we define stylistics as the linguistic study of style, it actually refers to all the elements of language that enable a writer or speaker to achieve a pattern of writing or speaking attributable to and exclusive or peculiar to him. Most notions of style carry with them an implication of individuality vis-à-vis generality, or, put another way, the matching of unique qualities against qualities shared with other works. Style is not limited to literature only; if style is the product of a particular, and in part, unique use of language, by an individual, then it is related to, and dependent upon, certain notions and the experience of the writer displayed through any medium. This takes us beyond the realm of literature and involves us in the relation between language use and social and cultural patterns.

Taylor (1981), also adds that “style is a function of the uses of language. It involves words choice and arrangements or patterns or phrasing. Any discussion of style must begin with an acknowledgement of these characteristic

expressive devices or techniques and so on” (83). He further says that style of a given literary work refers to word choice, images, figures of speech, rhetorical devices and similar qualities. Style although indeterminate is not always a product of care-free and careless selection of linguistic features.

The style of the feminist writers obviously evolves through a deliberate and exclusive effort and choice of appropriate linguistic features suitable for a discourse of social activism. This is supported by Azuike (2006) who notes that: to achieve effective style in communication, the writer has to consciously select features which will not only suit the context of the communication but also accord with the tenor of the occasion (80).

He actually described writers in this category as conscious writers. And adds that for instance, Hazlitt, calls it tone; Joos, a degree of formality, Crystal and Davy named it status; whereas Turner branded it tact. (80). If we take the word ‘occasion’ in the quotation above to mean ‘feminism’, then we may argue that the style of the feminist writers is master-minded by the ideologies of feminism rather than a fusion of pre-linguistics and post-linguistic influences for the actualization of the effect which feminism as a literary discourse creates. This will help us to appreciate the deliberate linguistic choices feminists make of symbols, diction and imageries to communicate the message of feminism in their works. The context of discourse no doubt is important in informing the linguistic choices we make. The end product of it is the emergence of some kind of style. Feminists, we can understand, are conscious writers.

Riffaterre (1959) endorses this view as well by saying ‘I select elements only because of their actual value in a definite context; without context, they are

neutral and free to form any or no stylistic association' (168). The chosen author for this study would be discovered to have consciously and deliberately fashioned the attributes of her heroine to buttress the fact of complementarity between sexes. Enkvist (1973) agrees that "stylistics has sometimes been regarded as that branch of language study which looks into the effects of context, particularly context of situation in an utterance" (115).

It is the analysis of this choice of linguistic features that informed the feminist stylistics that we are interested in this work. We shall be guided by the idea of Enkvist (1967) who says the study of the style of a text involves the progressive development and explication of a response which results from a primary but not an exclusive, concentration on an examination of the complex of linguistic features possessed by that text, both those unique to it and those which it shares with others (104). We do recognize that the old prescription for a single definition of style would not suffice for an understanding of the theory of style. Therefore, more light will be thrown on the concept of style later in this chapter where the discussion on the theories of style will be presented.

2.4 BASIC CONCERNS OF STYLISTICS

Stylistic studies are primarily concerned with the examination of the writer's language. This involves the analysis of the language of literary texts usually drawing its theoretical models from linguistics. It seeks to explore how readers relate with the language of literary texts in order to explain how we comprehend and are affected by them when we read.

According to Carter and Simpson (1989) 'Stylistics uses linguistic analysis to provide a window on the devices which characterize a particular

work'.(48) However, we have linguistic and literary stylistics. Carter and Simpson make a distinction between linguistic stylistics and literary stylistics. For them, linguistic stylistics is where practitioners attempt to derive from the study of style and language, a refinement of models for the analysis of language and thus to contribute to the development of linguistic theory (4). On the other hand, 'Literary stylistics is more concerned with providing the basis for further understanding, appreciation and interpretation of avowedly literary and author-centered texts. The general impulse will be to draw eclectically on linguistic insight and to use them in the service of what is generally claimed to be fuller interpretation of language effects than is possible without the benefit of linguistics (7).

In any case, both forms of stylistics analysis draw on a wide range of linguistic models such as from Michael Halliday's "Systemic Linguistics", "Noam Chomsky's Generative Grammar", "John Searles Speech Acts" and to "Malcom Coulthard's Discourse Analysis". However, the difference lies in their objectives in undertaking the analysis. Similarly, Leech and Short (1981) supply a clearer definition by saying that 'in general, literary stylistics has implicitly or explicitly the goal of explaining the relation between language and artistic function. The motivating questions are not so much *what* as *why* does the author here choose to express himself in this particular way? From the critic's view point, it is *how* is such-and-such an aesthetic effect achieved through language?'(13)

Feminist stylistics is concerned with these general emphasis outlined by Leech and Short, that is why they have chosen certain ways to express

themselves rather than others and how certain effects are achieved through their peculiar use of language (diction and style). Stylistics is the study of language in literature, Toolan (2009). This statement sharpens our awareness of how language works in texts. Toolan has identified three basic concerns of stylistics in any given texts. And we summarise them as follows:

- i. **Descriptive Skills:** Stylistic mentality in literature. Any literary text must necessarily involve stylistic features such as descriptive skills. This involves using linguistic terms to describe or label familiar and unfamiliar items/materials. This is geared at representing specific and substantiated insights in a given texts. For example, if we want to undertake the systematic study of the naming practices in a novel. We may want to look at whether protagonists are named via a pronoun (e.g. she) or by a proper name (*Chimere*) or by various definite descriptions (the woman; the fluttering sparrow; the elegantly dressed matron); we might well want to see how often a protagonist is named in these different ways and with what kinds of definite descriptions, what kinds of pronoun (e.g. thou vs. you in early modern English text). If we want to be sensitive to particular contexts on this issue, we might well want to consider any disparities in naming in relation to two or more characters appearing in the same texts. This simple example of protagonist naming is a usable description of just that aspect of the text. Another level of stylistic involvement will now inform us that *she* is a pronoun, *herself* a reflexive pronoun, *Chimere*, a proper noun and *the elegantly dressed matron* a definite description. Appropriate linguistic terms

and descriptions can articulate an inward understanding of the workings of a language.

ii. **Technique/the craft of writing:** The chief feature of stylistics is that it persists in the attempt to understand technique, or the craft of writing. If we agree that Shakesperian texts, Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart' and Soyinka's 'The Interpreters' are extraordinary literary achievements, what are some of the linguistic components of that excellence? Stylistics would prove that word-choices clause-patterns, contextual implications, foregrounding, cohesive links, choice of voice and perspective are possible reasons for the excellence. The same way they can locate the linguistic bases or some aspects of weak writing and use them as platform for criticisms. Stylistics is crucially concerned with excellence of technique. (style)

iii. **Linguistic examination of texts:** Stylistics shows interests in the understanding of the anatomy and functions of the language and the nature of language in communication. This is usually done by the close examination of the linguistic particularities of a text. For instance, Socratic phrase '*the examined life*' is often involved to remind us of our need to subject all our behaviour to rational and moral self-scrutiny; Stylistics nails its colour to an analogous slogan. The need for and value of the examined text: (Toolan 2009).

We are not ignorant of the fact that these concerns are spreading beyond the traditional domains of literary text to fields such as advertising, political discourse, legal practice and pop music lyrics.

The proponents of style as an individual clearly believe that individual writers develop 'idiolects' which could be traced in their works. For example,

grammatical analysis makes it possible to state that certain authors tend to use a particular range of syntactic structure e.g. Gerard Manley Hopkins or E.E. Cummings. Other stylisticians are concerned with the quality of 'literariness'. Whereby they take interest in analyzing canonical texts held to be of great literary value because of their skillful crafting and density of patterning, Mukarovsky (1970; Jakobson 1960). Literary language is seen as a different register or type of language which is the task of the stylistician to describe. The concern and preoccupation of stylistics, justify the claim of Leech (1973) that stylistics may be regarded simply as the variety of analysis dealing with literary discourse (151).

2.5 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF STYLE

The uniqueness of human experiences is largely responsible for the varied and often controversial responses or reactions in the work of art generally, and in stylistics in particular. This may be the possible reason that approaches to the concept of style abound. What is of concern to us is the adverse effect the shroud of controversy has on both students and teachers of stylistics. Stylistics to many is a scary mystic. It is regarded as something inaccessible and a puzzle. Many teachers of stylistics have also not helped matters. Some of them unwittingly compound the fear and the apparent helplessness of the students by turning stylistics into one faceless concept through unwholesome teaching and analysis.

In recent development, some scholars have made efforts to bring about necessary and gradual de-mystification of stylistics. The study of style has through collaboration of developed and specialized preoccupations of creative research by different scholars advanced some basic theories which have been

categorized according to the different schools of thought. With this, language students and teachers of stylistics can begin to appreciate the particular insights and methods which each has developed as distinct but also part of the whole issue in stylistic studies. We recommend this approach to ease the confusion in trying to understand the concept of style and stylistics.

Theories of style evolved from the compartmentalization of the various views and definitions, researches on of the concept of style itself as a discourse. We have noted earlier that style is not an easy subject to manage when it comes to tracking it down to one straight-jacket definition. In view of this, we may often use some definitions of style for pedagogical reasons, but establishing some kind of theoretical framework for the concept becomes even more valuable for a better and deeper grasp of the concept. Since style defies precision, managing it under some sub and yet broad headings becomes very vital. The reason is that the categorization of this diverse subject matter is essential not only for the student of styles, but also for teachers because of the comprehensive and explicit analyses that obtain in it.

Our intention is not so much to offer an account of a particular model of the theory as to suggest what might be manageable and easily digestible in the study of style. In other words, we desire to make comprehensive and explicit what the student of style requires of the concept and description of style and stylistics.

In their work *An Approach to the Study of Style*, John Spencer and Michel Gregory as quoted in Freeman (1970) set out the theoretical foundation for a method of studying literary style. They base their study upon the traditional

foundation of John Rupert Firth and his successor, Halliday. Spencer and Gregory based their model on the distinction among lexical, grammatical, contextual, phonic as well as graphic substances in literary texts for the analysis of style. They propose that stylistics concentrates more on lexis. They felt that the real analysis of style deals with the placing of a literary text according to the categories of field of discourse (subject matter) mode of discourse (relation between speaker/writer and hearer/reader) (73).

The point of view presented here cannot of course account for all details of the different contributions made by so many linguists in trying to define and expand the knowledge of the concept of style. The ideas of Spencer and Gregory may have emphasized the linguistic aspect of style without covering the aspects of socio-linguistics, anthropology and philosophy. They did not consider the very vital fact that linguistic style must also help to give us an intelligent realization of the consequences of seeing language as part of human social behaviour. Language events do not take place in isolation from other events, rather they operate within a wide framework of human activity.

According to Freeman, “stylistics studies are primarily concerned with the examination of written language” (75). This gives us the impression that phonology has little to contribute. Freeman thinks that any theory which seeks to analyze style should not lay so much emphasis on phonology. He further notes that a precise statement of the relationship between the patterns or phonic substance and those of graphic substance is not easy, particularly in a language such as English. There is certainly no one-to-one correspondence (76).

However, certain kinds of literature have strong phonic potentials. Drama and poems are written with the spoken word in mind and particular linguistic features which they consequently exhibit. This cannot be fully accounted for without a reasonable sophisticated phonology, Freeman observes on the contrary (75). He further argues that the phonemic reoccurrence characteristics of Hopkins alliteration cannot be fully understood or described simply in terms of the repetition of initial sounds which is the definition of this device commonly provided by works of prosody and poetics.

If a model of style provides clues, indicating only certain linguistic features as likely to be a prime importance in establishing a text's particular style, the functions of linguistic description are not simply that of making the precise nature of these features explicit or of producing statistical tables to support the intuitive judgment. Such a procedure also incidentally involves the danger of fixing the significant stylistics features in advance against careful analysis, thereby closing the door against the possibility of modifying and developing the original ambition of having a model that is all embracing. It can also result to a ready reliance upon impressionistically conceived and generalized norm of style with a consequent failure to observe the essential distinction between shared and unique features in the language of a text. In view of this, Freeman suggests that "judgment and recognition of style are primary analysis and statistics secondary" (82).

The numerous definitions of style can only be manageable under some theoretical sub-headngs. To this effect, Azuiké (1992) has categorized the different definitions and characterizations of style under six subheadings which

correspond with Enkvist (1967) assessment and groupings. We have been able to highlight the different views and opinions of various linguists on the concept style in this chapter. But the submissions of Azuike (1992) in his attempt to classify the concept of style becomes the most acceptable for the purposes of our analysis. The classifications took into consideration the infinite number of the definitions of style culled from critical works, linguistic studies encyclopedias of different ages, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and so on.

We shall therefore be guided by Azuike's grouping for our analysis of the theories of style in this work. Six practical theoretical sub-headings have been suggested by Azuike (1992). They are as follows:

1. As a deviation from a norm
2. A manifestation of the individual
3. Content and or form
4. Choice between alternate ways of expressing the same idea
5. Product of context
6. As good or beautiful writing.

We shall attempt the analysis of the enumerated sub-headings but not before the abstract nature of the concept has been discussed.

2.5.1 Style as an Abstraction

Trying to understand the concept of style from its numerous definitions poses a lot of problems and frustrations to students and other general readers. This may have been the experience and frustration that led Bennison (1969) to declare that "Style does not exist". Perhaps, the reason is the abstract nature of

the concept first and also the unlimited definitions of the subject from linguists, philosophers, sociologists and psychologists of all times. They have all tried to coin different and diverse definitions of the concepts from their own different subject areas and perspectives.

Although, style is one of the areas where linguistics, pragmatics and aesthetics readily overlap, part of the problem in dealing with style follows from the temptation to attempt simultaneous answers to linguistic, pragmatic and aesthetic questions in texts. This is the common point of confusion which makes the discipline appear to be abandoned. Simpson (2004) quoted Jean-Jacques as lamenting that:

... nobody has ever really known what the term 'Stylistics' means, and in any case, hardly anyone seems to care. Stylistics is ailing; it is on the wane; and its hey day alongside that of structuralism has faded to but a distant memory. More alarming again is that few University students are eager to declare an intention to do research in stylistics. By this account the death knell of stylistics has been sounded and it looked as though the end of the twentieth century would be accompanied by the inevitable passing of that faltering moribund discipline. And no one it seems would lament its demise (2)

Incidentally Simpson does not agree with Jean's predictions and sense of judgment on the concept of style. Simpson believes that stylistics has recorded a commendable progress in the 21st century with the advent of feminist stylistics, cognitive stylistics and discourse stylistics. This is hope-rising for the concept which will not allow the prophecy of Jean to come true. David Crystal, *et. al.*

(1980) did observe that language and style are so closely related that any study of the former is bound to be a contribution and understanding of the later. It is possible that popular interest and the importance of language as the principal means of communication between people, interests and creeds have promoted stylistics largely in this century from an amateur study to a widespread academic discipline. The latest of which is feminist stylistics. For Sir Quiller-Couch (1920) there is a way out and a point of take-off towards solving the problem of defining the concept as he declares that:

If defining style has become an arduous task for the linguist, a temporary relief is provided by the fact that regularity of pattern and features is a sure base line to take off from. If there is no observable regularity of occurrence of certain peculiar linguist artifacts in an individual's speech or writing, then we might be hard pressed to identify what constitutes style (78).

This is surely no mean relief. Most students of stylistics will see this suggestion as an attempt to ease the scare of stylistics abstraction but obviously not the solution. The problems is well understood by Azuike (1992) who feels that:

For anyone interested in the study of style there are three disturbing discoveries that await him. The first is that there is no definition of style in existence. The second is that there is neither a concensus amongst linguists on what it's aims are, nor uniform approach or methodology for its analysis. The third (and this is the only meeting of minds) is that all those who practise stylistics analysis agree that the concept of style is

nebulous, elusive, slippery and a sitting target for all its practitioners. (110)

Azuike is in agreement with linguists such as Tuner and Hassan among others who also testify to the slippery and nebulous nature of the concept of style. Opinions keep varying according to the schools of thought. To the Psychologist, style is a form of behaviour, to the rhetorician, the speakers choice of words, the critic refers to it as a language user's individuality, the philosopher an implicit speaker, whereas the linguist regards it as formal structures in function. Nevertheless, Enkvist, *et. al.* (1967) maintain that "the difficulty of precise definition need not however lead us to abandon the concept". They believe that the reason that the concept does not have a precise definition is that it is widely used and multifariously defined. Perhaps, by discussing the concept under some theoretical sub-headings which we had enumerated earlier, the picture of the concept may become clearer and more enriching.

2.5.2 Style as a deviation from a norm.

This theory brings us to note the difference between the usual and the unusual in a text. Linguistic norms seem to be roughly circumscribed by context including time, place and situation. These features, Enkvist (1967) points out that they may be stated in terms of metre (Heroic couplets), in time (Elizabethan Style) place (Yankee humour) language, dialect, writer ('Byronic Style') or literary work (Euphuism), school of writers ('Romantic style') genre ('Poetic style, journalese'), social situation (Sergeant-Major of Guards addressing recruits) and so forth. (Enkvist 1967:25-6)

The “Norm” represents standard or pattern accepted or agreed on by a people in culture, language and any other contexts, while deviation means to turn aside or diverge from a course or rule or pattern and or standard of doing a thing. If we put that together, we can resolve that deviation from a norm simply means a digression from an agreed model. This does not necessarily mean wrong usage in the context of style. To this effect, Azuike (1992) points out that:

Deviation from a norm can arise in different forms for different purposes. It is not always equated with wrong usage as is often done in error analysis. It can be a departure or deflection from the accepted norm. In this regard, a deviation will be seen as a foregrounded or de-automatized element—a prominence marker (111).

He further strengthened this opinion by citing Hassan (1964:12) who also agrees that some style or usage may be a deviation from the general norm of the language but perfectly okay as a register feature of a particular variety (113). The reason is that a given norm may not be generally accepted in all languages, because what constitutes a norm differs from one speech community to another. We may even extend this argument further by pointing out that language varies not only according to the social characteristics of the speaker (such as his social class, ethnic group, age and sex) but also according to the social context in which he finds himself. The same speaker uses different linguistic varieties in different situations which may include a departure from an agreed norm for a specific effect and purpose.

Language is a creative activity of the individual rather than a system of signals shared by a group. Little wonder Darbyshire (1971) as quoted by Azuike concludes that:

the norm is a linguistic abstract, an idea thought up by linguists and existing only in their minds. No actual use of language can be said to be 'normal' in the sense that one can go to it and say that all others are deviations from it. This is because every use of language arises in its own situational context and takes on its own sense, tenor and style from the circumstances of its origin (112).

Perhaps, Erik Wellander's (1948:18) definition of style as quoted in Enkvist, comes under the theory of style as deviation from norm as he observes that:

...style in the linguistic sense, usually signifies every special usage clearly contrasted against the general. More closely, style could be defined as that way of presenting a subject which differs more or less from the average and which is motivated by the character of the subject the purpose of the presentation, the readers qualifications and the writers personality (Enkvist 1967:23)

We also wish to consider Charles Osgood as quoted in Sebeok (1960) whose opinion fits into this theory as he notes that style is:

an individual deviation from norms for the situations in which he is encoding. These deviations being in the statistical

properties of those structural features for which there exists some degree of choice in his code (293).

Definition of style as deviation from a norm gives us a good first basis for stylistic comparison. In trying to capture the precise definition of style as deviation from a norm, linguists believe that there is a need to make explicit the role of frequencies and of statistical analysis. In support of this idea, Bernard Bloch as quoted by Enkvist says:

the style of a discourse is the message carried by the frequency distribution and transitional probabilities of its linguistic features, especially as they differ from those of the same features in the language as a whole (25).

Since style can be defined as a deviation from a norm, there is a need therefore to know whether it would be defined positively in terms of a norm rather than in terms of deviation. We do not think that the readers would pass their judgment on a text based on how much a writer has observed the pattern of a particular norm or digressed from it. Deviation from the norm on its own is a kind of style. If a deviation from the norm by a writer, helps to deliver his message more effectively so be it.

However, deviation from a norm as a theory of style has not been without some criticisms from linguists. A Neo-firthian or London school of linguistics has a different opinion on the theory of style as a deviation from the norm. Language including literary language, they argue, cannot be viewed apart from its context or situation; Language can be considered under the rubrics of register (Language according to use) and dialect (Language according to user). They

maintain that a literary text must be described not so much against the background of the entire language as against the typical characteristics of its register (the set of linguistic choices typical to a given use of language, as the ode, the short story, the essay and against the dialect of the writer. Their studies have brought to linguistic stylistics the concepts of lexical set and collocation. A lexical set is a group of words that occurs in similar semantic situations that have a similar range of collocation. Geoffrey Leech calls a violation of this a collocative clash. Neo-firthian linguists feel that the deviation from a norm for stylistic effect may violate the rule of lexical set and collocation.

Also, for the style- as- deviation from the norm school of linguistics, the definition of style is anchored on the notion that an author's style is supposed to differ in certain ways especially by statistical comparison and accommodation of linguistic features. This thinking is only a fanciful conception because according to Donald Freeman (1970)

the frequent distribution and transitional probabilities of a natural language are not known and never will be and even if they could be ascertained they would constitute no particularly revealing insight into either natural language or style. (5-6)

In spite of the above criticisms, the questions frequently asked by the proponents of style as a deviation from the norm are,

1. What does the language of literary text convey in addition to information?
2. What does a writer's language do in addition to what the rules of grammar require it to do?

3. What are writers' typical patterns of syntactic and lexical choice where they have an option?

These questions are practically considered in the work of the Prague-Linguistic circle in Jan Mukarovsky's famous essay on 'Standard Language and Poetics'. Mukarovsty distinguished poetic (that is literary) language as an aesthetically purposeful distortion of standard language; every literary work across the genres makes a business of violating the rules of grammar for specific purpose, e.g. poetic language deliberately breaks the rules in order that a given passage be noticed as language. This is the kind of style we are talking about here. Nevertheless, caution must be taken by writers with regards to how they bend or break the rules so as to avoid degenerating into gibberish. Style as a deviation from the norm will continue to be evident in works of art as a stylistic reality. Although, we should not fail to point out that the concept of style as deviation from the norm has always had a shaky foundation emanating from the unresolved controversies on the concept of norm itself.

2.5.3 Style as an individual

The peculiarity and individuality of a writer inform his style. It is simply an author's uniqueness. Remy de Gourmont (1916:9) as cited in Enkvist says:

having a style means that in the midst of the language shared with others one speaks a particular, unique and imitable dialect, which is at the same time everybody's language and the language of a single individual (21)

while Enkvist concurs by pointing out that a writer's style may be regarded as an individual and creative utilization of the resources of language which his period, genre, his chosen dialect and his purpose within it offer him. (Introduction: xi)

The individual's typical expression characteristics exhibit his style. Since the writer is regarded as part of the context of what he writes, it is possible that his personal assessment and judgment will influence the stylistic elements he works with most of the time. Ifeoma Okoye says in Emenyeonu (2000) that; each one of my literary works marks a stage in my literary growth and maturity and reflects my feelings, perceptions, beliefs and experiences at the time of writing, (369).

From here, his personal idiosyncrasies are revealed as constituting his own stylistic idiolect. Most notions of style carry with them an implication of individuality or put in another way, the matching of unique qualities against qualities shared with other works. Many great writers have achieved and maintained some kind of individuality that makes it possible for readers to identify their works with them. It is often a product of his perspective over an issue or an inspiration. An established individual's style may not really be a deliberate exercise of a pattern of expression. It usually looks like an inheritance or endowment although Bates (1992) notes that the finished work of an artist in a sense, no longer belongs to him (or her)' (7). This means that only the linguists can place it where it belongs. The theory of style as an individual, like any other theory, has its own difficulties. Enkvist observes that:

some features generally labelled as stylistic are not individual at all. They are shared by group of varying size. Indeed, he

argues, that the lack of individual features may serve as a hallmark of some style categories (22)

There is no personality stylistic theory that is able to handle that. Accordingly, Azuike notes when he quotes Milic Louis that:

To relate the devices of style to personality is risky and difficult and the chances of error great because no personality-syntactic paradigm is available and so neither syntactic stylistics nor personality theory is capable of making the leap, (114).

Similarly,

In a general theory of style as opposed to the adhoc study of an individual writer – it would run counter to established usage and linguistic expediency to exclude group styles from the heading of style, (22) Enkvist argues.

He concludes that: Individual modes of expression form a category too special to give us a general basis for an ideally powerful style definition (23). Though these problems exist in the theory of style as an individual yet, linguists do not subscribe to an abandonment of the theory. The analysis of the individual traits in stylistics is still very much in practice.

2.5.4 Style as content and/or form

Content and form inform and shape reality just as much as they reflect it. This has become one popular area of consideration when it comes to the theories of style. We however, do not intend to suggest what might be the model of a content and form in a theory of style; rather we hope to suggest in what specific ways content and form should be comprehensive and explicit. Content is

ultimately motivated by the contextual function it is called to fulfill. The whole issue of choosing, ordering and arranging words is the problem of form. Style in its larger sense, is essentially the same thing as form. Style as content and form raises the controversial issue of whether all approaches to linguistics style are essentially objective.

Certainly, subjectivity cannot be completely divorced from content and form as an approach to style. Olga (1976) as quoted by Azuiké (1992) opines that linguistic style is not completely devoid of emotional overtones. She believes that “Linguistic style is that part of language which is used to impart to the message, certain expressive-evaluative-emotional features (114). This according to Azuiké shows that linguistic style can be defined in subjective terms, thus posing a challenge to linguistic stylisticians who often claim that their analysis of style is objective while that of the literary critic is subjective.

Recent works by linguistic stylisticians may be divided into three types: Style as deviation from the norm, style as recurrence or convergence of textual pattern and style as a particular exploitation of a grammar of possibilities. These distinctions are easily discernible in the works of the last decade. Curiously, they are also discernible in the currents of both literary criticism and linguistics during this century. Freeman observes that criticism has moved from the anthropocentric and biographical work of men like Bradley, through the text-centered autoletic studies of John Crowe Ransom and Cleanth Brooks and so on, to attempts to reconstruct an author’s conscious and unconscious motives in the works of Northrop Frye, Kenneth Burke and Norman N. Holland, and that modern linguistics has moved from anthropologically and philologically-oriented study

of (Edward Sievers, Franz Boas) to data-restricted empiricism and taxonomy (the so-called structural Linguistics) to the concern of transformational generative linguists who determine how the surface form of language arises from deeper, more universal forms and what the process of producing sound from meaning and understanding meaning from sound reveal about innate intellectual capacities, language acquisition and the structure of the mind (Freeman: 1970: 3-6). Chomsky (1968) says, “the business of linguistics is to inquire into the close relation between innate properties of the mind and features of linguistic structure” (81).

According to Freeman (1970), Hugh Kenner laments that in the game of empiricism, that its “central rule forbids you to understand what you are talking about”. Linguistic stylistics rejects impressionism. They believe that objectivity and quantification are scientific and that is why they allow methodology to overwhelm its subjects (5). This is evident in the work of Riffaterre (1959) in stylistics as it is heavily influenced by a behaviourist philosophy of science. Riffaterre criticized Leo Spitzer for adhering to subjectivity. Leo Spitzer (1948) propounds the doctrine of the philological circle; the process of stylistic analysis from one group of superficial details to the “inward life-centre” of the artists creative principle and then back to an integration of other details of analysis. Spitzer was a mentalist who sought psychologically sound explanation for aspects of style and regarded with disdain mere accumulation and classification of data. Spitzer believes criticism does not proceed from a tabula rasa. His work ‘philological circle’ depends upon a critical mind and a sense of cultural values. Leo feels Riffaterre has failed to realize that literary criticism is not a laboratory

work. And to refer to a given literary effect as stimulus with the philosophical commitments inherent in such a term, is to do violence to the very nature of literature. Linguistic stylistics is interested in the frequency distributions and transitional probabilities of linguistic features, especially as they differ from those of the same features in the language as a whole, Bloch (1953) observed.

A linguistic stylistician should be able to give us an intelligent realization of the consequences of seeing language as part of human behaviour. Language events do not take place in isolation from other events rather; they operate within a wide framework of human activities. Any piece of language is therefore part of a situation, and so has a context- a relationship with that situation. Obviously, it is this relationship between the substance and form of a piece of language on one hand and the extra-linguistic circumstances in which it occurs on the other hand which gives what is normally called 'meaning' to utterance. Linguistic stylisticians will have to answer the frequently asked questions which we identified earlier on in this chapter if they wish to convince us that stylistics is not subjective.

We may as well argue that Feminist writers' style is pre-occupied with the impartation of the message of the basic ideologies of feminism. The whole experience of patriarchy, marginalization and subjugation by the feminist writers' provides content delivery to those contexts. Their message is presented in a form that expresses emotional features of the experiences of the feminists writers' themselves. This form may arguably be regarded as subjective since emotion is obviously subjective. Ellis Havelock (1923:163) in "*The Art of Writing*" as quoted by Enkvist says:

Style indeed is not really a mere invisible transparent medium, it is not really a garment but as Gourmont said, the very thought itself. It is the miraculous transubstantiation of a spiritual body, given to us in the only form in which we may receive and absorb that body, (11).

If we agree with Ellis's definition, we must then accept that the very thought itself is subjective. Thoughts and impressions on issues are linguistically and stylistically expressed in the content and form of works. Afterall, Gottingen according to Enkvist says: "style is a definite emotional effect achieved by linguistic means in a text", (15).

Burke (1954) in agreement with this argument says that: style in its simplest manifestation is ingratiating. It is an attempt to gain favour by the hypnotic or suggestive process of saying the right thing, (50).

In line with this view, Arthur Quiller-Couch also cited by Enkvist contends that:

style, as technically manifested in literature, is the power to touch with ease, grace, precision, any note in the gamut of human thought and emotion. But essentially it resembles good manners. (11).

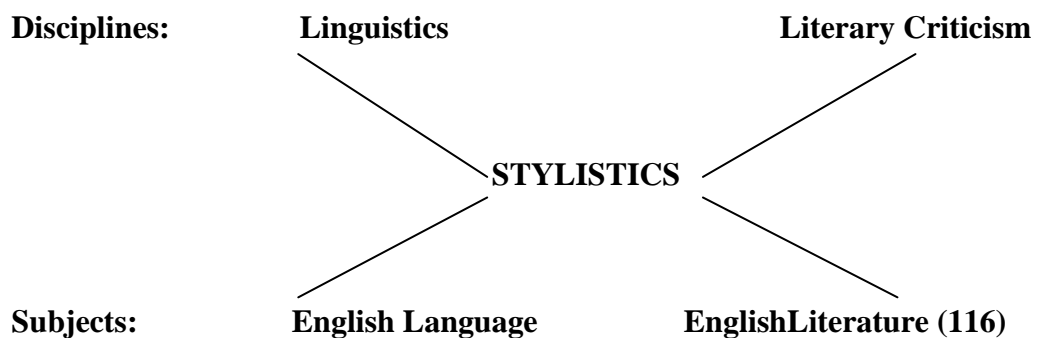
Content and form may be based only on linguistic features which readers or students can verify on their own. This approach would consciously contain statements on style that are objectively verifiable rather than subjectively impressionistic. The formal approach disqualifies a host of definitions which include those we have stated above which identify style with the existence of thought and those which state that style involves saying the right thing in the most effective way. Stutterheim's (1948) admits the inevitability of the writers'

original conception of his subject interfering in some way even as he strives to achieve objectivity in his analysis. This interference is a determining factor on what to include or drop in stylistic analysis. This is also the opinion of Herdan (1956) who believes that style is a product of the writers mental make-up. However, some linguists favour the analysis of style in terms of objective investigation of textual features. In the opinion of Corbett (1965) features of style are incalculable and thus no consensus can be reached on it. He therefore, advocates that the analysis of prose style be based only on objectively identifiable features. He argues that in this way, a systematic approach to prose analysis could be established, (409). Obviously, Corbett is opposed to subjective considerations in the analysis of prose style.

At this point, in this discussion, no better explanation and argument can match that of Azuike (1992) in “Style: Theories and Practical Application” where he discussed the dualist, the monist and the pluralist opinions on the issue of style as regards content and form. In Azuike’s presentation, Widdowson tries to close ranks between the linguistic stylisticians and the literary critics method. By this act, Widdowson may be regarded as belonging to the dualist school. He postulates two kinds of meanings which are referred to as Signification and Value (1979:33). Signification means “that which inheres in linguistic items as elements of the code” while Value means “that which linguistic items assume when they appear in context of use”. Widdowson defends this position by suggesting that meanings of some lexical items are understood only when the code and context are matched. In this case therefore, Widdowson’s opinion by comparism certainly matches Olga’s distinction of inherent and adherent

linguistic features which we had already mentioned above. Widdowson assertively denies stylistics an independent place in a catalog of disciplines. Obviously, different linguists have their assertions and claims on the concept of stylistics as we have earlier on pointed out. We do also observe that each of the linguists claims and submissions have their merits as well as questionable sides. Nevertheless, to the students and teachers of style, every opinion, contributions, views, and arguments of every linguist on the subject of stylistics becomes an added valued information towards a better understanding and management of the concept. In Widdowson's further claims, stylistics is neither a discipline nor a subject of its own, but rather, it plays a role between not only the disciplines, Linguistics and Literary criticism but also between the subjects: English Language and English literature.

Widdowson according to Azuiké establishes this relationship in this diagram as reproduced below:



Widdowson observes that language learners may neither share with the critic some of the experiences that provide his intuitively apprehended properties of language nor be adequately equipped with analytical tools for decoding a literary text. This may mean that the impression the critic seeks to convey will not elicit its corresponding response. At this point, he thinks the linguistic stylistics

analysis of texts can be quite useful in laying bare the textual pattern of language on which aesthetic values depend. He therefore suggests that the linguist and the literary critic could combine their analytical tools to ensure a greater achievement in the study of style (Azuike: 1992).

However, the monist practitioners of stylistics reject the content and form-dualist or what Azuike (1992) describes as VAF-theory of style. This group insists on the inseparability of content or meaning and form or surface structure. The monists believe that there is no pre-stylistic semiotic content, the how and it's what are merged and are indistinguishable from one another. The monist's view of style is similar to that of organicists who also support the inseparability of content and form(115). Azuike points out that Roland Barthes is a major crusader of the monist and organicist view of style. Barthes asserts that style as content cannot be marginalized. He feels the text is not double but multiple, within it there are only forms or more exactly the text in its entirety is only a multiplicity of forms without content. He likens a text to an onion consisting in a construction of layers (116). On the other hand, Leech and Short (1981) call for a total abandonment of the view of style as optional extra- dualism. They equally reject monism as an option. Leech and Short, rather, suggest the adoption of the pluralist approach or theory where language plays versatile roles and language acts are result of choices made at different functional levels of communication. They demonstrated the pluralist view of language as multifunctional phenomena using the sentence below as Azuike illustrated:

“Is your father feeling better?”

Here, this statement serves not a singular purpose but plural. First, the utterance is a referential statement as it refers to a person and the state of his health. Secondly, it is a directive because it requires a response from the addressee and thirdly, it is a social expression noting care and sympathy which give a clue on the relationship between interlocutors. The pluralist view of style is more attractive and acceptable as it is devoid of the abstractions which obtain in the monist and the dualist approaches to the study of style. In the pluralists approach, the whole essence of human language as a means of communication is paramount. (Azuike1992).

2.5.5 Style As Choice

According to the theory of transformational generative grammar, Language can be characterized at two levels of representation: Deep and Surface Syntactic Structures. Semantic interpretation proceeds from deep structure, only phonetic interpretation proceeds from surface syntactic structure. The two levels are related by an ordered set of transformations, which are meaning preserving. Given this theoretical frame work, a writer's typical exploitation of particular kinds of transformation may be said to constitute his syntactic style. With a number of transformational patterns available to him to express a given deep structure, he prefers certain patterns over others. This is the submission of Ohman and Buffon as recorded by Freeman (1970:14). This analysis gives a clear and simple understanding about style as a choice.

In a similar contribution Marouzeau (1964:10) as quoted by Enkvist adds:

Language is a catalogue of linguistic symbols and of their connexions with things – meant, represented by the inventory furnished by the

dictionary, and by the systematization that is given by grammar. It is a repertory of possibilities, a common stock at the disposition of the users, who use it according to their needs of expression in making the choice – that is, style – within the limits granted to them by the laws of language (16)

Further illustration was given on this involving non-stylistic and stylistic choice e.g. the choice between Peter and Paul in *x sings in the choir* shows that if the writer chooses either:

i Peter sings in the choir

or ii Paul sings in the choir

he would be making a non-stylistic choice of which the choice here will be dependent on the extralinguistic grounds of truth. On the other hand also the choice between *he is a strong man* and *brave man in he is a x* are both grammatically possible even idiomatic and they share a certain range of frames and referents in common. This type of choice may be regarded as Stylistic. Stylistic choice more often seems to be a choice between items that mean roughly the same, whereas non-stylistic choice involves selection between different meanings. On this premise, Warburg's (1959) opinion becomes a case in point when he declares that:

Good style, it seems to me consists in choosing the appropriate symbolizations of the experience you wish to convey, from among a number of words whose meaning – area is roughly, but only roughly the same (by saying *cat*, for example rather than *pussy*). (50)

Therefore, given the above, it is possible roughly speaking that two utterances in the same language which convey almost the same information, but which are different in their linguistic structure can be said to differ in style.

Bradford (1997) reveals that Barthes made a comparison of style as choice with fashion (clothes) and resolved that; the conventions which prompt us to choose this or that style of garment are comparable with the conventions that govern our choice of words in the formation of a sentence (74)

The choices made at each stage of dressing, for shirt or pullover, hat or hood, shoes or trainers – are comparable to the selective possibilities offered by each paradigmatic class of nouns, connectives or adjectives.

The theory of style as a choice is not devoid of criticism for some defects. The issue of Semantic approximation of given words for a perfect effect is under contention. Most words are not perfectly synonymous; therefore meaning may be distorted in the process of selection. This reveals the inseparable relationship between Stylistics and Semantics.

The indeterminacy of word meaning is capable of affecting the verdict on the choice of word a writer makes. Appropriate use of language for specific purposes becomes worrisome. It is possible to be guilty of the following examples as equivalents:

- i. To board the plane
- ii. To enter the plane (wrong equivalent)
- iii. To discover the ailment (wrong equivalent)
- iv. To diagnose the ailment
- v. To recommend drug (wrong equivalent)

- vi. To prescribe medication
- vii. To sustain injury in the accident
- viii. To be wounded in the accident (wrong equivalent)

The problem of these sequences does not lie in the structure, rather in the ability of the language users to choose the most appropriate word for specific purposes of matching with the subject matter. Also, jargons, specialized registers and vocabulary may pose problem of correct synonyms and equivalents in trying to make alternative choice of words out of those. Words often lose their effects and nuances if not well selected and applied. We must understand that without these considerations, style as a choice for alternative expression does not really offer us the choice of indiscriminate selection of words.

2.5.6 Style as Product of Context

The theory of style will not be complete if it fails to account for the situation or context in which language is used. There are different kinds of contexts. In this case, we would begin with the linguistic context first and down to the sociolinguistic context. The linguistic context contains co-text. The co-text of a word is the set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence. The writer must be mindful of the implication of co-texts as they are determinants of meaning in the text. For instance, if the word bank is used in a sentence together with words like, steep or overgrown, we have no problem deciding which type of 'bank' is meant. In the same way, when someone says he has to get to the bank to cash a cheque we know from the linguistic context which type of bank is intended.

We may also be able to determine the meaning of words on the basis of another type of context best described as physical context, for example, if one sees the word BANK on the wall of a building in a city, the physical location will influence the interpretations of meaning in this case. This simple explanation shows us the task of managing words and expression by writers, in order not to express themselves out of context. The above explanation becomes necessary as we do not want to sound ignorant of the fact that context must be assessed even from single linguistic elements.

The theory of style as a product of context has a pact with sociolinguistics. The socio-cultural factors which may be an outline of the writer's experience usually weigh heavily on him under this theory. Without this harmony the writer may not be able to deliver his purpose.

Context influences an individual's choice of words naturally. Words and utterances cannot be used interchangeably in formal and informal contexts respectively. Social element is a decisive factor in style as observed by Nkomo (1982) that:

An analysis of style, however intelligent it may be and, however brilliant its insight into specific problems and detail, is bound to fail unless it recognizes that, content – that is to say in the last instance, the social element – is the decisive Style – forming factor in art (20)

Similarly, Azuikwe cited Crystal and Davy (1980) and as tying style with social context as they uphold that:

... to analyse language habits with the main purpose of identifying, on every conceivable occasion, those features which are restricted to

certain kinds of social context, to explain where possible why such features have been used as opposed to other alternatives and to classify these features into categories based upon a view of their functions in social context (119)

Language events do not take place in isolation from other events; any piece of language is a part of a situation, and so has a context. Yule (1996) believes that this extra-linguistic involvement helps in determining the ‘meaning’ of an utterance as used by a writer or a speaker of language. Every utterance, Enkvist adopts, has a style determined by contextual probabilities (53). Widdowson (1979) feels that effective delivery or communicative competence is not unrelated to a mastery of an ideal speech situation (context). There is a symbiotic relationship between stylistics and sociolinguistics which must interplay in a writer’s work under the theory of style as a product of context.

Azuike (2004) provides us with a similar view when he says that there is a violation of linguistic norm when the writer fails to relate context with reality. He maintains that for the reader to be at home in reading and following the events in a novel, the writer should relate fictional context as close to reality as possible to reflect social realities. (26-27). Any writing which will not observe this stylistic norm or technique would not make sense to anyone. It will be accorded the popular saying “written out of context”.

2.5.7 Style as Good Writing

A text is said to be well written if the writer skillfully conveys precision of thought in it. “A writing that claims to be beautiful must also satisfy the demands of correctness. In the principle of association, serious violations of

linguistic correctness always seem ugly, except for occasional instances of poetic licence”. This is the opinion of Frechner as cited by Enkvist (18). On the contrary, we may then regard writings that are aesthetically indifferent and trespass against logical clarity as ugly.

Good writing may also include a show of precision of thought in the authors management of purpose and content delivery. The skillful handling of language to create and maintain intended message and meaning may also be considered as constituting good and elegant writing. And since style is likened to good manners, a careful assembling of linguistic items to make sense of them resembles good manners. A good writer is obviously involved in this task while writing.

Style is a matter of proper selection and placement of words in a discourse. According to Azuike in the views of Jonathan Swift: “Style is a matter of the ability to slot in the right words in the most appropriate positions” “proper words in proper place makes the true definition of a Style” (120), this is usually evident in any beautiful work of art. Though some linguists may argue that good or bad writing is subjective because even the most deviant writing has a style on it’s own. Style invariably remains the product of a particular and unique use of language.

A beautiful writing would seek to create in the readers a mental image of the situation he wishes to address. What this means according to Fowler (1977) is that:

the manner of expression, as much as the content expressed, allows the reader to construct an image of the author of a text or rather, not

of the author himself, but of the posture he has created for that particular work (10)

The verdict here is that good style or beautiful writing must be purposeful. The application of certain Styles is simultaneous with thought. The style of a writer is good when he can give his thought an objective intellectual form which conforms with reality. Azuiké adds that a writer who does not have the ability to create the necessary make-believe required to sustain the interest of the reader would have failed to exhibit good writing. No matter how we approach the explanation of style as good or beautiful writing, the simplest understanding of it is that it is the perfect way of expressing thoughts and ideas of the writer.

2.6 FEMINISM: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Feminism is a collective term for systems of belief and theories that pay special attention to women's rights and women's position in culture and society. The term tends to be used for the women's rights movement, which began in the late 18th century and continues to campaign for complete political social and economic equality between women and men (Encarta 2010). Feminism can also be defined as a movement which seeks to define, establish and defend equal political, economic and social rights for women. The agenda of this movement includes among other issues, to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and experiences.

On the other hand, feminism which majorly focuses attention on women's issues tends to forget that it seeks gender equality. Some feminists argue that women's liberation should be a necessary part of feminism and that men are also adversely affected by gender roles. Thus, Mills (1995) defines feminism "as

implying a commitment to changing the social structure to make it less oppressive to women and for that matter to men (4). Feminism later evolved into a literary consciousness which emerged out of a desperation to address the predicaments of the woman in a patriarchal society.

Studies in this regard are branded feminist stylistics. The literature is often a documentation of the social, cultural experiences of the feminist writers themselves. To this effect, Ohmman observes in Freeman (1970) that “A writer’s ordering of prose reflects his ordering of experience” (209). Feminist stylistics mirrors institutionalized prejudices and ideologies as they affect women. As a literary concept, feminism could be called a women’s liberation movement. Feminists are united by the idea that women’s position in the society is unequal to that of men, and that society is structured in such a way as to benefit men to the political, social and economic detriment of women. However, feminists have used different theories to explain these social issues in different genres and have advocated different ways of addressing them. This has resulted in marked geographical and historical variations in the nature of feminist works as they write from their different backgrounds, perspectives, cultures, and experiences.

Feminism has brands and classifications such as:

- i. Conservative Feminism: Conservative Feminism holds the belief that division of labour by sex occurs as a result of the biological differences between male and female. This is the view of the early functionalist Radcliffe Brown (1952) as well as the socio-biological interpretation of George Murdock (1949) and Tiger and Fox (1972).

- ii. Modernization feminism: Modernization feminism preaches the preservation of male excellence in the society and at the same time female potentials. It is believed that achievement has nothing to do with biological status.
- iii. Critical Feminism: This concerns reformation of issues that downgrade the women in the society. It protests cultural and social processes that affect women in patriarchal societies. It is particularly against the language and style which men use against the women even in literary works and in general communication.
- iv. Marxist Feminism: This contends with equality with men and condemns the overthrow of which has degraded and reduced women to servitude.
- v. Radical Feminism: This may also be called socialist feminism. It focuses on the social class system and emphasizes the negative issues of inequality of male and female. Socialist feminism was first championed by Shulamith Firestone when she published, *the dialects of sex* (1970). Nevertheless all forms and brands of feminism preach the liberation of women.

Historically the feminist movement can be divided into two waves. The first wave which began in about 1800 and lasted until 1930s was largely concerned with equal rights between women and men. The second wave, which began in the late 1960s, has continued to fight for equality but has also developed a range of theories and approaches that stress the difference between women and men and draw attention to the specific needs of women.

Archaeological evidence from Europe and the Middle East has suggested that Stone Age civilizations practised goddess worship which organized matriarchies with women in charge. However, from the time of the earliest written records, these civilizations had been overtaken by patriarchal cultures that worshipped male gods, and women were kept in subordination. In Ancient Greece and ancient Rome and in the early Christian era, women were excluded from public life and were made subordinate to men, For instance, the Greek Philosopher Aristotle argued that women were inferior to men and must be ruled by men. In the Bible, Saint Paul tells Christian wives to obey their husbands and not to speak in the Church (Ephesians 5:21-6). Similarly in the same Bible, Timothy also advises women thus; let the woman learn in silence with all subjection but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Timothy 2 11-12)

Yankson (1990) cited John Milton’s poem written as far back as in the 17th century, as saying that:

...therefore God’s universal law gave to the man despotic power over his female in due awe, nor from that right to part an hour smile she or lour; so shall he least confusion draw on his whole life nor swayed by female usurpation nor dismayed.

Yankson 1990 (46 – 47).

FIRST WAVE

The term feminism never existed until the end of 18th century when feminist beliefs began to emerge. The earliest form of feminism (first wave) was concerned with equal rights for women and men. This means equal standing as

citizens in public life and to some extent equal legal status within the home. These ideas emerged in response to the American Revolution (1775-1783) and the French Revolution (1789-1799). Both of which advocated values of liberty and equality for both sexes. Feminism has so far bred a global literary warfare in literature challenging the social and cultural injustice against women in patriarchal societies.

Mary Wollstonecraft (2004) edition of '*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*' reviews that the book was first published as early as 1792. In this work, she demanded equality and better education for women and made the first sustained critique of the social system that relegated women to an inferior position. Also, Equal rights and feminism were given theoretical justification by John Stuart Mill, (1869) through his work *The subjugation of women* in the second wave. (see Encarta 2010 on John Stuart Mill 1869)

Towards the end of the 19th century, another strand of feminist thinking that questioned social attitudes towards women emerged. These attitudes were expressed through representations of women in literature and other art forms and social rules for women's behaviour. By the turn of the 20th century, the media in North America and Europe became preoccupied with the image of the "New Woman". Thus, women challenged patriarchal domination not only by demanding equal rights but also by defying social conventions and choosing her own lifestyle and more importantly, documenting her experiences and challenging the negative image of the woman in literature. This has never ceased till today.

THE SECOND WAVE

The second wave feminism started from the civil rights movement and social protests in North America, Europe and Australia. Fundamentally, what is central to the second wave feminism is the notion that women do not suffer oppression in isolation but as the result of wider social and political systems. This ideology was greatly influenced by the writing of a French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir and American feminist Kate Millet, who drew attention to ways in which women were oppressed by the very structure of Western society.

In the “*The Second Sex*” (1949) de Beauvoir argued that Western culture regarded men as normal and women as an aberration (“the other”) and she called for the recognition of the special nature of women. Kate Millet in *Sexual Politics* (1977) drew attention to the pervasiveness of patriarchy and to the ways in which it was reinforced through the family and culture in literature. The recognition of the rampant nature of patriarchy fuelled the feminist idea of universal sisterhood – that women of all culture and backgrounds can be united in their common oppression. This has consequently led to women from non-western cultures taking up feminist ideas and accommodating them to their own situations. This is evident in the varying works of the feminists that abound. Feminist writers have no doubt succeeded in drawing public attention to the inequality between women and men and to the structures within society that work against women. Having explored this historical background which informed feminism, one is set to understand and appreciate the reason that feminist stylistics has come to be.

2.7 FEMINIST MODELS OF TEXTS

The oxford dictionary defines text as an original word of an author. Language is used in producing a text. Feminist text and language model are unique and peculiar. This is because the constructs and epistemologies on which this model is based and developed lend it to a peculiar style resulting from a particular ideology (feminism). There is a need to identify what distinguished feminist texts from the others so as to give a clearer picture of what we are working on. This would border on highlighting the characteristics that mark out a feminist text which makes it an interesting material for linguistic and stylistic analysis. Wales (1989) suggests that:

in order to do any analysis of text, we need to be clear about the type of model that we are analyzing because that has serious implications for how we analyze the text and what our interpretations are! (437-8).

This obviously does not mean that, unlike most stylistics textbooks, we cannot plunge straightaway into an analysis of texts, but that we have to consider our assumptions about texts and the relation they have with contexts and readers. For example, our consideration in this is on gender concerns. Feminists' texts therefore become appropriate for a stylistic analysis aimed at unearthing gender issues in the texts. In stylistics analysis generally, the model of text and language which is used is rarely made obvious. That is, the text itself is assumed to exist in some self-evident state whereby it contains meanings which the critic and reader discover or uncover. The critic does not need to explain this to the reader,

because it is taken as common sense knowledge about texts which both reader and the critic share. Wales further asserts that:

Literary texts only fully exist with the active participation of the reader, they require concretization. Inevitably, in any text there will be spots of indeterminacy... or information gaps... that readers must fill in from their own cultural knowledge in order to make the text fully coherent and consistent... such cultural knowledge along with intertextual knowledge makes up the horizon of expectations by which any text will be examined (392).

Many of the stylistic analyses which have been undertaken have used a 'text-immanent' model of meaning, that is, they have assumed that what the critic 'finds' in the text is located in the text itself rather than perhaps being more the result of a negotiation between the reader and the text. Mills states that the various models of language include; for example, language as a form of information transfer- the most common sense and simplistic view, language as a form of social networking or social bonding or as the site where power relations are negotiated and enforced; Language can be a set of mutually exclusive choices in a close system. This diversity of language models would obviously affect the form of the analysis in texts (Mills: 1995). Feminist literary texts could be branded a model for social bonding, since it stems from a movement called feminism.

The question of which linguistic model to be used has been an issue for debates around stylistics. Traditional and conventional types of analysis pretended to be objective, little attention was paid to issues such as gender, race

and class. Stylisticians saw them as elements of bias in analysis. Regrettably, feminist linguists and literary critics who would like to engage in linguistic analysis of texts with emphasis on the listed issues, are often torn between the academic respectability which they attain if they use the seemingly scientific methods developed by linguists and stylisticians, and the realization that these methods rather than producing readings which are neutral, produce analyses which are themselves biased in favour of the value-system of the men's world.

Feminist critics now have models of language and textual analyses which do not spare patriarchal experiences. Feminist critics of models of language and textuality unlike patriarchal critics, deviate from the traditional stylistics where the analyses of texts will involve a showcasing of the writer's overflow of powerful feelings which is usually the culmination of the informing ethos that catalyses the writer's creative or critical sensibility. Analysis as Wales (1989) suggests must recognize the writer's society including her general background, experience and exposure, ideological alignment or philosophy among other things which inform her work. These distinguished features and forms in the feminist model mark it out and lend it to linguo-literary analysis in modern times; that means the features obviously provide theoretical basis for textual analysis.

Mills claims that language is recognized as having a material identity only when it is considered by stylisticians to be the result of the conscious choices on the part of the author to 'play' or experiment with the medium itself. Feminist writers are conscious writers because they are aware of their set objective and purpose—to address gender issues. In their model, the author is in control of the material she produces that is, there are patterns and effects within their texts

which the author decides upon and which is the job of the stylistician to dictate.

Foucault (1972) says:

We do not simply write anything we wish, but we write within the context of those elements which are considered appropriate within our society; all writings which fall outside these parameters are labeled 'mad', deviant or unreadable (118).

Most texts focused on, in stylistics analyses as models from time are canonical texts; that is, they are drawn from a limited number of texts which are seen to have better literary values (for example D. H. Lawrence, Shakespeare, Pinter, Beckett). Feminist critics such as (Moi 1985; Showalter 1978) have revealed that women's texts have often been excluded from canonical states by the process termed Phallogocentric Criticism— that is, texts have been judged according to a set of male-oriented criteria (see Montgomery *et al* 1992). This shows that there is an assumption that texts which are of value are most likely to be those authored by males. Within such a model, it is difficult to make statements about gender and textuality since it is seen to be a factor which lies outside the text as part of its context – and therefore outside the concerns of reader critic; and yet, assumptions about gender play an important role in the choice of which text to analyze. However, feminist critics have referred to such models as gender-blind.

Feminist stylistic model is a move away from 'text-immanent' criticism to a theorized concern with those factors outside the text which may determine or interact with elements in the text. Even though gender can be seen as extra-textual it can also be viewed as part of the text. Fairclough (1989) confirms that

such extra-textual properties could serve as cues in the process of interpretation (24). After all, (Barthes 1977, Foucault 1980) are of the opinion that socio-historical factors can affect the production of texts. This means that certain types of writing are likely to appear in times of repression, war, colonization and economic inflation. In the case of feminist writers, the nature and model of their texts are informed by a reaction to patriarchal system. Female writers are constrained to write in particular ways or to write on particular subjects because of what they perceived are society's views of them as women. Certainly, texts must in part be formed by the extent to which writers identify with a variety of possible social issues. The unlimited human experience is largely responsible for the varied responses or reactions in the work of art. The feminist model of textual production considers and observes certain features of form, literary conventions, syntax, lexis as cues to interpretation of their works. Feminist text models unlike other models, consider the reception of the text as part of context, (Mills; 35). The reader's role is given more prominence. It is clear that the reader is addressed by the text. The reader is an active participant, negotiating with the meanings and messages being passed across. This creates the effect of sensitization, as a result, most feminist texts in all the genres offer the reader coherent messages in a self-evident way. Their style makes space for the possibility and in fact the necessity of integrating notions of gender, race, class and all of the socio-historical factors. Their language is fashioned to produce a gendered address to the reader. In view of the discussion above, Mills (1995) fits in properly here as she asserts that:

Feminist text analysis like critical linguistics can develop into a form of consciousness-raising, a 'making aware' of that which seems to be self-evidently normal or neutral, a 'making strange' of the ordinary, and forcing readers to re-examine the text in the light of a consideration of gender (39).

The artistic substance which informs and shapes reality just as much as it reflects it therefore becomes a very important aspect of style and stylistic analysis. In this regard, Mills (1991:64–75) cited in Mills (1995) thinks that:

feminist stylistics is not simply an academic exercise; It is also political; a way of empowering people so that they can analyze text and in that analysis they can become aware of some of the factors which work on all individuals in the present society. (39–40).

The analysis of the feminist text calls for the interconnectivity of the three concepts of language, style and feminism. This is because we are set to discover what the language of feminist text conveys in addition to the general information, that is, the effect of the language of the writer as a result of certain stylistic techniques which the writer explores.

Enkvist says:

If style in literature is the product of a particular and in part unique, use of language, then it is related and dependent upon certain notions of the proper function of language as a whole. This takes us beyond the realm of literature as such and involves us in the relation between language use and social and cultural issues (59 – 60)

Feminist texts take us beyond literature. They are not mere literature texts, they are revolutionary texts. The whole ideologies of feminism are tactically entrenched in their styles.

2.8 REVIEW OF SELECTED AFRICAN FEMINIST WRITERS

Female writers started springing up in Africa from the 1960s. They challenge the experiences of being rejected, omitted, isolated, segregated and discriminated against. Notable characteristics of the works of the African feminists are their roots in the African society and pre-occupation with one aspect of the traditional African cultural experience or the other. They focus on the feelings and aspirations of the people on basic issues affecting their lives. These experiences are captured in varying styles, in which they are artistically given impetus and shape as real life experiences. Chukwukere (1988) confessed “that the role of the female writers is clear; they dramatize injustice against women and thereby attract society’s attention to them” (26). In the propagation of feminism, the African literary scene has recorded the emergence of many female writers.

Flora Nwapa was the first woman literary artist to be published. Her first novel *Efuru* was written in 1960 followed by *Idu*. We are told that *Efuru* her heroine is a beautiful woman who cannot marry or have children. Nwapa’s deployment of a feminist style in these texts captures a peculiar female realism. The woman is no longer childish. Nwapa’s female characters are orthodox and chaste. Her woman’s world is explored with great intensity. In the novels, the woman conforms to certain traditional ideals. She is hard working and has the respect of her husband and community. A critic has pointed out that Nwapa’s women are secure and know their roles both in marriage and in the community.

They are usually fulfilled but are rather fiercely independent and rebellious. Efuru flouts tradition by refusing to listen to her father. She again refuses to undergo the three months circumcision. Again, Efuru ran back to her father's compound and re-married. These are traits of rebellion. This peculiar rebellious characteristic is a new stylistic dimension in literature. It is scarcely evident or does not obtain at all in earlier works authored by men. The women's rebellion in Nwapa's novels is a rejection of that traditional restriction which does not give them freedom of self-assertion and maturity. The stylistic device to create this rebellion is encoded in the language and actions of her heroine Efuru.

Nwapa's novel *Idu*, is set in a small Nigerian town, where the life of the individual is woven into that of the community as a whole. For long, it appears as though Idu is unable to have a child, and her husband Adiewere takes a second wife. But finally Idu gives birth to a baby boy, Ijeoma. But it is not until Ijeoma is four years old that Idu becomes pregnant for a second time. Before her second child arrives however, Adiewere mysteriously dies. Idu flouts all conventions by refusing to marry her husband's younger brother, Asiodu, preferring to follow her husband to the next world. It is traditional in some African societies for a man to inherit his dead brother's wife. But Nwapa, in this work rebuffs the indecency in the evil tradition that requires a widow to be inherited by her husband's brother.

Ifeoma Okoye, our case study in her book, *Behind the Clouds*, captures the sorrow, loneliness and regret around the childless African woman in her marriage. Ije, in this novel longs for a baby to crown her marriage. Okoye, in *Behind the Clouds*, reveals another kind of injustice done to women in the African traditional family institution. Ije, in this novel is made to represent the

traditional African woman in her ill-fated childless plight in marriage. She endures all sorts of humiliation from her mother-in-law, and even threat to her life from her husband's relations for not bearing a child. Dozie, Ije's husband earns his mother's wrath for turning down her suggestion to take a second wife. Ije, on her side, turned down a similar advice from her friend Beatrice who becomes pregnant for another man in order to save her marriage, because her husband is on the verge of sending her away and taking another wife. (62).

This very issue which Okoye decries, obtains in all of the African societies. Attention is never directed to male infertility in the African traditional context. Every case of a childless marriage is blamed on the woman. Even when the problem is obviously from the man, the society has a way of covering it in other to save the man's ego. *A Woman in her Prime* portrays the heroine Pokuwaa, who though a woman, has become a successful farmer. But true happiness eludes her as she reached middle age without a child, which is considered a grave misfortune. She felt compelled to divorce her first two husbands. She marries Kwado, who grew to love her for her charm, sympathy and her sweet conversation. She rejects every interference and recourse to charms, drugs and sacrifices to ensure a successful pregnancy, and achieves fulfilment and new happiness on her own terms.

Another female writer is Zaynab Alkali who was born in Borno State in the Northern Nigeria, where Islamic tradition is harsh on women. Her novel, *The Stillborn*, portrays a different view of the African tradition. The novel reflects the author's belief that it is essential that women throughout Africa should be allowed and encouraged to fulfil their potentials if they are to make

effective contribution to nation-building. In this novel, her heroine Li, dreams of escaping from her village to a life of luxury in the city. Her husband later loses interest in her for another woman. Li engages in some fierce emotional struggles, and hard work, which lead her to accomplish her ambition of becoming a successful teacher.

Mariama Ba, in her work. *So long a letter*, portrays the ordeal of widows in the African traditional society. At the death of a husband, the wife is made to sacrifice her possessions as gifts to her family-in-law. And worse still, beyond her possessions, she is subjected to giving up her personality and dignity to the relations and friends of the man who had married her and in addition, her behaviour is conditioned by them. Mariama, in *So Long a Letter*, also laments another aspect of the African tradition which has to do with the isolation of married women who refuse to accept polygamy in a society that takes it for granted. It is a testimony of, and an exposure to the plight of those articulate women who live in social milieu dominated by attitude and values that deny them their proper place (84).

Buchi Emecheta in the *Joys of Motherhood*, presents the seven wives chief Agbadi married, four of whom were inherited on the deaths of his relatives. Additionally, he invoked handsomeness to capture the best looking women in his time whenever they raided a neighbouring village. He married only four in the traditional sense, yet as he watches each of them go into domesticity and motherhood, he soon becomes bored and looks for another exciting woman. Similarly, Nnaife, after the death of his brother, inherited two of his wives.

In *Second Class Citizen*, according to Emecheta, a woman who gets married is at times referred to by the receiving family as “bought” (37). In the traditional Igbo society, a woman is considered to be a little more than a piece of property that can be “bought” even on credit basis.

Also, in *Beyond Veiling*. Rose Uchem recalls that in the African traditional life, where the number of wives a man has is taken as an index of his wealth and social status, women and children are thereby regarded even more as property. However, in a typical African society, the primary motivating factor for the practice of polygamy is the quest for a male child for the purposes of inheritance. Incidentally, for this reason, Uchem observes that:

- Daughters and widows are denied inheritance rights both in their paternal and marital homes.
- This predisposes people to value male children more than female children in patrilineal societies.
- It serves men as remedy against childless marriage.

Uchem, also observes that initially, colonial schooling was exclusively offered to males and when education became available to both sexes, the male to female ratios regarding students enrolment clearly demonstrated women’s continued restriction from formal education. She laments the high preference given to men in most societies in the past, especially as women were denied education or were given it grudgingly. It was considered a waste as it was believed that they would be married off to some man. This is still the case in some places today.

A male feminist writer, Mongo Beti, in his novel, *Remember Reuben*, observes that in the African traditional context, the home is no longer home for the women and children. They are cowed, humiliated and disorganized by the lord of the house, the man. The woman and the children are regarded as mere properties in Kala, Bomba and Essazam. A woman in these towns is like an ear of maize, which any one with good teeth can have a nibble at, or a slender palm tree, which any man with a good belt can climb.

In another work *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, Beti gives a portrait of a disorganized traditional African family system, where the men are colossal figures, whose vibrating terror sends the women and children walking on tiptoes.

Yet another male feminist writer Ola Rotimi in *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again* unveils the subjugating treatment meted on women in the shameful manner in which Lekoja Brown manipulates three women, whom he claims to be his wives, while the fact remains that he is using them for different purposes to satisfy his selfish interest. African tradition encourages a man to marry as many wives as he can handle ... (39). Although, he pointed out that African men are fast becoming aware of court marriages, which encourage litigation if the woman's right to monogamy is infringed upon.

This is unlike Achebe, who in his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, portrays the African woman entirely as a piece of furniture, which should be beaten into proper shape, as shown in Okonkwo's reaction to his second wife, Ekwefi, whom he gives a sound beating for merely cutting off some banana leaves to wrap some foofoo.

In Umuofia, before a girl gets married, she is subjected to a thorough moral screening by relations of the would-be husband to ascertain whether she is still a virgin. She is made to swear, and if she is not truthful, she “will suffer and/or even die in child-birth” but the man is free to sleep around with other women. Emecheta, however, decries this belief in *Second Class Citizen*, where Francis believes that in the African society men are allowed to sleep around if they like, to give a nursing mother break to nurse her baby before the next pregnancy.

Against Achebe’s perception of the women, Rotimi in *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, portrays a different view. He sees the treatment meted on women in African tradition as brutal and slavish. He believes that there should be respect for the feeling of women. While the woman must be loving and loyal, the man should reciprocate the woman’s respect (p.54). “After all, Men and women are all created equal”.

Margaret Snyder and Tadese, M. (1995) in their book *African Woman* observe yet another aspect of women subjugation in Africa, clearly attests: “there is now a widespread agreement about the fact that women are excluded from access and control over national and international resources and this has brought about harm to human well-being.

Okeke, (1994), “Patriarchal Continuities and Contradiction in African Women’s Education and Socio-Economic status”, a study on *the Igbo women of Nigeria*, reveals the double burden carried by contemporary Igbo women. She points out the contradiction in the presumption that formal education and wage employment are avenues of social mobility”, while in reality, they have

principally served as “vehicles for perpetuating cultural and foreign forms of gender subjugation” (65). Consequently, an in-depth study of data collected from elite Igbo women leaves one in no doubt about the injustices involved in women’s experience of gender stratification both in the labour market and in the home. Her findings reveal that, while times have largely changed, and living conditions have changed, traditional sex-division of labour, which exclusively assigned roles and child-care to women has remained permanent and unchanged. Men have refused to change and move with the times; they have refused to share in domestic work and child care and, in addition, still expect to be waited upon.

Ogundipe-Leslie, Omolara in her work, *Re-Creating Ourselves*, observes that, if literature, though imaginative, can be used for a systematic study of society, the status of women’s authorship and the nature of their depiction within the African literary tradition are certainly issues of great relevance. She points out that the degree to which works are penned by women, the manner in which these texts are critically received, and the roles women occupy within the general body of African literature, are all reflective of societal attitudes toward them. She decries the gender-biases concerning access to university education as part of the reasons that stifle women’s contributions to the literary production which higher education generates. Consequently, even when education became more varied and more sophisticated for women, the gap was still not closed in comparison (Male and Female) rendering the authorship,– critiquing– and publishing of African literature, a dominantly male enterprise”. As a consequence of the male-dominated literary tradition, many of the depictions of African women are reductive and perpetuate popular myths of female subordination. Female

characters in male-authored works are rarely granted primary status. Their roles are often trivialized to varying degrees and they are depicted as silent and submissive in nature, and remaining absent from the public sphere. Lazreg (2005) and Oyewumi (2005) think the only way out of this predicament is through a radical feminist scholarship. These reactions inform the feminist literary tradition and style. Emecheta criticizes this false characterization strongly by stating that the good woman, in Achebe's portrayals is the one who kneels down and drinks the dregs after her husband. In *Arrow of God*, when the husband is beating his wife, the other women stand around saying, 'its enough, its enough'. In his view, that kind of subordinate woman is the good woman.

In some Igbo cultures, educated women are considered emancipated and wayward. Okoye also notes this wrong and ignorant perception in her novel, *Behind the Clouds*, where she portrays Dozie's mother as the traditional African mother-in-law who believes that a highly educated girl is in most cases wayward and often childless. They are also "headstrong" and disrespectful. Even though Ije's good manners tend to disprove her wrong notion, but because she has conditioned her mind to hate educated women, she refuses to accept her daughter-in-law, Ije (40) and insists that her son, Dozie marries another woman (40).

In her latest work, *The Trial* Okoye lamented the plight of the widows in the society. She condemns the roles of 'umuada' against the widows noting that in some parts of Igbo land in Nigeria, the woman who loses her husband is subjected to eating with a broken piece of clay pot with her left hand for a period of seven days, and also to sleep on the bare floor throughout this period. The

hair on her head, armpit and her pubic area is shaved by Umuada (married daughters).

After the burial of her husband, she is sent into hibernation and subjected to wearing only one cloth (mourning cloth) for a period of one year. During this period, she is mandated to cry very early every morning to the hearing of all in the community, without which she is alleged to be responsible for the death of her husband. In agreement with Okoye, a very recent feminist writer Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo in *The Last of the Strong Ones*, x-rays the good and the ugly sides of the Umuada society. Branding it an agent of women oppression.

In another dimension, Bessie Head's works are viewed in relation to her life, and the violence in South Africa. Racism as presented in Head's works is discussed not only as it relates to the so-called inferior race, but also as it relates to women, the silent victims of oppression. Violence against women in society has been a part of history and takes the form of physical and non-physical oppression by men. According to Head, the idea of the oppression of women has been difficult to reject by men since it is a tradition already implanted in human imagination and the result of this has been the unchecked oppression in its actual sense. With the rise of feminism, the issue of male oppression of women became a front-burner issue. The laws about the rights of women are present in most constitutions, but the laws can only check the menace, they cannot change the society it seems.

The first kind of violence a female person encounters is the subtle hostility that welcomes her arrival into the world. This is common in many African societies which believe that the male child is God's blessing of the union

between a man and a woman. This is mainly because in such societies, it is the male child who carries on the family name and stays around to manage his father's property, assets and liabilities. Even some mothers have this attitude towards the birth of male children because they have been conditioned to believe in the tradition of male superiority. A woman's marriage is usually on the line if she cannot have male children even in the societies tagged "matrilineal" because genealogy is traced through patrilineal line. The Akan of Ghana is one of such societies, and so most of the literatures by feminist writers from that society show how women are oppressed along this line. The popular ones are Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* in which the heroine is "sold" to the highest bidder, according to her father's standard and in Ama Ata Aidoo's *Anowa*, the heroine who rejected other suitors and chose her husband by herself has this to say:

...Some should have taught me how to grow up to be a woman. I hear in other lands a woman is nothing. And they let her know this from the day of her birth. But here...they let a girl grow up as she pleases until she is married. And then she is like any other woman anywhere: in order for a woman to be a woman, she must not think, she must not talk. (*Anowa*,52).

In Ngugi Wa 'Thiongo's works, women are placed in positions that would make womanhood a thing to be proud of. The women do not have to deal with the problem of inequality to men because it simply does not exist. However, what Ngugi portrays is his idea of what should be and not what actually happens. The socialist vision he presents idealizes a society in which all human beings, regardless of sex, race, creed, play their collective parts in the struggle of the

masses. Ngugi and Okoye shares similar believe that men and women should explore the potential of a symbiotic relationship for a better and greater development and advancement of the human race.

Women have earlier been said to have a better ability to express the violence perpetrated against them in their works. In line with this, the theme that pervades the North African feminist writer's style is that of sexual oppression portrayed either by symbolic representations or concrete examples in their texts. Because of the North African female experiences, the texts are underlined by tragedy, leaving the heroine in the most absurd situations culminating in death or insanity. Nawal El Sadaawi a female writer from Egypt in her work presented the disadvantage of being a woman especially in Arab Africa. She is unwanted from birth and the alienation that results begins from this moment. She is therefore neglected, and knowledge in the real sense of the word is kept away from her as far as possible: El Sadaawi presents these facts as they relate to her society, and confirms that violence against women is common in all communities.

When all these frustrations are unleashed on the woman, she may also respond with aggression which is manifested mainly in her speech and in her thought and invariably presented in their style of writing. For instance, in most of the novels of Emecheta, the leading figures, always women, after a life-long experience of suffering and oppression in the hands of men, eventually respond in an outburst, which is most of the time expressed mentally or verbally and which is considered inappropriate in a patriarchal society. These experiences from her story line create a message which is in line with feminist concerns.

For a feminist like Emecheta, women find out who they really are and what they are capable of doing when they decide to do away with the traditional shackles that restrict them. This is fully represented in the fact that the main personality in each of her works is always a woman and the story revolves around her. The woman's desire is the breaking of her shackles. This is because the author believes that the woman has to struggle first, then recognize, and then assert herself in a world that is male-oriented and dominated by men. According to Acholonu:

...Buchi Emecheta's novels reflect the plight of the African woman trapped in the claws of traditional taboos and restrictions that only help to propel male Chauvinism. Her novel illustrates the slow but steady wind of change; the progression from rigid traditional customs and sanction...into conflicting situations brought about by urbanization...and ultimately they bring her readers to the first attempts at freedom for the African women. ("Buchi Emecheta", 218).

Even the woman who is able to "produce does not escape oppression by her man and in fact, by the society because through the speech of Laoye in *Second Class Citizens* we are meant to understand that:

...The honoured black mother is also a woman, the second class citizen who is often regarded and treated as an object of all forms of oppression and then by collective rejection by such women who have been able to assert their individuality.(151)

An African female scholar and critic, Ogundipe (1984) feels that "... it is up to women to combat their social disabilities to fight for their own fundamental and democratic rights, without waiting for the happy day when men will willingly share their power and privileges with them- a day that will never come. ("An African woman, culture..."89).

The coming together of women paints a picture of feminism taking on communal nature, making it take up Marxist tendencies, and this may actually be the solution to the problem of the oppression of women. The cry of a lone woman in the wilderness of oppression may not make much impact, but the roar of a group shall surely be heard.

Another problem encountered as a result of female subordination is that heroic acts by men and women in a group are usually accorded to men. This robs the woman of self-esteem since she is not really appreciated no matter what she does. The issue of male heroism in Head's works suggests a celebration of men at the expense of women. Such statements as "There is only one god and his name is Man" (*A Question of Power*, 2006) point categorically to the fact that it is man who possesses all power in the thinking of the patriarchal world. This posture however, can be interpreted in terms of a revisionist attitude taken in post-structuralism and feminist aesthetics. For Head, violence is inhuman because it is a power that destroys the soul and the body. The whole situation in South Africa reflects violence, and citizens of all ages and races are both culprits and victims, depending on which level of power is applicable. But no matter how much a man is oppressed, he still oppresses the woman.

However, the feminism which Head tends towards, therefore, is not the one which seeks absolute power, but that which desires to cooperate with the male folk to build a new society. For Head, a woman should not seek selfhood as an end in itself, but should, along with other oppressed people of the society, contribute what she can towards the development of her community. Incidentally, this view is mutual with Ifeoma Okoye's. The work places a high premium on this view as a workable brand of feminism in the African cultural context.

We may not be able to exhaust the list of African feminist writers, but the review which we have done serves as an eye opener to the reader and as a guide for the present study. We shall concentrate on conformity with and deviations from the tradition of confrontation and radicalism evident in most feminist works which we have reviewed, and which the feminist under study in this study deviates from.

Ifeoma Okoye, the focus of this work, has through her enormous artistic strength and endowment mirrored the traditional African patriarchal society and its attendant subordination of the woman. She hopes to arouse a consciousness in the society and draw attention to the inequalities and injustices that permeate our traditional society. The assessment of Okoye's style will reveal some affective elements that partly reflect her personal experiences and the social forces she is subject to. Nevertheless, the task here is to examine these elements and study the means by which language expresses them.

Okoye has her own mind on the issue of feminism which makes her style worth studying. She builds her own narrative techniques and style through a

personal conviction and not by following a phenomenological feminist traditional ideology and its literary order. Okoye is not an advocate for sex roles like many feminists, rather, she acknowledges the complexity and the plurality of the African culture and yet defines emancipation of women primarily as an individual's right to make her own decisions in soul and conscience as an individual unto herself. This can be seen in her positive depiction of men like Chigo and Weluche in her novel *Chimere*. She also identifies the negative females, especially those who are nasty to fellow women/girls as we see in the characters of Jide's mother and Azuka of the same text. She has a good mark for a female writer's creative imagination using historicity as major characteristics for aesthetics.

Julie Kristeva has provided modern literary theory with the option of transparent text in opaque context. Okoye's works fit into this paradigm as she creates and recreates reality in the context of Kristeva's identification of transparency of history. Okoye is one of the female writers that have been able to write their way out of the confines of the patriarchal space. Her works emphasize diverse themes of social and cultural interest. A critical analysis of her novels reveals the centrality given to female characters as they reflect their sensibilities and privilege their voices in a constructive manner without relegating the men to the background. Okoye's heroines are calculating and resolute unlike those of her contemporaries such as Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta who are characterized by stubbornness and rebellion as seen in *Efuru* and *Second Class Citizen* respectively. A linguistic and stylistic analysis of Okoye's works will establish this peculiarity of her style.

Fowler (1981) suggests that “a text can be described and interpreted in relation to the stylistic convention which generates it and the historical and sociological situation which brought it into existence” (174). Thus, we would be guided by these considerations for a feminist stylistic analysis of Okoye’s texts.

Holmes (1995) declares that women’s styles of politeness are in fact more productive for debating issues than masculine styles of speech. A re-evaluation of women’s speech or writing styles to make it less aggressive, is a strategy in the right direction for a possible actualization and fulfilment of the feminist agenda. Okoye is one of the few feminists who do not believe in rebellion as a way of emancipation. She is one writer whose style lies in the power of subtle language used by her heroines. In chapter 4, her heroines will be presented to show how much they adopt dialogue to solve issues and make meaningful suggestions to their husbands and families; how they use submissiveness to have their way rather than rebellion. Okoye feels feminism is supposed to preach complementarity of both sexes for a meaningful progress. It still does not stop her from establishing that some cultural practices are against the woman. She advocates that women should not fight culture and tradition but should rather prove some cultural practices wrong by exhibiting their potentials and aiming for personal achievements and actualization without violence. By so doing they can prove some of these practices wrong and make nonsense and foolish of their advocates in the society. Her characters are well delineated to create this effect. Her imageries and plot are also well managed to actualize a revolution without violence and confrontation. The authorial voice shares her views on feminism. However, the analysis of her text in chapters three and four in this study will

illuminate in detail, the entire stylistic devices that Okoye employed to carve out a style for herself, to create her own exclusive message on the concept of feminism.

2.9 FEMINIST STYLISTICS AS A PROTEST

Feminist writers have deployed a peculiar revolutionary style as a weapon to unearth and protest violence, marginalization and subjugation against the women. Sara Ahmed in Eagleton (2003), feminist theory is a relationship between feminism and pain in the sense that women's experiences of violence, injury and discrimination have been crucial to feminist literature. Women's testimonies about pain for example about their experiences of violence or abuse have been crucial not only to the formation of feminist subjects (a way of reading pain as a structural rather than incidental violence) but also to feminist collectives which have mobilized around the political and ethical demand for redress, not with a physical combat but with a literary' stylistics (242). Burstow (1992) maintains that the context in which her book is written is the fundamental unhappiness and alienation of women and continual suffering born out of patriarchy and other systematic oppression.

Feminist therapy embedded in their styles, allows women to make connections between their lived experiences of pain and frustration and such feelings as implicated in social and power relations. Hence women's experiences of pain seem crucial to the mobilization of feminism as a response to the injustice of violence that is structural as well as lived and bodily. Tauris (1982) asserts that consciousness-raising groups were important because 'to question legitimate

institutions and authorities, most people need to know that they are not alone, crazy or misguided' (246)

From the ancient English poetry of E.E. Cummings and T.S. Eliot, we can note that their style of poetry was a pointer to their identities as English poets, who lived at the time. For instance, one of the poems of Cummings – *Ageless Warlords* (1908) had its major theme as the English war at the time and so it had a stylistic representation of a GUN: (Such that the writing was graphetically modelled on the shape of a GUN). Style betrays a work's content and the author's attitude to it, for instance, the subject of protest feminism.

For protest literature to be explicitly expressed, style has to be appropriately deployed for the achievement of the desired goal. Feminism can be described as protest literature which fights for the rights of women and so, its style could be called revolutionary style. Their stylistic weapons of protest are embedded in their use of diction imageries/symbols, figurative expressions, rhetorical devices amongst other linguo-literary features. Protest and anguish can inform an individual's or a group's style. Eyoh (2005) sees literary style as language habit of a particular writer (a writer's idiolect), the language identity of a group of writers in a particular period.

A writer has an experience he wants to convey to his readers either as a protest, incitement or sensitization. The common language that is shared within his speech community is available to him for use. He uses style and the appropriate choice of words to effect his message and appeal to the mind of his readers. Therefore, the work of a stylistician is to see to what extent an author has created and excited a particular sensitivity, emotions, feelings or mood in a

reader through his word choice. So, the work of stylistics is to study the effect, impression and the aesthetic beauty achieved by a writer. Stylistics helps us to understand that a writer must have a reason for using or abiding by a particular linguistic or graphological code. Eyoh believes that “stylistics beams its searchlight on some identified areas in a text in order to comment on the aesthetic functions of that text” (37). To this effect, any searchlight on feminist work must reveal an underlying agitation.

The stylistician studies codes and elements which form the writer’s style, and then draws up judgments, interpretations, evaluations, inferences, as they affect his subjective observation of these stylistic features evident in a text. It must be stated that the feelings, emotions, impressions, interpretations and aesthetic values which a particular work of art elicits from the reader will vary according to its many intelligent readers who are likely to judge the text based on their intellectual and emotional reactions. The whole emotional outpour of the feminist writers has protest undertone.

2.10 THE BENEFITS OF A REVOLUTIONARY DISCOURSE

As a revolutionary discourse, feminism has undeniably recorded remarkable achievements from its inception. We shall begin to document this by first of all focusing on the efforts of the feminists to record and change sexist practices in the use of language in texts. The advent of feminism has resulted to a woman’s view of language and a woman’s style in writing (feminist stylistics) which is a new element in literature where women’s experiences are documented. Feminism has resulted to a potential for the transformation of English Language as Longman identifies (1991):

“Within the last thirty years, the feminist movement has forcefully drawn attention to features of English which discriminate against women by excluding them, treating them as deviation from a male norm devaluing them, or confirming sexual stereotypes. This has already produced significant change in some common features of usage, even among people who do not accept all the sociopolitical and linguistic arguments against traditional usage (1478).

The change is noticeable in the dropping of feminine suffix-ess,-x and -ette in many nouns: actress, manageress, authoress, waitress, suffragette, mediatrix. Feminism has sensitized and conscientised women thereby making them call for affirmative action, more recognition, eradication of stereotypes and liberation from being objects of possession. Women now prefer to use ‘Ms’ instead of ‘Miss’ or ‘Mrs’ titles. Similarly, women are today addressed as ‘chairlady’, ‘chairperson’.

Feminism has redirected an average woman now to depend on her family for self-fulfilment, husband and children (her cultural role) and her position in the society at large to create her own image and identity. Her changing world has made her appreciate a multitude of civilizations without denouncing her identity in the development of universal moral values. She is now flexible and resourceful rather than tied to a specific structural role. Women now have the right to vote and be voted for globally, participate in politics and other social activities. Discrimination, subordination and subjugation are receiving enough protest universally.

Realizing that the under-development of women in any society is almost always synonymous with the society's under-development, the development of the woman is now being given priority in governments' attempts to restructure their economies. More political appointment slots are being reserved for women during appointments. In Nigeria, the women have been promised thirty-five percent of appointments into elective positions. Reasonable female representations are seen in cabinets, government offices, social organizations; board appointments into federal and state parastatals, key diplomatic assignments and other national jobs.

Women are being empowered through sound education for skills development and exploitation of great potentials, contrary to what obtained before the advent of feminism when women's education was regarded as a waste.

In Africa, the African feminist writers are making efforts to change the long standing traditions that perpetuated discrimination. The woman's battered image is being corrected and recreated. Feminism condemns the society for the injustice against women and decries the prescribed role that made her unproductive, unnoticed and only to be seen and not heard. Women have discovered the magnitude of their potentials and now contributing positively to nation building. Ever since, the emergence of the African woman in the literary world, she no longer wants her story told from the male point of view.

We might not say that George Best, Pele, Jimmy Johnson are great footballers because they wear football boots". We believe that, in order to achieve real stylistic goals, it is important that writers are able to appreciate for example, what impact a particular figure of speech has, what function it performs

in the text, how it is used by the writer to get the response he wants from the reader. To this effect therefore, stylistics analysis must seek to scrutinize the writers use of words, phonemes, stress, syntax and lexico-semantic elements and relate them to the culture, experiences and social representations. Style should achieve value, purpose and aesthetics. Stylistic devices should manipulate and arouse the emotion and psyche of the reader not necessarily through radical or confrontational approaches, but rather by being diplomatic, less aggressive and rebellious use of language. Feminism can possibly achieve more than we have enumerated to its credit if only it can adopt a complementarity approach. This is our focus in this thesis.

CHAPTER THREE

SYNOPSIS OF TEXTS AND FOREGROUNDING

3.1 THE SYNOPSIS OF OKOYE'S NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES

Okoye's works centre on girls and women's reality. Her basic preoccupation is the redemption of the image of the Nigerian woman. She highlights the Nigerian women's self-esteem, self-assertion and dignity but focuses on male characters who are symbols of life's positive values and who are gender sensitive. She portrays various aspects of the human conditions to expose social problems. She has written on diverse themes of social and cultural interests. A critical reading of her novels and short stories reveals the centrality given to female characters reflecting their sensibilities and asserting their opinions in a constructive manner usually rare in works authored by many male writers.

Okoye's aesthetic vision is both humanist and womanist in her works and this stands out as great literary strength. This explains her depiction of men like Chigo and Weluche. She also identifies the existence of negative females, especially those who are nasty to fellow women. She has been able to write her way out of the confines of the patriarchal space without being controversial and confrontational. Her works preach complementarity of action and purpose between the two sexes.

3.1.1 Synopsis of *Behind the Clouds*

This work exposes and questions the ordeal of the barren woman in many Nigerian cultures. Her Heroine, Ije is used to portray the pains women have to bear in a childless marriage even when in most cases; the fault may not be from the woman. Ije's husband, Dozie, typifies the average African man who will not

admit his impotence. The role of many mother-in-laws in the African traditional setting was dramatized by Ije's mother in-law, Dozie's mother. She represents in her conduct, women's antagonism to their fellow women. Okoye believes that women also oppress their fellow women. She provides her usual womanist perspective that attempts to dig below the externalities of tradition. Okoye recreates in this novel, the dynamics of the human condition that structure gender relationship. The myth of women as guilty ones in childless marriages is well deconstructed and reconstructed in this work. The heroine, Ije acted as a help-mate to the husband most of the time. She is his confidant; she is educated and civilized not naïve. She knows her gender roles and respects the traditional values. These attributes of her heroine were scarcely or completely not available in the works of many early male writers. Okoye's view on feminism is typified in the construct of her heroine Ije. Her conduct in the novel, reveals the complementarity which Okoye preaches.

3.1.2 Synopsis of *Men Without Ears*

In this work, we have a panorama of the Nigerian oil boom dilemma, the problem of resource management, greed, poverty and the attendant social problems. The story of Uloko Adaba who lives an artificial life of greed and ostentation is the story of a slice of the contemporary Nigerian situation. The desire for wealth and social recognition that drives people to borrow and engage in criminal activities such as theft, armed robbery, money laundering are all true reflections of the social reality in Nigeria since the oil boom or as some say, doom. In this work, Okoye foregrounds the human condition as experienced in Nigeria. Women characters are culture and tradition-compliant as they play their

expected traditional roles of handling house chores and taking care of the children and their husbands' relatives. They are also seen to be enterprising as they indulge in some petty trading to earn money. Okoye displays her passion for men who are conscientious as Uloko's brother, Chigo typified men of integrity and conscience. He keeps warning Uloko about his showy, self-indulgent lifestyle. Okoye believes that feminist writers should not play down on the good qualities of men. Feminists, Okoye argues, should recognize and uphold the positive attributes of the men as well.

3.1.3 Synopsis of *Chimere*

In this novel, the eponymic heroine Chimere is a beautiful, intelligent and ambitious young undergraduate who sees education as the channel for social transformation and success. Her background is at once her motivation and her limitation. Okoye plays out this ambivalence in her identity in the most brilliant way. Chimere's joy is punctuated at crucial moments in her life by the mystery of her birth and paternal identity. Her mother keeps this secret from her for many years as she struggles to bring up her only child as a single parent (mother). She fears that telling her daughter the truth will permanently separate them; so she decides not to lose her beloved daughter. The concept of single-motherhood is strange to the modern world and obviously in the traditional societies in Nigeria. The heroine spends much of the rest of her time in search of her father. This depicts a woman's quest for her identity in the contemporary world.

The quest for her true identity and the identity of her father becomes a matter of survival when she loses her lover Jide, a wealthy but spoilt young man. Jide's mother insists that Chimere is an illegitimate girl and as such not qualified

to be married to her son, Jide. Jide's cruel rejection of Chimere, turns her to a detective who is determined to unravel the mystery of her identity.

Class is as central to this novel as the problems of tradition, modernism, poverty, girls' education and marriage. Chimere confronts many obstacles, her mother, herself, the society, poverty, ignorance and other forces. After being jilted and humiliated by Jide, she withdraws from male relationships. She felt men could not be trusted, until Weluche comes into her life and through love, persistence, tenacity, patience and kindness, he brings Chimere out of her shell. This portrays Weluche as a feminist. It shows how much the woman needs a man in difficult emotional circumstances. Okoye shows that not all men are bad after all. Weluche later becomes Chimere's confidant, who cares profoundly for her. He becomes the channel of the resolution of the conflict in her life.

Chimere eventually finds her father against her mother's counsel. She finds out that Mr. Enuma, her biological father abandoned her mother as a pregnant young girl and changed his name to hide his identity. As if by some divine ordering, Mr. Enuma lost his three sons as infants and became a wreck under the iron fist of his wife. Chimere's reunion with her father suffers a setback as Enuma is afraid to accept her because of his wicked wife. Eventually, Enuma loses his job and had to revisit Chimere as the only possession he has left. Weluche is well placed to seal both the restoration of Enuma's job and the reunion with his daughter, Chimere. Chimere did not expect Weluche to marry her after the discovery of her illegitimate background. Weluche, however did not abandon her like Jide and so his wish and her dream came true in a most dramatic way at the end of the novel.

Okoye's short stories are as remarkable as her novels.

3.1.4 Synopsis of *The Power of a Plate of Rice* (short story)

This is a dramatization of the modern day Nigerian situation and its numerous contradictions and paradoxes. The so much celebrated oil boom has not brought the much expected social justice and equality. At best, it magnifies the gap between the rich and the poor, the worst scenario is that the boom turned into doom, brought about the worst traits in many and a desperate quest to emerge from the vicious circle of want. The story embodies a deliberate narrative strategy, unearthing in the process women's submerged words and consciousness.

In this short story, Mrs Cheta Adu is a widow with two children and lives with an aged mother in-law. She tries a great deal to explain her predicament to Mr. Aziza, the principal of the school where she teaches but Mr. Aziza would not listen. He decides not to pay Mrs Cheta Adu's salary as punishment for her absence from school for four days, despite the fact that the staff have not been paid for four months. As she pleaded continuously, Mr. Aziza intoned "My decision is final". The manner in which Okoye resolves the conflict in this story is remarkable and ingenious. On the 23rd of February, after school hours Mrs Cheta Adu went to Mr. Aziza's office and once again pleaded with him to pay her. Mr. Aziza would not listen but rather told her she was wasting her time and should stop following him like a dog because he would never change his mind. At four o'clock, Mr. Aziza left the office to go home; Mrs Cheta Adu followed him to the house. When Mr. Aziza noticed her, he asked why she was following him, but Mrs Adu kept silent and Aziza walked into his sitting room, she also

entered with him and sat down in the sitting room. Mr. Aziza disappeared through the door. His house boy began to lay the table and Mrs Adu could smell jollof rice in the making. The smell wafted around her nostrils, reactivating in her, hunger which had been suppressed. The house boy set the food on the table and left. On impulse, Mrs Cheta Adu, walked to the table, grabbed the spoon and began to eat. She ate quickly, not only with relish but also with animosity. Suddenly, she heard the door squeak and turned to see Mr. Aziza, his mouth wide open as he stared at Mrs Adu. He bellowed at her but she did not stop until she finished the food. Mr. Aziza snatched the spoon and ordered her to get out of his house. Mrs Adu, whom desperation had given courage refused to leave as she insisted on getting a positive response from Aziza or she would wait for supper. When Mr. Aziza saw her desperation and determination, he quickly scribbled a note instructing the bursar to pay Mrs Adu, she grabbed the note and left.

This story is particularly significant to feminine literary discourse in a number of ways. The story is a culture and gender shock to many to the extent that in it, Okoye deconstructs the myth of women fighting back with words. Cheta Adu, the female character, displays ingenuity in solving her problem in a society where “talking and grumbling will not effect any change”. The story tries to sensitize women to identify effective means of forcing the society to meet their needs and hear their voice. The sense of desperation that forces the heroine to shun her bosses’ threat becomes a tool of self-assertion. The story demonstrates the writer’s sense of humor and satirical flavor. The story defines Okoye’s aesthetic traits and her ideological dispositions towards feminism. Her manipulation of suspense is unique. Her use of language is lucid and clear. She

exudes confidence in her recreation of the right metaphor for the thematic issues as she deploys language with clarity and in a deliberately delicate manner. Her story line is sustained in a classical way as her usual resolution of the problem is inherent in the plot.

3.1.5 Synopsis of *The Pay Packet*

This short story centres on Iba's turbulent marriage to Bertrand. Bertrand believes that a woman loses her human rights to financial independence in marriage. By virtue of marriage the man owns a woman and all that she owns including her monthly salary. Bertrand did not succeed in this tyranny for too long because Iba had to resist him at some point. This resulted to domestic violence as Bertrand resorted to wife battering and intimidation to get what he wanted. The story featured other women who also share Iba's experience in their marriage.

The author uses this story to bring to the fore that money is one of the major reasons for male violence against women in the contemporary society. The story impliedly advised women to resist any attempt to deprive them of their economic power and rights though not by violence. Iba maintained her stand through dialogue and persuasion that she needed to keep her salary. She never confronted Bertrand until he realized his mistakes and apologized to her. Iba won at last.

3.1.6 Synopsis of *The Trial*

The Trial is a collection of nine short stories which the author uses to express her feminist concerns especially on the issues of widowhood, girl-child marriage, women economic empowerment, women antagonism of women. The

book exposes the inherent gender bias and inequality in most traditional societies in Africa. The text is inspired and informed by the authors own personal experience as a widow. As a result, she uses the book to lend a voice to the widows, drawing attention to many and sensitizing peoples conscience to the ordeal the widows go through in the traditional African context. The book offers some suggestions to the widow, urging them to be self-reliant and economically independent as a way out of their predicaments.

3.2 FOREGROUNDING: A PREAMBLE

In this chapter, foregrounding which has been identified as the most important, perhaps, most dominant strategy employed by Ifeoma Okoye in the texts under study, will be examined. The first impression the reader of her texts has is one of entrapping simplicity. Her story line flows unhaltingly and effortlessly, apparently because of the deceptive simplicity of her use of language and the cascading plot structure which inexorably culminates in a crescendo. The route to the climactic ending of her stories, some with satisfactory closure, others promissory, hauntingly engrosses the reader, enticing and creating an unputdownable effect. The reader pursues the riveting story line relentlessly and devours voraciously, plot by plot and line by line the account of events in anticipation of a denouement. To describe Ifeoma Okoye as a quintessential story teller might be an understatement of some sort. She is indeed a *raconteur extraordinaire*. The reader is easily sucked into a mental vortex which processes the contents of her stories at the risk of paying scant attention to the linguistic and stylistic resources which form the superstructure of the stories. It is therefore easy, perhaps possible, for the researcher to impatiently and helplessly race to the

resolution of the events in the texts without caring about the linguistic and stylistic landmarks that dot the landscape of the stories.

What is described in the paragraph above is no doubt an indication of the degree of periodicity of the plot structure which sustains suspense and heightens interest in her stories. From *The Trial and Other Stories*, *Chimere*, *Behind the Clouds*, *The Pay-packet*, *The Power of a Plate of Rice* to *Men Without Ears*, Ifeoma chronicles the vicissitudes of the lives of women in varying circumstances and encounters with their male folks. Okoye is unrelenting in her portrayal of the gravity and intensity of the burdens her heroines and female characters bear and the torturous marital pilgrimages and challenges they undergo. Even in *Men Without Ears* where it would seem men took the centre stage of the action, the women in their lives suffer the consequences of the folly, recklessness, thoughtlessness and unconscionable excesses of the men. It is significant that Okoye, while not pampering the harsh reality the women in her story face and undergo, avoids the uncritical condemnation of the men who are responsible for some of the harsh cultural and traditional observances women are subjected to in the texts. Indeed, in some instances, she even allows some women to perpetrate and demonstrate the same level of ruthlessness and humiliation on fellow women. To this extent, it could be said that Okoye appears to delicately balance her sincere and firm belief and concerned advocacy for the rights of women with the vicarious culpability they share. This leaves one with the firm belief and conclusion that Okoye's major preoccupation is to support complementary existence between men and women instead of a merciless, one-sided condemnation of a brood of males, whose stock in trade is the self-righteous and

vainglorious subjugation of women. With the observations above, the concept of foregrounding will now be discussed to set the scene against which the concept as a stylistic strategy in the texts under study will be illustrated.

3.2.1 FOREGROUNDING IN THE TEXTS

Paul Simpson (2004) identifies foregrounding as one of the major outcomes of the intellectual wedlock between the ideas and currents of two interrelated movements in Linguistics – the Russian School of formalism and the Prague School of Structuralism as reflected in the efforts of Roman Jakobson who moved from the Moscow Circle to Prague in 1920. Two of the major proponents of the former movement are Viktor Shklovsky and Boris Tomashevsky; two key figures of the latter are Jan Mukarovsky and Wilheim Mathesius.

The genealogy of foregrounding can be further traced back to Grecian antiquity with Aristotle (Ca 335BCE) in the vanguard. He had proposed that literary work should be set apart from other types through the deployment of strange words, metaphors and unfamiliar terms. From this Grecian foundation, foregrounding was adopted and emphasized by the Russian Formalists and the Czech Structuralists with sufficient zest and enthusiasm. This new interest is reflected in the Russian Formalist, Shklovsky`s claim that “the purpose of art is to present the unfamiliar objects in a sophisticated unfamiliar way so that the perception of such objects will be renewed and refreshed in the eyes of the reader”. In this way, literature will be sustained as a living and vibrant enterprise.

The second outcome of this intellectual collaboration is the notion of the poetic function of language. The notions of foregrounding and poetic function of language have endured from the 19th century and could be said to have contributed to and impacted directly on the methods of contemporary stylistics. (50)

Foregrounding in a text is established essentially through the agency of three major strategies. One is deviation, the second is repetition and the third but not the last is parallelism. Other schemes of construction that can be used by an author to achieve foregrounding in a text include alliteration, antithesis, parenthesis, apposition, periphrasis and rhetorical question. These schemes are instruments for creating balance in a text. Short (1996), claims that foregrounding is borrowed from art criticism where the matter in the background is distinguished from that in the foreground. In painting, the matter in the foreground is given prominence over the matter in the background even where the matter in the latter appears more elaborate. (11)

The foreground is that part of a painting which is in the centre and towards the bottom of the canvas. ...the items which occur in the foreground of a painting will usually appear larger in relation to the rest of the object in the picture because of the conventional perceptual 'rules' of perspective ... and will be thought of as constituting the subject matter of painting. (11)

In this regard, Short explains that a picture of two people in front of some houses is different from a picture of some houses with two people in front of

them. The focus in the former, are the two people (foregrounded) while some houses (foregrounded) constitute the focus in the latter. So much for the painting foreground illustration. In linguistics and stylistics, foregrounding refers to “a form of textual patterning which is motivated specifically for literary-aesthetic purposes.”Simpson (50) it is useful to quote Simpson in full on this matter:

Capable of working at any level of language, foregrounding typically involves a stylistic distortion of some sort, either through an aspect of the text which deviates from a linguistic norm or, alternatively, where an aspect of the text is brought to the fore through repetition or parallelism. That means that foregrounding comes in two main guises: foregrounding as ‘deviation from a norm’ and foregrounding as ‘more of the same.’Foregrounding is essentially a technique for ‘making strange’ in language, or to extrapolate from Shklovsky’s Russian term *ostranenie*, a method of ‘defamiliarisation’ in textual composition. (50)

He further added that;

Whether the foregrounded pattern deviates from a norm, or whether it replicates a pattern through parallelism, the point of foregrounding as a stylistic strategy is that it should acquire salience in the act of drawing attention to itself ... this salience is motivated purely by literary considerations and as such constitutes an important textual strategy for the development of images, themes and characters, and for stimulating both effect and affect in a text’s interpretation. (50)

Thus, it is the identified 'defamiliarisation' in the text that draws attention to itself whether it appears in form of deviation from a certain linguistic or grammatical norm or in form of repetition or parallelism, and often, of the last two combined. For Leech and Short (1981) foregrounding is evidence of 'overstepping the limits of grammar.' They explain that language use is governed by a set of rules and possibilities and that a writer's style as reflected in his linguistic choices is exercised within the limits of such rules. However, they are aware that the possibilities open to the creative users of the language are neither easily legislated nor strictly enforced. Therefore, many adventurous and creative users of the language freely exceed the bounds of grammar rules to register their linguistic idiosyncrasies. (138) After all, there is not always a grammar police in attendance when people write. This matter is also not helped by the fluidity in, and uncertainty of, the limits of the rules of grammar which are often hoisted on the equally slippery concept of the norm. In this regard, Simpson (2004) raises two pertinent issues which appear to be major challenges to the concept of foregrounding. These can be seen in the last two questions in his next excerpt. He acknowledges that:

The theory of foregrounding raises many issues to do with stylistic analysis of text, the most important which is probably its reliance on the concept of a 'norm' in language. Given the functional diversity of language, it is very difficult if not impossible to say what exactly a 'normal' sentence in English actually is. This constitutes a substantial challenge to foregrounding theory because the theory presupposes that there exists a notional linguistic yardstick against which a

particular feature of style can be measured. A related issue concerns what happens when a once deviant pattern becomes established in a text. Does it stay foregrounded for the entire duration of the text? Or does it gradually and unobtrusively slip into the background? (51)

A possible response to the last two questions raised by Simpson starting with the first, is that once a set of rules is engaged for the analysis of a particular text, such rules should remain in force throughout the duration of the analysis of that text. In this way, the norm established for the text is observed uniformly and consistently. The second is that once a hitherto deviant structure or feature loses its 'defamiliarisation' potential, it becomes ordinary if it also acquires the force of currency and commonplaceness. It loses its 'mask' and remains de-mystified. If the new form, a new creation, a neologism, becomes abused or overused in application, it can slip into a cliché status having now lost its freshness, like salt losing its saltiness! For Freeman (1970), foregrounding is a 'motivated deviation from linguistic or other socially accepted norms.' It is considered to be 'a basic principle of aesthetic communication.' (121) This he claims arises because 'in making choices which are not permissible in terms of accepted code, the poet (writer) 'extends or transcends, the normal communicative resources of his tongue.' (122) In the process, the semantic opposition between literal and figurative meaning is generated. When we identify foregrounded features in a text, they should signal to us that such features may have been deliberately or unconsciously deposited to aid and perhaps guide our understanding of what the writer wishes to draw attention to. The more mechanical their presentation, the more likely they have been done consciously. This aggregation of foregrounded

features is what Leech (1970) has called 'cohesion of foregrounding.' (36) Rishi K. Nagar in an elaborate essay on foregrounding (Wikipedia accessed Friday, April 18, 2008), cites (Miall and Kuiken, 1994) who claim that foregrounding passes through three stages.

First, defamiliarization which is present in the use of unfamiliar linguistic features which strikes and captures the eye of the reader. Second, such unfamiliar linguistic features force the reader to slow down and allow time for the feelings aroused by alliteration and metaphor to appear. Third, such feelings create a rich beautiful image ... in the mind of the reader. (7)

Rishi therefore emphasises that:

The term refers to specific linguistic devices, i.e., deviation and parallelism, used in literary texts in a functional and condensed way. These devices enhance the meaning potential of the text, while also providing the reader with the possibility of aesthetic experience. According to the theory of foregrounding, literature – by employing unusual forms of language – breaks up the reader's routine behaviour: commonplace views and perspectives are replaced by new and surprising insights and sensations. In this way literature keeps or makes individuals aware of their automatized actions and preconceptions. (1-2)

He also notes the unlimited potentials of the concept in the English language lending it to multiple applications. He agrees that the English term “foregrounding” *has come to mean several things at once*:

First of all it is used to indicate the (psycholinguistic) processes by which – during the reading act – something may be given special prominence. Second, it may refer to specific devices (as produced by the author) located in the text itself. It is also employed to indicate the specific poetic effect on the reader. Furthermore, it may be used as an analytic category in order to evaluate literary texts, or to situate them historically, or to explain their importance and cultural significance. Finally, it is also wielded in order to differentiate literature from other varieties of language use, such as everyday conversations or scientific reports. (2)

3.2.2 Repetition and Parallelism

So far, these two linguistic and stylistic strategies for achieving foregrounding appear to have been submerged in the discussion of foregrounding above. Often, the impression created appears to be that deviation from established norms is the only means of achieving foregrounding in a text. In this section, it will be emphasised that it is through the agencies of repetition and parallelism in addition to some of the other schemes listed earlier on, that Okoye effectively creates foregrounding in her texts under study in this work. Repetition and parallelism are two obvious manifestations of foregrounding when they are deployed in what Corbett (1965) refers to as the ‘artful deviations from the

ordinary pattern of speech.’ (431) This involves the creative combination of repetition and parallelism in order to point out and emphasise semantic values in form of semantic, phonetic, lexical, grammatical contrasts and or similarities.

3.2.3 Parallelism

Parallelism, no doubt, is one of the useful schemes for the construction of foregrounding in a text. It is usually evident in similarity of structure where pairs or a series of related words, phrases and clauses are linked by sameness or opposition. In skilful hands, this scheme can be deployed to good effect to create and sustain co-ordination or opposition of thought and structure as well as build coherence. Any breach of this scheme impairs communication in a significant way. An extreme form of parallelism is one in which there is similarity of structure of length, with the same number of words and perhaps, the same number of syllables. This is called isocolon. Corbett illustrates isocolon with the following example: *His purpose was to impress the ignorant, to perplex the dubious, and to confound the scrupulous.*’(429) With this kind of example, one is not in doubt that any attempt to deliberately and sensationally create isocolon will produce stiff, mechanical and artificial constructions. When parallelism is combined with the scheme of antithesis – the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, often in parallel structure – rhythm is created in a sentence. Assessing the central value of parallelism in grammar, Short (1996) observes that; what is interesting about parallel structures, in addition to their perceptual prominence, is that they invite the reader to search for meaning connections between the parallel structures, in particular in terms of the parts which are varied. (14)

This, Short suggests is the 'parallelism rule' for interpretation. This rule is further distilled into the following concrete form: 'If two structures are obviously parallel in linguistic form look for a semantic relation as well.'(65) By piling up parallel elements in a piece of discourse or utterance, the perceptive reader or analyst is forced to note the potential semantic linkages between or within the linguistic and stylistic features of the text. The associations identified can involve and affect all levels of language ranging from the phonetic and graphological to the semantic and pragmatic with a host of other linguo-literary features in between. The opportunity presented by parallelism in a text is sufficient motivation for the analyst to identify the potential semantic associations derivable from the words, phrases and clauses in that text. These associations may be merely quasi-synonym or quasi-antonym relationships. (67) Short therefore concludes that parallelism is an important tool for the writer in exercising control over the reader for the reasons reproduced below.

4. It helps readers to perceive some associations and not others,
5. It pushes readers towards perceiving semantic relations between words and phrases which do not exist as such in the language system as a whole and,
6. By relating parts of a text together it acts as a powerful force in the cohesion of foregrounding. (67-68)

A separate section has not been created for repetition because it is combined with parallelism in an inextricable way. Many of the parallel

structures that will be illustrated appear in form of repetitions of words, phrases, clauses and other linguistic features.

Another prominent feature of Okoye`s texts under study in this thesis is alliteration. Alliteration is the repetition of the same or similar consonants in a structure. It could be said that alliteration is the most pervasive structural feature in all her texts. All the texts present several examples of alliteration. With this feature, she creates associative phonetic links with other words in a line. The variable incidence of alliteration in initial and some final consonants reinforces associative meanings with other similar occurrences in a line of structure. This phonetic scheme produces phonetic parallelism which enhances rhythm and music in a text. Short notes that generally, `sounds seem to be more salient than spelling.`(107) However, `if alliterating sounds are also spelled the same this will help to make the alliteration more obvious, but alliteration can occur even when there is no `spelling alliteration.`(107)

Having set out these foundational considerations, Okoye`s texts will now be closely examined to illustrate how she has effectively deployed the schemes described above in telling her stories. Her stories appear incredibly effortless but racy and one immediately feels that they are natural and instantaneous extrusions from her mind. Thus, it could be argued that the speed and compactness of her narration might not provide her with the luxury of time to indulge in deliberate crafting. But a second and closer examination reveals obvious and tell-tell signs of mechanical interventions by the author. Perhaps a fairer assessment is to concede to her linguistic dexterity which is much in evidence throughout her texts. There is an irresistible pull to her

story line that arrests attention. The reader is led inexorably to the end of each story in the mode of the James Hadley Chase suspenseful series. What follows now are the sundry examples which aptly illustrate the foregrounding schemes that have been described above. The examples will be grouped into sets but numbered consecutively throughout this thesis. Ifeoma Okoye`s texts under study here are *The Trial and Other Stories* (2005); *Chimere* (1992); *Behind the Clouds* (1982); *Men Without Ears* (1984); *The Pay-packet* (1993); and *The Power of a Plate of Rice* (1999).

3.2.3.1 SET A: Repetition and Parallelism in the Texts.

i Excerpts from *The Trial*

1) “A story is interesting *when we can identify* its characters, *when the characters achieve* their noble goals ... *when they make us* laugh at them or with them. ... *when it transports us* to a familiar world ... A story gives us pleasure *when it presents us* with fresh knowledge *about ourselves, about other people, about other cultures,* and *about the world* in general.”(1)

2) “It is discriminatory that *widowers don`t go through* dehumanising rites and rituals. *They don`t lose* their property or children when their wives die. *They easily acquire* their deceased wives` property. *They remarry* without losing their children to anyone.

... Widows can do something by themselves to *solve some of their problems.* ... *Solving their problems* by themselves, will increase *their*

self-confidence and self-esteem and will help them maintain their dignity.” (2)

- 3) “But to her, working didn’t mean earning money only. It also meant *freedom, empowerment, self-fulfilment and self-esteem*. It meant *meeting people, gathering experience, building character and learning to live.*”(12)
- 4) “*Marry him if you want to be in hell fire for the rest of your life. Marry him if you want to lose your sons share of family land to him.*”(30)
- 5) “*I’m not letting you stay here. ... I’m not going to earn enough money with you being here, with you sharing with me the pittance people give these days to us beggars. ... Go and find yourself a job. Find yourself something to do. There is nothing wrong with you.*”(36)
- 6) “*I want to work. I can’t find a job. I don’t want to beg. I don’t want to sell my body for money.*”(41)
- 7) “*She was a victim of child marriage, of child widowhood, of a world of imbalances.*”(42)
- 8) “*She couldn’t identify any of the parts on the shelf, she couldn’t tell what their functions were, she didn’t know how much they cost, ... she didn’t know where she could buy them.*”(58-59)
- 9) “*I must succeed if only to put Adim and Odo to shame. I must succeed to show them that a woman can run the store profitably.*”(65)
- 10) “*Paul you know very well that I built that block of flats with my own earnings. You know that I bought the piece of land and built the block*

with the huge profit I made from my contract work. *You know Fred tried first to intimidate me ... You know all this because you waded into the matter. You pleaded with me to do as Fred wished. You told me that it would be odd for a man to live in a house owned by his wife, that it should be the other way round.*”(71)

11) “*She missed her husband’s company, his jokes, his stories and his numerous, seemingly little actions that showed his affection for her and for their children.*”(74)

12) “*Because they are our children, because they belong to our family ... They don’t belong to your family. They don’t belong to the family of the man who wants to marry you.*”(74-75)

13) “*What if the children reject me? What if they are difficult children? What if they don’t like Okey and Lizzy?*”(80)

14) “*She was lonely. She needed company. She needed someone to spend her life with, someone to share her problems. She needed financial help. She was in debt. She could not feed her children well. She could not buy them decent clothes. She could not pay their school fees on time.*”(81)

15) “*He asked for a huge sum of money for her bride price. He took the money, the whole of it! He used part of it to change the roof of his house. He took the money because there is no man in my house. A woman must not touch the bride price. A woman must not know how much her daughter is sold for. Tradition says so.*”(86)

16) “He and my daughter *don`t send me money. They don`t send me gifts. They don`t send even a letter. They don`t visit.*”(86)

ii Excerpts from *Chimere* (1992)

17 “Chimere was not quite sure of the exact reason why she wanted to see her father, but the urge to do so was strong and unmistakeable. *Was it due to sheer curiosity? Was it because of the taunts of Jide and his mother? Was it because of her need for identity or for revenge?* She wished she could answer these questions.”(74)

18 “*Didn`t I warn you about men and their ways? Didn`t I tell you how evil and selfish they can be?* (100)

iii Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds* (1982)

19 “*He parents, his relations, his friends,* all keep on telling him to get himself another wife to bear him an heir.”(4)

20 “*I can`t imagine you* dressing as flamboyantly as the other club members. *I can`t imagine you* racing up and down our bad roads to attend the club`s numerous meeting and induction ceremonies. *I can`t imagine you* taking part in their gossip and backbiting. *I can`t imagine you* doing host of other things the club members do.”(31)

21 “I still cannot get myself to believe that Dozie can be involved in such a silly scandal, *Dozie whom I* have always held so high above other men, *Dozie whom I* have always thought, and would have sworn any time to be above such thoughtless infidelity. *Dozie whom I ... I ...*”(81)

22 “Don` t worry about me. *I` ll be all right. I` ll look for someone* to help you, but meanwhile *I` ll do my best* to help you.”(89)

23 “*Once again their minds* had begun to work on the same lines. *Once again the current of love* and understanding which used to pass between them before Virginia arrived to disrupt it, began to flow again in the familiar way.”(119)

iv Excerpts from *Men Without Ears* (1984)

24 “*I waited and waited* for you yesterday; she said.”(43)

25 “Incorrigible woman! ... *Keep on neglecting* father. *Keep on running* after money.”(44)

26 “*I kept seeing my brother` s* sad face. *I kept remembering his harsh* words, his accusations.”(125)

27 “*I wished I could run* away from it all. *I wished Iruka, my fiancée,* was around for she alone would understand and comfort me. *I wished I could* go back to Tanzania.”(125)

v Excerpts from *The Pay-packet* (1993)

28 “... She had always looked forward to receiving her salary, and weeks before it was due *she would begin to make plans* on how to spend the money, *would draw up lists of what to buy, deleting from and adding to* them, and *would visit shops and markets looking for the items* on her lists and *comparing prices* to make sure of good bargains.”(15)

29 “Once again Iba *played the judge, declared the boy guilty, rescued Ebele`s five kobo* for her, and *banished the offending boy* to a corner of the classroom as his punishment.”(16)

30 “She spent *one third of her salary on food stuff, the second third on herself, and some of the rest on baby things. She bought herself two maternity dresses, some underwear, a pair of shoes and a handbag to match, and a long-sleeved shirt for her husband.*”(20)

31 “He *raised his coconut-shaped head, closed the file he was reading, removed his plastic-framed spectacles and peered at me.*”(92)

32 “... I worried over *how I was going to pay the January rent, how I was going to feed my two sons and my mother-in-law, and what I was going to do* if Rapulu became so ill that he had to be hospitalized again.”(97)

33 “... When Fred died over four months ago, *I was subjected* to many dehumanising widowhood rites by the *umuada*, his patrilineal female relatives. *I was forced* to sit on a mat on the hard floor throughout the burial ceremony. *I was not allowed* to take part in planning for the burial, although *I was asked to provide* the money needed. *I was not allowed to express* any opinion about the burial of my own husband.”(67-68)

vi **Analysis of the Excerpts**

In the first example drawn from Ifeoma Okoye`s letter to the reader in *The Trial and Other Stories*, the first shot of what is to come is fired. The repetition of parallel structures is emphatically presented in the recurring *wh-* adverbial

clauses which modify the headword, *story*. Thus: *when we can identify, when the characters achieve, when they make, when it transports*, all these conditions can be achieved if a *story* is interesting. Similarly, the second string of parallel elements is given in the prepositional phrases: *about ourselves, about other people, about other cultures and about the world in general*. What we have in the first string of clauses is a piling of identification processes referring back to “its characters”, of course, the characters in an interesting story. In this example the author has used two adjacent complex sentences to load details which otherwise would have been cast in separate simple or compound sentences. But the loading of information is not unwieldy as the reader is drawn to the regularity of the parallel elements which breeds familiarity and vividness of information in the structure. In each parallel segment, the author provides the reader with new information which refreshes expectation and combats the drudgery and weariness of repetitiveness. This is also the pattern of parallelism repeated in many of the examples above.

In example 3, the author lists reasons why Somadi wanted a job even though her late husband did not allow her to work. These are set out in the following parallel structures. To her, *work meant: freedom, self-fulfilment and self-esteem*. It also meant *meeting people, gathering experience, building character and learning to live*. In two quick sentences, the author packs parallel elements and details which amplify Somadi's world view and serve as justification for her conviction. In example 4, Ebube warns her friend Enu of the impending doom that awaits her if she makes the egregious error of marrying her brother-in-

law, Onumba. With prophetic and ruthless finality Ebube declares: *marry him if you want to be in hell fire for the rest of your life; marry him if you want to lose your sons` share of family land to him.* These warnings coming from a seventy-five year old widow sallowed by years of experience and hardship carry unspecified ominous danger for any unwary and foolhardy youth and strike fear in the heart. In two measured and parallel structures, Ebube`s warnings deal the final death blow on any niggardly chance Onumba`s marriage proposal to Enu might have had. For sure, Enu, also a widow, would neither want another experience in hell fire nor let her sons lose their share of the family inheritance. Widowhood was enough hell. Marrying Onumba would be one hell too many.

Examples 5, 6, 7 and 8 present the same pattern of parallelism reinforced by repetitive phrase and clause structures, some fronted i.e. in sentence initial position for emphasis. In example 5 we have *I`m not letting you stay here. I`m not going to earn enough* and then *with you being here* and *with you sharing with me ...* In 6, *I don`t want to beg. I don`t want to sell my body for money.* In 7 ... *a victim of child marriage, of child widowhood, of a world of imbalances;* while in 8, we have: *she couldn`t identify any of the parts, she couldn`t tell what their functions were, she didn`t know their names, she didn`t know how much they cost, she didn`t know where she could buy them.* It is obvious that Ifeoma Okoye deliberately strings together these parallel structures to underscore the emphasis she attaches to the ideas she is putting across. Example 8 for

instance, could have been dismissed with a single sentence which indicates that Mercy was totally ignorant of how to conduct a spare-parts business. But, Okoye would not indulge our expectation. The gravity and severity of the abysmal ignorance spelt out in the parallel structures in example 8 are designed to stress that Mercy the novice, is dabbling into an uncharted territory which will task and challenge her mettle. It is against this background that we appreciate Mercy's determination to succeed in a business which has remained the exclusive preserve of men, in spite of her obvious business handicap. She declares in example 9, *I must succeed if only to put Adim and Odo to shame. I must succeed to show them that a woman can run the store profitably.* At the back of her mind, no doubt, must be the popular saying that *what a man can do, a woman can do better* . This no doubt, is a woman who believes in her strength of character and who is neither intimidated nor discouraged by socially erected business barriers.

In examples 10 and 15, Okoye adopts a fronting strategy to focus attention on whom or what she considers culpable for the turn of events in those circumstances she describes. In 10 for example, the repeated *you know* (4 times), *you pleaded with me* and *you told me* are nothing short of rhetorical blackmail by Arit designed to prick Paul's conscience to return to her, the Certificates of Occupancy of the buildings he was planning to dispossess her of. The degree of indictment laced in the impunity with which she confronted him, must elicit if not remorse and pity, at least a quirk of conscience. Her strategy worked because Paul surrendered the

documents. The locational impact of the parallel elements can be said to have been very effective as they seem to have convicted Paul, allowing him neither self-defence nor self-righteous arrogance. This direct fronting strategy is repeated in examples 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 and 21. In 15, Mata pointedly accuses Uko, her brother-in law, of appropriating the entire bride price paid on one of her daughters, Awele. Mata emphasizes that Uko took *the whole of it* as one collects the proceeds of goods and chattels in a business transaction. Example 15 carries tone of complaint and perhaps, condemnation and dissatisfaction borne in this pattern of parallelism and repetition. Example 20 is emphatic, establishing the familiarity and closeness between Mrs Ije Apia and her childhood friend, Mrs Ugo Ushie. Ije was convinced that her friend, Ugo was not cut out for the flamboyance and showmanship which were the major attributes of members of Mrs Okoh`s Social Club. Ije expresses this concern in her *I can`t imagine* you parallelism repeated four times for emphasis in example 20.

The examples analyzed above confirm our claim that parallelism in Ifeoma Okoye`s texts under study here, is inextricably tied to the scheme of repetition. We are convinced that the two schemes are the author`s favourite strategies for producing foregrounding. In the examples, we notice that where the same words have not been repeated wholesale, their variants or other forms which share semantic field with them, have been used. The variations in the examples serve to check monotony of structure as they breathe freshness into the author`s stories.

Short (1996) considers parallelism a much more interesting method of creating foregrounding especially because “some features are held constant (usually structural features) while others (usually lexical items, e.g. words and idioms) are varied.”(14) Because of the simplicity of Ifeoma Okoye`s narrative, there is the possibility, perhaps, risk that one may gloss over these foregrounding strategies deployed by the author. Having seen the illustrations from our examples we must conclude this section by agreeing with Short that:

Parallelism has the power not just to foreground parts of a text for us, but also to make us look for parallel or contrastive meaning links between those parallel parts. This may well involve us in construing new aspects of meaning for the words concerned, or in searching among the possible connotations that a word might have for the one that is most appropriate in the particular structure. (15)

The next scheme we identified in Okoye`s texts earlier on is alliteration which is the most pervasive phonetic device used by the author in her texts. Alliteration in the texts also provides some kind of phonetic parallelism. The examples under SET B below will illustrate the incidence of alliteration in the texts under study. The numbering of the examples is done consecutively.

3.2.3.2 SET B: Alliteration in the Texts

i Excerpts from *The Trial and Other Stories* (2005).

- 34 “She placed *her hands* on *her head* and bit *her lower lip* as she watched...”(7)
- 35 “... *hoping my husband* would see reason, *hoping he* would change *his mind* ...”(12)
- 36 “Then *she shuffled back* to the *bed*, sat down *heavily* on it and *buried her head* in *her hands*.”(15)
- 37 “*Her husband* on *his part* had cared for *her* and ... *had never hit her* no matter *how angry he* was with *her*.”(17)
- 38 “What if the knife *had hit her eye*?”(19)
- 39 “There was a *bitter quarrel* between *her* and *her husband`s cousin* over a valued keg that *her husband had lent* to the cousin before *he died*.”(29)
- 40 “She *herself had had* enough battering from *her late husband*; enough to last *her* for the rest of *her life*.”(31)
- 41 “She *held her head* in *her hands* as if to stop the pain.”(31)
- 42 “It was *reputed* to be *ruthless* and *resolute* in its decisions even in matters concerning its members.”(44)
- 43 “She could *hear her heart* beat.”(45)
- 44 “She and *her husband had had* their squabbles but they loved each other and *had lived happily* together in spite of their misfortunes.”(46)

45 “The *din* died down.”(46)

46 “Police dropped the money into a *plastic plate*, placed near the entrance and resumed her seat.”(46)

47 “She *looked like* a woman who would control *her husband*, a woman who would not let *her husband help* his relations financially.”(47)

48 “ ... She would like to see *him* and *he had* told *her he* would be home on Saturday morning.”(73)

49 “She missed *her husband`s* company, *his* jokes, *his* stories, and *his* numerous, seemingly little actions that showed *his* affection for *her* and for their children.”(74)

ii Excerpts from *Chimere* (1992)

50 ““Huge horse-chestnut, manilla, and nim trees towered protectively around the house.”(7)

51 “What will you drink, *Baby?* *Beer?* *Brandy?* Just name your *brand*.”(8)

52 “They *had had* jollof rice with *frozen fish* or ‘*mortuary*’*fish* in vulgar parlance.”(64)

53 “He was a *large, laxy-looking* man with greying hair.”(66)

iii Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds* (1982)

54 “She told Ije about the many quarrels she *had had* with *her husband* because of *her* childlessness.”(4-5)

55 “She *had had her* appendix out; *had had* many D & Cs; *had also had* an operation for fibroids.”(8)

56 “... the *doctor`s diagnosis had* been wrong; and that *he had realised his* mistake only after *he had* opened *her* up in the theatre.”(8)

57 “When *he had* found *himself* in such a predicament, as *he* often did, *he* would let *her* wisdom produce a suggestion and she *had* always come to *his* rescue.”(15)

58 “Do you know a member has to pay a *fifty-naira fine* each time she *fails* to attend any meetings, *frolics* and *funeral ceremonies*.”(32)

59 “ ... *he* imagined *how humiliated he* would feel if Ije were to turn *him* out of *her* office in the presence of other employees.”(111)

60 “And remember, a good wife must not allow *her husband* to *humiliate himself* before *her*.”(117)

iv **Excerpts from *Men Without Ears* (1984)**

61 “In the plane, I *had* remembered sadly *how he had had* to mortgage some plots of family land in order to fund my education overseas.”(1)

62 “I was surprised to see men wearing long chains with *ponderous pendants* together with several rows of beads.”(24)

63 “This explained the reason *for the false fronts, the false images* and ostentatious displays of wealth which some people had put on during some of the *functions* I had attended.”(81)

64 “We sat on a form in the verandah of the ward and talked while we waited for Uloko to wake up.”(155)

v **Excerpts from *The Pay-packet* (1993)**

65 “Although *he* wasn’t rich, *he* never asked *her* to hand over *her* salary to *him*.”(16)

66 “She was only *five feet four* inches and 55 kilograms.”(18)

67 “Sparks of *fire* flashed from *her* eyes and *her* cheek burned with intense *heat*.”(23)

vi **Analysis of the Excerpts in Set B**

Perhaps, we would have drawn greater semantic values from the alliterative compositions in the examples above if this work is on matters of sounds of poetry. Nevertheless, the regularity of pattern of particular consonants deployed for the realisation of alliterations in the texts leaves no one in doubt that it is one of Okoye’s favourite strategies for achieving foregrounding. The alliterations in many of the examples stand out and maintain a rhythm equivalent to and reminiscent of that in verse. Some can be converted to or realised as nursery rhymes which maintain a musical cadence when repeated twice, thrice or more times. But pursuing this matter of rhythm, we must bear in mind what Short (1996) said about the need to vary the beat in order to produce an interesting rhythmic effect.

For interesting rhythmic effect to occur we need some underlying regularity mixed with variations. Once a regular rhythmical beat in a

tune is established, it can be made more interesting by adding cross-rhythms or by modifying the beat in some way (e.g. by adding extra beats, or removing them from, the basic rhythmic pattern.) (125)

The following examples provide such musical rhythm when chanted: *Five feet four* (e.g. 66); *while we waited* (e.g. 64); *fire flashed from* (e.g. 67); *how he had had* (e.g. 61); *Baby? Beer? Brandy? ... brand* (e.g. 51); *frolics and funeral* (e.g. 58); *for fibroids* (e.g. 55); *her husband help his* (e.g. 47); *had had with her husband* (e.g. 54); *woman who would* (e.g. 47); *police, plastic plate placed* (46); *din died down* (e.g. 45); *hear her heart* (e.g. 43); *had hit her* (e.g.38); *her head in her hands* (e.g. 36); and *her hands on her head* (e.g. 34). It must be noted in the rhythmic examples isolated here that 23 out of 34 refer to women, or are connected with women and their activities in the texts. Only 8 examples are male-related, specifically examples 53, 56, 57, 59, 61, 62, 64 and 65. However, 3 are adjudged to be neutral. In the 34 examples under SET B, the personal pronouns *she* and *her* occur 54 times (*her* = 38, *she* = 16) against the total of 28 occurrences of the male (*he* = 16, *him* = 3, and *his* = 9). This confirms our claim here that Okoye`s stories are female-positive as she does not disguise her predilection for the female gender. The pervasive incidence of *her*, for instance, sets up an alliterative nest which inevitably draws attention to the plight of women in the texts. This indicates that Okoye`s major preoccupation in her stories is the female. They constitute the nexus of events in her texts while the men are mere constellations that orbit the female stratosphere. Where Okoye gives the male the narrative centre stage in her work, like in *Men Without Ears*,

the female is not out of sight completely and is perhaps, the seen or unseen hand which tugs at and shapes the destiny of such a male.

In the examples under SET B above, the dominant alliterative consonant is [h], the voiceless glottal fricative occurring in word-initial position in words like *her, had, how, heart, hands, husband, head, hoping, hit, and hear*. This locational fronting confers on the sound, focus of interest and attention. The other alliterative consonants in the texts are seen in the voiceless labio-dental fricative [f] in the following words from the texts: *five, feet, four, fire, flashed, from, fine, fail, frolics, funeral, for*; labio-velar semi-vowel [w] in: *we, ward, while, waited, woman, would, who*; voiced bilabial plosive [b] in *Baby, Beer, Brandy, brand*; voiced alveolar plosive [d] in *doctors, diagnosis, din, died, down*; voiceless bilabial plosive in *Police, plastic, plate, placed*; linguo-alveolar roll [r] or [ʀ] the voiceless post-alveolar frictionless continuant in *reputed, ruthless, resolute*; and the voiced alveolar lateral continuant [l] in *large, laxy-looking*. The description and classification of consonants here are according to A.C. Gimson – *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* (1976).

Very prominent also is the high incidence of the preterite, *had*, denoting the fact that most of the events described by the author had already happened. This verb form occurs 30 times in the 34 examples of SET B. Out of these, 8 occurrences of *had had* denote the actions perfected in time but reported presently. For instance, in example 40 above, the author informs us that Enu “herself *had had* enough battering from *her* late *husband*.” In example 55 the author informs us that “Ije ... *had had* her appendix out; *had had* many D & Cs; *had* also *had* an operation for fibroids.” In this particular example alone, there is

the occurrence of three pairs of *had had*. Similarly, Chigo who had fond memories of his father (e.g. 61) acknowledges that he “had remembered sadly how *he had had* to mortgage some plots of family land in order to fund my education overseas.” Beatrice also in example 54 told Ije “about the many quarrels she *had had* with her husband because of her childlessness.” In all, the density of alliterative [h] in the texts is noticeably high and inescapably picturesque, building some kind of graphological harmony and memorable presence in the texts analyzed. The alliterative sounds identified in the examples above make visible impact in the environments they appear because of their word-initial positions. As Short (1996) notes “... alliteration is much more salient on syllable-initial sounds than others, particularly when the syllable concerned is itself word-initial.” (109) In the analysis above, we bore in mind Simpson’s (2004) observation that:

... as stylisticians, we make connections between, on the one hand the physical properties of the sounds represented within a text and, on the other, the non-linguistic phenomenon situated outside a text to which these sounds relate. (66)

3.2.4 Scheme of Balance in the Texts

Another useful scheme of construction used by Okoye in the texts to create parallelism and thus foregrounding, is structural symmetry. This scheme is a further elaboration of the parallelism identified, exemplified and discussed above. It is a scheme of balance which combines the effects of all the other schemes in their different ramifications as antithesis, parenthesis, apposition and

parallelism in one structural environment. This is used to achieve grammatical co-ordination and semantic coherence in a text. The examples below illustrate the scheme.

i Excerpts from *The Trial and Other Stories*

68 “Ebele must be *lying brilliantly* or *telling the truth*.”(40)

69 “She had expected *sympathy* and *understanding*, not *insensitivity* from the women ...”(46)

70 “Although the store had *closed for one month* after her husband`s death, it had been *open for two months* since the end of the burial ceremonies.”(61)

ii Excerpts from *Chimere*

71 “She saw all eyes *as unfriendly* and all faces *as sneering*.”(28)

72 “She *could not be a beauty*, with her nondescript features, but she *was good and kind and loyal*, and Chimere loved her for these qualities.”(29-30)

73 “... there was *a flash of lightening* followed by *a blast of thunder*.”(37)

74 “All men are the same, she thought; they are *sweetness and smiles*, *gallant and chivalrous*, when they are out to woo, but *untrustworthy*, *arrogant and callous* when they have had their fill.”(51)

iii Excerpts from *Men Without Ears*

75 “Coats flapped untidily behind their owners, while ties snapped discourteously to the wind as the men ran.”(5)

76 “She was neither *slim* nor *fat*, but a pleasing mean between the two.”(15)

iv Excerpts from *The Pay-packet*

77 “Although *he wasn't rich*, *he never asked her Ezuma to hand over her salary to him.*”(16)

78 “She felt like one *condemned to death* but *allowed to satisfy some of her desires* before meeting her fate.”(20)

79 “... he had become *closer* to Virginia and *further* away from her.”(99)
– *Behind the Clouds.*

v Analysis of Scheme of Balance

In the examples in SET C, there is no doubt that the author set out her ideas in antithetical formations which lend symmetry and equipoise to her grammatical and semantic constructions and composition. Each example in this section carries the sense of balance achieved through the collocation or clash of opposites. Where the clash is not in the sense of the composition, it is in the grammatical co-ordination of incompatibles. For instance: *lying brilliantly or telling the truth* (e.g.68); *the store had closed for one month* after her husband's death, *it had been open for two months* since the end of the burial ceremonies (e.g.70); *had expected sympathy and understanding, not insensitivity* (e.g.69); *all eyes as unfriendly* and *all faces as sneering* (e.g.71); *a flash of lightning* and *a*

blast of thunder (e.g.73); *sweetness and smiles, gallant and chivalrous / untrustworthy, arrogant and callous* (e.g.74); *closer to Virginia / further away from her* (Ije) (e.g.79); *could not be a beauty / was good and kind and loyal* (e.g.72); *coats flapped untidily / ties snapped discourteously* (e.g.75); *neither slim nor fat / but a pleasing mean between the two* (e.g.76); *condemned to death / but allowed to satisfy some of her desires* (e.g.78); *although he wasn't rich, he never asked her Ezuma to hand over her salary to him* (e.g.77). The juxtaposition of many of the above contrasting words and their semantic potentials creates balance in the environments of the narrative where they are used.

In this chapter, foregrounding in its various manifestations has been examined in some detail, to underscore the stylistic weight it carries as a textual strategy in the works of Ifeoma Okoye. The major agencies through which it is achieved, i.e. deviation, parallelism, repetition and alliteration have been presented and exemplified in this chapter. It is all too easy to ignore or gloss over this vital narrative and stylistic strategy in an attempt to hurry to, or arrive at the resolution of her stories which are indeed enthralling. It has been demonstrated that the artful deployment of the schemes of foregrounding examined in this chapter, has enabled the author to unobtrusively provide a tapestry for her stories. In the process, she has successfully created a narrative, in each case, where the reader is neither distracted nor impeded in the pursuit of the denouement of her stories.

3.3 WOMAN ON WOMAN IN THE TEXTS.

In this section, we shall explore Ifeoma Okoye`s brand of feminism as reflected in her texts under study in this thesis. The evidence that will be presented below will obviously show that the author has an uncompromising sympathy for women and especially widows who are subjected to a myriad of dehumanising conditions and cultural rituals and rites which demean their person and assault their dignity. To appreciate the spark which explains Ifeoma Okoye`s attitude to widowhood and women in general, a peep into her mindset can be gleaned from two vital sources. One is her dedication to her children and the second is her letter to the reader, both in her book, *The Trial and Other Stories* (2005). In the first, she dedicated the stories to her children “who stood solidly behind me when I refused to undergo the subjugating, humiliating and dehumanizing, rite of hair shaving to which many Igbo widows are subjected.”(ii) This is the signal that the author, as a widow, is writing from the heart as one who has been at the receiving end of the obnoxious cultural and traditional practices rife in the Eastern part of Nigeria as well as in many other parts of Nigeria and Africa. He who wears the shoe definitely knows where it pinches. In the letter to the reader, Ifeoma Okoye provides sufficient justification for her devoting the stories in *The Trial* (2005), to widowhood practices in Eastern Nigeria in particular and in other parts of Africa. These concerns are presented below:

Widows in Eastern part of Nigeria are often forced to go through traditional rites and rituals that deprive them of their dignity and bring them under men`s control. They often lose their inheritance to their in-laws because of discriminatory laws and customs. They are sometimes forced to marry their husband`s brother. They are

prevented from remarrying because of the fear of losing their children to their late husband`s relations if they remarried outside his extended family. Loss of their property or sheer neglect can make widows turn to begging or prostitution or to poorly paid jobs in order to survive. Some are forced to withdraw their children from school because they cannot afford to pay the school fees.

These problems arise mostly because of gender bias and inequality. In these areas where widows are subjugated, discriminated against and denied their fundamental human rights, the general belief is that women are inferior to men and under them, and that men should decide what is good or not for women. It is discriminatory that widowers don`t go through dehumanizing rites and rituals. They don`t lose their property or children when their wives` die. They easily acquire their deceased wives` property. They remarry without losing their children to anyone. (1-2)

The litany of woes listed in the excerpt above indicates the reaction of an insider immersed in the culture of the environment and perhaps, a victim of the conditions so graphically, delineated in this letter which opens the stories. The reader therefore expects very strident and excoriating criticism of the men who are responsible for this scourge of man`s inhumanity to woman. *The Trial and Other Stories* (2005) is therefore devoted by the author to the revelation of the excruciating difficulties and harsh conditions which widowhood inflicts on women. The stories chronicle different aspects and consequences of widowhood, ranging from the sale of daughters, concubinage, re-marriage, economic

independence, voicelessness, barrenness and child illegitimacy (bastard phenomenon) to the actual trial of widows as chief suspects in the death of their husbands. Poignantly and instructively, men do not suffer these humiliating and dehumanising conditions when they become widowers. Here lies the consciousness and impetus for what the author does in her stories in *The Trial*, and also explains why the stories are unrelieved by bouts of humour and lightheartedness. Even the most unrepentant male chauvinist reading her stories, will deprecate strongly, the rational, wisdom or whatever excuses that inform, uphold and justify the cultures and tradition where such gender inequity and inequality are practised and celebrated. This raises a fundamental question – that of female acquiescence, which will be addressed in this section. Man's inhumanity to woman is condemnable no doubt, but woman's inhumanity to woman is mind-boggling and incomprehensible. The culture Ifeoma Okoye refers to in her stories in *The Trial* appears to prime and condition the female for the uncritical acceptance of the patriarchal induced and sanctioned dehumanisation of the female. This patriarchal brain-washing is so well nurtured that women sometimes, surpass men in perpetrating greater doses of harshness and cruelty on fellow women. It is this point that will be illustrated with evidence from the texts. Okoye adopts this strategy, we believe, to underscore her belief in the complementarity of the sexes, especially as they are both guilty of the same offence. Her position, unequivocally, is that men and women have the capacity for good as well as evil and the same predatory tendencies. But by telling these stories as frankly as she has done in her texts, one is heartened that Okoye is yearning for a change of the practice and attitude towards women, no matter what

custom and tradition prescribe; customs and traditions which are *ab initio*, phallogocentric in conception, observance and execution.

3.3.1 Women against Women

The second story in *The Trial and Other Stories* (2005) is appropriately titled “Between Women” by Ifeoma Okoye. It is the story of Ebuka, an orphan and a widow who has been employed as a domestic servant by Mrs Edet in Enugu. Ebuka works in a home where she is forbidden by Mrs Edet from bringing her five-year old daughter, Amara. Mrs Edet’s excuse is that the “child will be in your way, and your job will suffer.”(15) That Mrs Edet, a woman, unarguably endowed with all the maternal instincts, denied another woman the opportunity of the companionship of her daughter of such a tender age, when all the maternal care, warmth and supervision are required, is to say the least unfortunate, perhaps heartless and inexcusable especially coming from another woman who should know better. Or could Mrs Edet be insisting on untainted domestic professionalism? Whichever way and whatever her reason(s) may be, this is the first sign that a woman can also be the worst enemy to another woman. The author tells us that Mrs Edet abused Ebuka “verbally and physically.”(20) This, she demonstrates when Mrs Edet hauled a serrated table knife at Ebuka which hit her on the left eyebrow – a close blinding shave indeed! Unlike their mother, Mrs Edet’s children showed more concern, care and kindness to the bleeding Ebuka, especially Effiong who wept and inquired: “Are you going to die, Ebuka?”(19) He even offers some biscuits from his school lunch pack to Ebuka which was his soothing balm for her. “Take some of my biscuits, Ebuka,”he said. “You will feel better.”(19) This he said with the practised

assurance and confidence of an experienced medical superintendent. In sharp contrast, the author reveals that Ebuka's husband "on his part had cared for her and throughout their brief married life, had never hit her no matter how angry he was with her."(17)

The next incident that demonstrates the woman on woman tragic oppression is related in the fourth story, "The Voiceless Victim." Here, at the "beggars' haven" provided by the shady branches of an old mango tree near the gate of the Main Post Office, many beggars, most of them female, colonised territories of space and forbade others from using such corners for soliciting for alms. The altercation between the middle-aged beggar and an eighteen-year-old beggar illustrates the fact that even amongst the poor, down-and-out, lowly, and helpless beggars, women also oppress, humiliate and dehumanise other women. Two encounters below graphically illustrate the case in point. The narrator recounts one incident:

On approaching the beggars' den that morning, I noticed that a quarrel was going on between two female beggars. Out of curiosity, I stopped to listen.

I say, get out of here! shouted one of the beggars. I recognised her as one of the regular occupants of the beggars' haven. She was middle-aged, thin and short. Suddenly, this middle-aged beggar grabbed a mat in one hand and a black plastic shopping bag in the other and then flung them away with all her strength like an expert discus thrower. The contents of the black shopping bag flew out of their

confinement – a plastic cup, a metal tablespoon and a small plastic bowl.

“Why are you throwing my things away?” a young female beggar asked the middle-aged beggar in conciliatory voice. “I came here before you.” She could not have been more than eighteen years old, I reckoned. She was clutching a baby to her bosom, and cringing beside her, was a toddler.

“I `m not letting you stay here,” the middle-aged beggar said. “I`m not going to earn enough money with you being here, with you sharing with me the pittance people give these days to us beggars.”

“Please let me stay here for today,” the teenage mother pleaded. “Tomorrow, I`ll find myself another spot.”

“No!” the middle-aged beggar said with a tone of finality. “Now, get out of here.” She began to push the younger beggar away violently. The toddler began to cry, clutching tenaciously at his mother`s faded skirt. (35-36)

Between the Narrator (Female) and the Eighteen-year-old Female Beggar.

B) “Please, Madam, give me some money to buy food for my children.”

“Get out! I shouted angrily at her.” “You have no money and you`re breeding like a guinea pig. Go and find yourself a job. Find yourself something to do. There`s nothing

wrong with you.”I filled those words with all my contempt for beggars, particularly for this able-bodied young woman who, I believed, preferred breeding fatherless children to finding herself something decent to do.

“Sorry, Madam,”said the teenage mother.”“Sorry for asking you.”(36-37)

The two encounters above confirm to us that women can unleash debilitating harshness and brutality on other women. This is Ifeoma Okoye`s way of demonstrating that gender and feminine difficulties suffered by women are created not only by men but also perhaps, painfully, by fellow women. The next incidents that will be used to illustrate the phenomenon described here occur in the circumstances surrounding the inquisition and trial by the *Umu-okpu* – Daughters of the lineage, of Anayo who was accused by her brother-in-law of killing her husband in the story appropriately titled “The Trial.”The setting was eerie and the mood of the Daughters of the lineage, menacing, unfriendly and unpredictable. The author describes the setting.

As Anayo stepped into the Obi, the women`s eyes hit her like a thousand arrows. They were hostile eyes staring out of grim faces. The silence that followed her entrance was so sharp it could have sliced a piece of yam. She remembered some of the stories she had heard about the women`s group. It was reputed to be ruthless and resolute in its decision even in matters concerning its members. It

was also notorious for applying the clan`s traditional laws and sanctions and for being easily offended. (44-45)

Could anyone obtain fairness, justice and equity from a body, so constituted and with such a reputation? Anayo was so consumed by fright and it was said that “she could hear her heart beat.”(45) The aliases assumed by the different leaders and vociferous members of the *Umu-okpu* left no one in doubt about their no-nonsense temperaments. The leader is called *Electric* or *Eletty* for short. True to her name, she shocked victims with or without provocation and with unbending determination. Ironically, *Eletty* was also a divorcee. She insisted that no one should offer pregnant Anayo a chair to sit down during the inquisition. *Eletty* bellows: “Stand there,” thrusting her hand to her left.”“No,” *Eletty* shouted. “There, where we can all see your face.” She pointed to the spot with her hand.”(45) The tall dark woman provost was nicknamed *Police*, another, *Antelope* and yet another, *Steamer*. Let us relive the encounter between Anayo and the dreaded *Eletty*, the women`s leader.

Eletty: ”Anayo, your brother-in-law, Ezeji, is accusing you of killing your husband, Zimuzo. It is our duty to find out whether this accusation is true or not. What have you to say for yourself?”

Anayo: “I didn`t kill my husband... Whoever accuses me of such a crime is wicked.”

Eletty: “Watch your tongue, young woman. Answer our questions and nothing more. Be rude to us again an we`ll deal with you squarely.”“You understand?”“No nodding here, you are not a lizard.

You have a tongue and you'd better use it. You understand? "Answer our questions promptly and politely. And don't you ever eye me again the way you did a minute ago. Now tell us how your husband died. What killed him? Tell us all you know."(46)

Eletty: "If you poisoned your husband, you'll die within twenty-eight days of going through the trial. No doctor can save you."(49)

Eletty makes this last pronouncement with magisterial arrogance and finality. This intimidating encounter is simply, a case of a woman terrorizing another woman in order to uphold an oppressive male-instituted traditional rite and custom. It is even more laughable that the present case was instigated and instituted by a man, Ezeji, who is exploiting the instrumentality of the dreaded *Umu-okpu* "trial by ordeal" apparatus to even imagined scores with his late brother's wife, Anayo. It is instructive that *Eletty* speaks in the royal plural to underscore the collective authority reposed in her by the Daughters of the lineage. Anayo protests being subjected to the "trial by ordeal" to prove her innocence. However, the punishment of ostracism hangs menacingly over her head like the sword of Damocles. When we realise that membership of Daughters of the lineage included graduate female civil servants, one wonders about the suffocating grip of custom and tradition on women in the society the author describes. Ezeji had blamed the death of his brother on Anayo, the late brother's wife. He accused her of poisoning her husband, Zimuzo. All married members of the Daughters of the lineage are potential victims of this dehumanising, humiliating and oppressive custom of trial by ordeal. But the thought never deters them from carrying on with the zeal and fervour exhibited by *Eletty* and her

Judicial Council. While this lasted, none of the educated members of the *Umu-okpu* raised half as much as a whimper in support of Anayo. Not even Tope, a doctorate degree holder and Sociology lecturer at the University of Lagos, rose to her defence. Tope is said to regularly bore or entertain her fellow women with her 'mini lectures' on feminism and boasts about her brilliant conference papers. On this auspicious occasion of the inquisition, though present, she was shamefully and disappointingly "tongue-tied and manacled" and did not come to the aid of hapless Anayo. It can be said that she sold out. The author reminds the reader that:

Because of Tope's education and eloquent "mini lectures" to any small gathering of women on the subject of injustices meted out on them by men, Anayo had expected her to have matched her words with action when the opportunity came. But Tope had watched a fellow woman being humiliated and subjugated, not by men but by fellow women and had remained tongue-tied and manacled. Tope's inaction reminded her of her aunt's popular expression: "saying is not doing."(49)

Even Oluchi, Anayo's friend, who finally plucked up courage and risked a fine when she stubbornly offered Anayo her chair at the height of the ordeal, says, "it is not easy to challenge tradition."(49) This was a case of women betraying a woman. What is playing out here can only be the result of a conditioning process which enslaves the women to the whims and caprices of a male-dominated and structured society. Tope's name might suggest she comes from outside the Eastern Region's culture which provides the setting for the

practices described in *The Trial and Other Stories*. But Tope, who belongs to the culture by reason of marriage could be a metaphor for the national or universal applicability of such traditional rites and customs. Perhaps, the greatest blow to Anayo on this momentous occasion was one from the least expected quarters – her mother, Mama Ebo. As Anayo agonised whether to go through the trial by ordeal or not, as all the women had deserted her, her final source of hope and support was anticipated from her mother who has just arrived from Kano where she had been visiting a sister. Surprisingly and disappointingly, Mama Ebo insisted Anayo must go through the trial to prove her innocence. She had repeated the grave question of the moment: “Anayo, did you poison Zimuzo?”(50) Weakened and disappointingly shocked by this coming from her mother, Anayo asked: “Mama, how can you ask me such a question?” “Do you also doubt my innocence?”(51) Mama Ebo explodes:

Everybody will, if you don't go through the trial.“Everybody will believe you killed him. You will become a murderer in everybody's eyes. What will your father say in his grave? And that's not the end,”Mama Ebo continued.“You will be ostracised.” She changed her sitting position. “Nobody will talk to you in the whole town. You `ll not visit anyone. Nobody will sell any item to you in the market.” Anayo, my daughter, is that what you want?”

“Keep your voice down, Mama,” Anayo said. “Let them ostracise me. I can take it.”

“Ostracise you, Anayo?” Mama Ebo cried. “Condemn you as a husband killer? Do you know what that will do to me and to your brothers and sisters? Your sisters will die as old maids. No man will marry a girl whose sister murdered her husband for fear of his own life. Even your brothers will find it difficult to marry. No woman would accept them. And what about me? I’ll be known as the mother of a husband killer. No, Anayo, I’ll not let you do this to me and to your brothers and sisters. You must go through the trial or I’ll have nothing more to do with you. I’ll make sure your brothers and sisters disown you too. You know me. You know what I can do. This is not an empty threat. (51)

This, coming from Anayo’s mother, Mama Ebo, her last source of hope and support to challenge the obnoxious tradition, must be said to be the last straw that broke the Carmel’s back. Her resistance crumbled like a pack of badly decked cards and she knew that the game was up for her. She would be subjected to the trial. But at the trial proper, her mother and *Eletty* were the only women admitted in audience. The others were men. This final conclave could be described as the equivalence of a Supreme Court, the trial and Appeal courts where women held sway, having referred the matter to the superior court for final irrevocable adjudication. No woman listened to Anayo when she was protesting her innocence. She had cried out: “we should be sticking together. It could be one of you next time. We shouldn’t let men use us to police ourselves.”(48) A cry that obviously fell on deaf ears.

When some people claim that women are indeed, their own worst enemies and perhaps treat other women more callously than men, this can never be better illustrated than the kind of treatment Mrs Ije Apia received from her mother-in-law, Dozie`s mother, in *Behind the Clouds*. From the onset, she had opposed vehemently, the marriage of Ije to her only surviving son, Dozie. Her reasons were documented in her letter to Dozie who was still studying then in England with Ije. The letter was executed at her prompting by her village professional letter-writer with acerbic poignancy. It had stated with prophetic clairvoyance that “highly educated girls were in most cases wayward and often childless, they were also headstrong and disrespectful. Mama had also feared that Ije might be an *Osu*.” From this blind rejection of another woman whom she had neither met nor known her character, the foundation for bad blood between the two was set. Ije knew that she was in trouble as there was no way she could wish away a domineering mother-in-law, no matter how hard her husband tried. Mama on her part was relentless in her acrimony, petulance and unprovoked aggression against Ije. When Ije and her husband were determined not to visit another herbalist at Naze recommended by Dozie`s mother, all hell broke loose. Ije`s previous visit to a herbal home for treatment, on the orders of Mama, nearly cost her her life.

Your wife will not like to go to see the herbalist so you support her. I saw her give you a sign with her eyes. Whoever denies me the opportunity to have a grandchild will meet with misfortune all her life!

Mama`s temper was rising. Dozie tried to quieten her, but his attempts were like pouring kerosene into an already blazing fire. She

became vituperative. She called her daughter-in-law all sorts of derogatory names. She said her childlessness was a punishment for her unchaste life as a spinster.

Ije did not say a word. It grieved her to see that Dozie was so helpless that he could not restrain his mother from casting aspersion upon her integrity. Nothing was worse in her position than the consciousness of her innocence. It undermined her morale. It was on the tip of her tongue to exculpate herself. She could feel her temper rising – the familiar pressure in the chest and the choking feeling in the throat – but she controlled herself and allowed Mama to go on and vent her spleen. (42)

The reader could feel Ije`s heart palpitating at the ferocity of this vitriolic attack which she considers unwarranted. When Mama at another occasion asked of the whereabouts of Ije and was told by Teresa, the house help, that she was asleep, Mama`s contempt for Ije was obvious. She had asked: “By the way, where is the other `Missisi`?” Teresa had replied: “She`s sleeping.” Mama`s retort was derisive: “White woman! What else can she do but sleep?”(91) This is a situation where a woman that should encourage and empathise with a fellow woman unleashes venom and discomfiture on her prey.

Similarly, in *Chimere*, Okoye recounts how a blissful relationship between two love-birds was ruined by the intervention of the boy`s mother. On a visit to Enugu to the boy`s home, his mother recognises the son`s girlfriend as the illegitimate child of an old acquaintance. She quickly released this bombshell to

her son and that unfortunate revelation shattered a once blooming and enviable relationship. The confidence of the young girl was shattered and she bore the mortal wound of amoral rejection. Shockingly, Jide the boy that jilted her was suspected to be the source of this scandal which was published in the campus gossip tabloid, *Agent 1001*. Of course, he had the temerity to do so because his mother had wittingly ordered the dissolution of the affair. The question to ask is: even if the girl was an illegitimate child, could not the boy's mother have saved them the agony of this revelation? As a mother, it was unfair for Jide's mother to hold the young girl culpable for a sin she did not commit. The young girl did not ask to be brought into the world neither was she responsible for the frailties of her adult parents. If anything, Jide's mother should have provided a safe haven for Chimere and encouraged her son to treat the girl decently. She does not deserve such unceremonious abandonment with the prompting and connivance of a fellow woman and more so; a mother.

The point made in the presentation in this section is that women oppress or are used to oppress fellow women. Sometimes, they willingly participate in such obnoxious traditional observances and rites that demean and humiliate fellow women without realising the permanent damage done to the psyche of women. While decrying the gender inequities and inane traditional rites and customs which men use to shackle women and the weak in the society, Ifeoma Okoye is contending that women are also culpable for their uncritical acquiescence and acceptance of such mores that demean the female person. Okoye is neither violent nor radical in her presentation of the relationship

between men and women in her stories which encourage us to say that she believes in the complementary existence of both sexes.

3.4 Humour as Stylistics Device in the Texts.

In this section, humorous and sometimes ludicrous instances which brighten, a little, the dark pall that seems to envelope Ifeoma Okoye's stories will be presented. One cannot blame the author if her stories are sombre, heavy-going and unrelieved by bright spots. Her preoccupation in *The Trial* is the description of the vicissitudes of widowhood and widows and their dislocated world which hardly provide interjections of comic relief. For our first shot at humour we go to Okoye's *Behind the Clouds* and specifically to Dr Melie's Blest Clinic where Ije Apia went to consult for a solution to her apparent barrenness. The author informs us that Dr Melie always addresses his female patients as "Young lady" "even when strands of grey hair that had mischievously escaped the hair dye betrayed the truth." (9) This would seem to be Dr Melie's politeness formulae, an empty rhetorical ritual. We believe that out of habit, Dr Melie may also address a ninety-year old female patient as "young lady." Many women are likely to lap up such a compliment which to Dr Melie, is an ordinary, hollow ritual and exchange of pleasantries.

In Apostle Joseph's Church, the new converts are required to respond to altar calls where they are expected to give offerings and receive sustained prayers in return. It is said that the first "new convert to go to the altar was" a sick-looking man." And that he "was so thin that one could almost hear his bones rattling as he walked to the altar supported by a woman." (52) This is certainly

some kind of exaggerated humour bordering on the ridiculous and ludicrous. The author's description of the man allows the reader to make a mental picture of a mobile human skeleton wobbling to the altar to give his offering. For some, the picture of the man may elicit pity, for many others, humour.

But it is in Okoye's *Men Without Ears* that the reader experiences more rib-cracking humour. Here, attention is turned to the author's capacity for keen observation and apt description of human idiosyncrasies and foibles. As Accountant Chigo returns to Nigeria from Tanzania, the airport provides the environment for the expression of individualism, display of elaborate mannerism and outlandish dress habits. The setting is equally ideal as people, of necessity, must run to board planes, a practice which poses a great and uncomfortable challenge to many air travellers who are usually gorgeously and resplendently arrayed. Boarding passes are hoarded and even those who secure them are not assured of seats inside the aircraft. Physical agility is therefore additional requirement to guarantee a seat on a plane. In one of the unending relays to the aircraft, the author observes that:

Coats flapped untidily behind their owners, while ties snapped discourteously to the wind as the men ran. The women would not allow themselves to be beaten in this marathon race. I saw one of them slip off her high heeled shoes and carry them in her hand as she raced to the plane. Those men and women who wore headgear fought tooth and nail with the wind for their possession. (5)

In another breath, the author notes:

A short fat man in a white flowing gown, whom I had come across before at the International airport, fluttered past me. He wore a red cap with two feathers stuck in it, and several rows of red Coral beads round his wrists and thick neck. On his right hand were a big leather fan and a walking stick. In his left hand he carried a large brief-case. It was obvious that the weight of his body and his regalia was a great impediment to him as he scudded forwards. The hand that held the brief-case also lifted his flowing gown to prevent him from tripping, while the hand that gripped the walking stick and the leather fan tried desperately to stop the feathered cap from joining the wind in its frolic. (5-6)

What the author describes above is indeed a hilarious sight. The incongruous and grotesque appearance of men and women engaged in an unending relay of human traffic in an environment where civility, grandeur, style and orderliness are expected can draw mirthless laughter. When the narrator, Chigo, finally sees his brother Uloko who has come to pick him up from the airport, it is said that Uloko “was dressed in a beautiful white lace *agbada*. Three rows of Coral beads and a long chain with a pendant as large as a saucer feminised his neck.”(10) This, undoubtedly, is what can be described here as “peacock display.”The description of one of the characters in the text attracts hilarious attention. He is Chief Alike Otaka, alias Young Millionaire. He has a flamboyant wife for company. This is the way the author presents them:

His neck appeared over-burdened by the enormous weight of his several Coral beads necklaces and the cumbersome pendant that hung

at the end of his long gold chain. His wife carried a mountainous head-dress precariously balanced on her head. As she walked, she kept her head steady for fear of throwing off the contraption. When on one occasion she had to look back, she turned her head as slowly and as cautiously as if she had a stiff neck. (85)

In another instance, the author informs the reader that Young Millionaire “was so busy making sure that the camera caught the full view of his face that he tripped over the electric cables on the floor.”(85) Young Millionaire and his wife present comic relief in *Men Without Ears*. From his grandiose appearance to his utterance, it is obvious that he is illiterate but has come by quick fortune and wealth which have gone to his head. This can be seen where he boasts: “I’ve made nonsense of education with my success. I stopped at Standard Six, you know ... A professor’s monthly salary is less than what I give my wife for chop money.”(56) The attempt to ridicule advanced scholarship betrays Chief Alike’s inferiority complex and feeling of social insecurity. A man whose tentacles bestrode the following spheres of life will surely not disappoint – “Exporter/Importer, Manufacturer’s Representative, Building and Civil Contractor, Clearer, Forwarder, General Supplier, Beer and Soft Drinks Distributor.”(56) With nothing else of eternal value to hold on to, Chief Alike, alias Young Millionaire, clings tenaciously to his money which is the only thing that makes sense to him and his likes in the text. The philosophy of the male characters in this text is “without money you’re nobody.”(12)

The narrator even observes that the characters' show of religiosity is fake and phoney. In the church men and women go to display their dresses and not for any reason of piety. He observes:

It was evident that some of these gorgeously dressed church-goers came to church to bring their clothes and not themselves, and that they deliberately came late so that everybody would notice them as they marched vaingloriously to their special seats. I watched with disgust as a woman put her head under the pew during the sermon and began to powder her face and apply fresh lipstick.(76)

Equally, the priest who preached the sermon was hypocritical and someone whose lifestyle was a diametric opposite of what he sermonized. The man who chaired the fund-raising ceremony after the church service attended by Uloko, his brother and their father, for the building of a Cathedral in their village was as flamboyant as his peers and made a scene out of his Chairmanship:

Okalia stood up, tested the microphone to make sure it was working, and then began in vernacular punctuated with English words and phrases. I don't want to waste your precious time by making a long speech. The priest has said all that there is to be said about this ceremony. What we want now is action, not words. He cleared his throat importantly, looked around him pompously and continued. I want to open the fund-raising by making my own *humble* donation. But before I do so, I want four strong men to come here. Will my driver come here, too? Four men and the chairman's driver went to

him. He gave them instructions and waited. Everybody was all eyes and ears. In a short while the four men reappeared with four sacks which they laid on the table in front of the chairman.

The chairman again tested the microphone to draw attention to himself, cleared his throat, and began once more. As I said earlier, I want to open this fund-raising by making my *humble*, yes very *humble* donation of the sum of twenty thousand naira. He spelt out the amount clearly and deliberately. An ear-deafening ovation followed this announcement. The crowd yelled, clapped, and hailed him as a hero. The master of ceremonies did not bother to stop the ovation. Instead, he allowed it to take its natural course. After what seemed a decade, the people became quiet again, having worn themselves out with shouting. (77)

This is sheer showmanship bordering on the theatre of the absurd. The characters' vainglorious tendencies are manifest in the titles and aliases they have assumed. The big dreams and wishes that accompany these grandiose titles speak volumes about their claimants. A few titles rendered in the Igbo language and their English translations show the epicurean dispositions of the characters. The titles are profusely used at the welcome party organised by Uloko for his brother Chigo who returned from Tanzania. Some of them are:

- | | | |
|------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Orimili | - | the sea that never dries! |
| Aka-ji-aku | - | The hand that makes money. |
| Odoziaku | - | The custodian of her husband's wealth |

Osisi na mi ego

-

The tree that bears money as its fruits!

Other titles for men are Money Maker, Ichie Gold, Swiss Bank. The women have also given the men a good challenge in this title game. Some bear Cash Madam, Madam True Money and one of them is simply called Bank; this must be a Universal Bank, the repository of all the monies on earth. The Igwe, His Royal Highness, that Uloko and Chigo went to pay homage to, has appropriated for himself the ultimate title as vividly inscribed on the big signboard overhanging his Palace gate: “The Onu Nekwulu Nmo Na Madu I of Ichan.” (38) This roughly translates to “the King that speaks for the dead and the living, the first!” Anybody emulating this title can only come a poor second. This king is the *primus inter pares*. What a ridiculous pity! Chigo, who has just returned from Tanzania after spending some time abroad, is the only person who is not drunk on titles. Even the man who helped him to procure a boarding pass at Lagos airport introduced himself as Engineer Akah. For good measure Chigo played along by addressing him as “Mr Engineer Akah” which elicits instant protest from a now more discerning Engineer who corrected Chigo’s apparent mischief, “Engineer is not my first name! ‘it’s only a title.’ Chigo retorts “I see. I’m very sorry for the mistake, `I thought it was your first name.”(4) Earlier on, Okoye had presented a graphic description of the benevolent young man who had volunteered to secure a boarding pass for him. The man had “a small face with eyes too large for it; a small mouth to match the compact face; and a nose a little on the flat side.” Funny you would say. The craze for titles may be the characters way of covering up their failures and deficiencies in other areas of human endeavours. The title ‘Mister’ is the most reviled title in the text because it is

believed to be “common, classless and uninformative.”(27) It is for this reason that Uloko constantly reminds Chigo his brother, to prefix the title of Accountant to his name. After all, Chigo is a qualified professional, Accountant.

Good humour is also seen, though not as much as in *Men Without Ears*, in *Chimere*. Weluche tells Chimere a hilarious story of an ailing old man who was asked by a diviner to sacrifice a goat to his gods so that the ailment would heal. The author says that “this man was so poor he could not afford a cockerel not to talk of a goat.”(139) Luckily for the poor man, he has a goat-skin bag that looks exactly like a goat made from goat skin in the shape of a real goat, with tail and legs to match. Since the old man could only afford a chick, he bought one and in place of a goat, he put in his goat-skin bag the chick and headed unashamedly to the shrine. On his way, the old man intoned: “Little chick, whether you cry like a chick or not, what I know is that I’m carrying a goat to the gods and not a chick.”(139) This hilarious interlude definitely lightens the sombre mood that pervades the vicissitudes of Chimere.

These examples leave no one in doubt about the author’s capacity for humour and light-heartedness when the occasion and characters warrant the accompaniment and display of humour. It is therefore wrong and misleading to assume that Okoye’s preoccupation with widowhood will continually weigh her down, make her downcast and spurn only gloomy narrations from her. She also has a bright side to her and this she has been proved and demonstrated with the humorous encounters presented in this section.

In conclusion therefore, this chapter has been used to illustrate some of the effective stylistic and narrative strategies employed by Ifeoma Okoye to tell the gripping stories that abound in her texts studied in this thesis. The first part of the chapter is used to illustrate the concept of foregrounding. Here, the internal linguistic mechanisms and features that she uses to point up regularity of pattern in her works have been established. The second part charts the feminist perspective of the author which chronicles the different ways women betray fellow women and sometimes champion the social, political and cultural emasculation of others whom they should be protecting. In the process, women consciously or unconsciously uphold the harsh laws and inequities put in place to humour the whims and caprices of a male-dominated society. The only explanation that can be offered for this phenomenon is cultural conditioning. From infancy to adulthood, the woman is taught, even by his mother, different shades of limitations and male-defined taboos which manacle and psychologically restrain her from exercising her full potentials. This is how Ifeoma Okoye demonstrates that it is not only men who hold down women in the society. In some cases, women do worse things to fellow women. And herein lies the author`s advocacy for complementarity between men and woman for a better society.

The last section of the chapter treats humour as one of the components of the linguo-literary features used by the author to lighten the heaviness experienced in several of her stories which recount the vicissitudes of the women who populate her texts. In this regard, *Men Without Ears* stands out as the authors weapon for ridiculing the frailties and foibles of men, especially the uneducated

ones among them, whose preoccupation is the race for demonstrative wealth. With nothing else of value to cling to, they boast of their money and material accomplishments. It is seen in this text, that their wives are also not immune to life of flamboyance, showmanship and vainglory.

In all, it must be said that the author has demonstrated her capacity for effective combination of linguistic and literary elements which enable her to hang neatly, all the strands of the stories she tells in her texts, and the stylistic devices which she uses to give them artistic prominence.

CHAPTER FOUR
LINGUO-LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTS
4.1 DICTION/UTTERANCES FOR PURPOSE DELIVERY IN
IFEOMA OKOYE'S TEXTS.

4.1.1 Preamble

An effective management and manoeuvre of words and expressions in a literary work, is a stylistic skill which writers need to deploy for the accomplishment, and or the realization and actualization of specific goals and purposes. A writer's proper application of diction in a literary work, results to the harmony of the theme and rhyme which accords the reader a better appreciation of the writer's work. Writers across the genres often introduce and sustain their messages through deliberate and conscious efforts to select the right choice of utterances and codes for their characters. Although, it is arguable that some writers are often not conscious of the language they use in their works, that means, they do not strain to make deliberate choices of words. Conscious writers write with the consciousness of purpose to deliver a message. This is made manifest through the deliberate choice of words and utterances (Diction) they assign to the characters in their works. Ifeoma Okoye, belongs to the group of conscious writers. It is obvious in her works where the utterances of her heroines, the authorial voice and those of other characters are consciously and deliberately deployed to relay her opinion on feminism and to reveal her other gender concerns. The Stylistic harmony of the linguistic and sociolinguistic elements in her work reveals a compliance with the right stylistic norm for depicting social realities in the work of art. This stylistic technique creates a kind of aesthetic effect which sustains the interest of the readers of her work. The linguo-literary analysis of Okoye's diction and utterances in her texts under study

in this thesis, reveals her skill for selecting appropriate words and utterances for the realization and actualization of purpose and effect. This is our pre-occupation in this chapter.

4.2 Diction/ Authorial Voice and Utterances in the Texts

4.2.1 Diction Defined

Diction simply means ‘wording’. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 2010, defines ‘Diction’ as the choice and use of words in literature. It is a technical linguistic term which is used to describe the choice of words and expression and their applications by a writer in a text. Diction is a stylistic tool which must be used for purpose delivery. This is because diction refers to a vital means and manner of expressing ideas. It involves the choice of words, their arrangement, accuracy and the distinction with which they are used. While language should be appropriate to the situation, it generally still leaves plenty of room for variety. Skillful writers mix general and particular, abstract and concrete, long and short, learned and commonplace, connotative and neutral words to convey and deliver different messages and opinions on issues. Turner (1979) sums up the concept of diction as the individuals capacity for lucid expression.

The words and the setting in which an author uses them contribute a great deal to the success of his writing (Glaser 1999). That means the handling of Diction can make or mar a work. To this effect Azuike (1992) states that:

By diction, we mean the choice of words. The level of diction selected by the writer has a tremendous effect on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the message. The writer can decide to operate at

different levels of diction to suit different purposes and different audiences. The writer may choose simple and concrete words and expression. He can also settle for the abstract, ornate or Latinate words and expressions. However, the diction of a writer should reflect sufficient audience sensitivity because the ultimate goal of a writer's message is consumption by a targeted audience. (121)

In view of this, a writer's diction becomes significant and of interest to the stylistician when it has been used effectively and appropriately to present a subject matter. The tone of the writer can be identified through his diction.

A proper linguistic decoding of diction and utterances which a writer assigns to his characters reveals such writer's opinion, purpose and in the creation of such characters. In the light of this, we can understand that diction in a text must reflect a careful and conscious selection of the appropriate, registers, vocabulary, technical and professional jargons for specific purposes. An effective use of diction as a stylistic device entails the ability to slot in the right words in the most appropriate positions. Azuike (1992) cited Adam Smith who observes that:

The perfection of style consists in expressing in the most concise, proper and precise manner the thought of the author and in the manner which best conveys the sentiment, passion or affection with which he designs to communicate to his readers (120)

Smith's observation above underscores the relevance of choosing the right words by a writer for effective communication. Although Shakespeare declares in *Macbeth* that there is no art to find the mind's construction in the face, it would

appear that the art to find the mind's construction is in the words. The expression of thoughts and ideas is done by no other means than with words and utterances.

Diction will be effective only when the words the writer chooses are appropriate for the target audience and purpose (Kolln 2001). It is therefore the duty of the writer, to manage, manipulate and manoeuvre words to accomplish a desired goal. On this premise, the works of Okoye are analysed to reveal a concord of diction and purpose.

4.2.2 Authorial voice:

Authorial voice is the voice or opinion of the author. Conscious writers make deliberate and conscious effort in their management of diction so as to allow authorial voice to reveal their intention, opinion and verdict over issues. Azuike (2006) agrees that conscious writers make deliberate, distinctive choices of the linguistic features that appear in their discourse. He further explains that:

“... to achieve effective style in communication, the writer has to consciously select features which will not only suit the context of the communication but also accord with the tenor of the occasion” (80)

Many of the utterances which Okoye assigned to the authorial voice in all her works are so consciously worded to reflect Okoye's feminist concerns. They are meant to portray the image of the woman positively, thus revealing her good attributes. The utterances also reveal Okoye's non-radical attitude towards the feminist crusade.

4.3 Diction in *Behind the Clouds*

A writer's purpose and intents are often established and concretized through utterances of the characters, the authorial voice, and or the omniscient

narrator among other devices. In *Behind the Clouds*, Okoye makes a deliberate and conscious effort to structure appropriate words and utterances which are delivered through her heroine Ije, and other characters such as Dozie, Virginia, Beatrice, Ije's mother-in-law amongst other characters. Azuike (2004) states that:

...it is from what a character says and not what he does that the reader is able to fathom the inner recesses of his mind, his outlook and general perception of events in life. (27)

In view of this, we may begin to appreciate that diction is not just the putting together of words by means of observing syntactical rules in language, rather it is a well calculated and articulated act of selecting appropriate utterances with the intention of creating special effects as well as revealing one's concerns over an issue. In *Behind the Clouds*, Okoye's stand on feminism is made clear by the roles and conduct of her heroine Ije. Okoye's purpose is to uphold a complementarity position on the issue of feminism. Accordingly, some utterances and choice of words (Diction) have been located in the text as appropriate for actualizing this purpose.

4.3.1 Authorial Voice for Purpose Delivery in *Behind the Clouds*

From the onset, an authorial voice discloses that:

... he (Dozie) was having some difficulty paying his school fees and could not combine his studies with going to work. I had to keep two jobs in order to help him pay his university fees (7)

Ije was confiding in Dr. Melie how she supported her husband Dozie, financially during his university days in England. It is not common in the traditional African

context for a woman to support the man financially. In many of male-authored works except for male feminists, women are often portrayed as unproductive, economic dependants and in extreme cases parasites. Ije's utterance has been deliberately worded to buttress the fact that women do support their husbands economically, contrary to the popular view against women on the matter as created in some literary works before the advent of feminism. The sentence "*He was having some difficulty paying his school fees...*" contains the deliberate inclusion of the phrase "*having some difficulty*" which paints the picture of hardship. It allows the reader to appreciate Ije's benevolence to Dozie. Dozie needed a help-mate in a time of difficulty and he found one in Ije. Okoye also employed the linguistic technique of cause and effect in the utterance for aesthetic representation and effect.

- Having difficulty paying his school fees because he could not combine his studies with going to work.
- Ije had to keep two jobs to pay Dozie's university fees

Cause

Effect

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could not combine studies with going to work - Keep two jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having difficulty paying his school fees - Pay Dozie's university fees. |
|---|--|

The structural cohesive elements of 'because' and 'to' are necessary for the realization of effects in the sentences. The utterance touches on modern social realities especially for Nigerian students studying abroad where couples and lovers may need to support one another by doing some menial jobs. Ije's role

depicts complementarity in practice as well as suggests that the African woman is hardworking and supportive.

Similarly, we note other utterances of the authorial voice in the text that portray women as supportive to the men:

“... at a time jobs were not coming he (Dozie) had exhausted his savings running about to secure contracts and in bribing his way, Ije had kept her job and of her own free will had given him (Dozie) all her salary. Life was hard, but she never complained” (63).

This utterance portrays Ije as a supportive and submissive wife in spite of her high educational qualifications. This is contrary to the thinking of Ije’s mother-in-law whose language reveals the traditional prejudice against the educated woman, when she advises her son Dozie, not to consider an educated woman for a wife. She cautions:

...highly educated girls were in most cases wayward and often childless, they were also headstrong and disrespectful” (40)

But the authorial voice creates a positive image of the African woman with utterances that reveal her hardwork and submissiveness. Okoye deliberately introduces this voice to counter the utterance of Ije’s mother-in-law. Other such instances are located on pg. (4) “...*she (Ije) took her husband’s brief case into the bedroom and then went into the kitchen*”. (4)

also in

... Ije followed here husband into the bathroom and while he undressed she ran his bath-water for him... when Dozie entered the bathroom, Ije went to the kitchen to see to his food.(34)

In another instance the authorial voice paints Ije a supportive and understanding wife "...they got into Ije's car and Ije took the wheel as she often did when he was tired." (38)

In that utterance, "*took the wheel*" is an idiomatic expression which gives the utterance the desired effect that makes the act of driving look like, what "*a man can do, a woman can also do*". This is the new image of the African woman that Okoye has constructed. Also the compound word '*way-ward*' (40) is vulgar and derogatory to express the extent of the dirty impression Mama has for educated women. There is a stylistic touch by the author in the use of contrast for the reconstruction of a negative belief against women. Unlike Nwapa, Buchi and Alkali, Okoye's heroine Ije, is not rebellious. Her disposition in the novel, counteracts rebellion. A rebellious woman does not achieve much in the African cultural reality.

Ije uses dialogue most of the time to deal with issues. Okoye's authorial voice also captures this important approach in human relationships, especially in marriage.

...Dozie came home from Port Hacourt late in the evening. Ije was happy to have him home again. She hugged him affectionately 'welcome D. But D, why didn't you telephone me to come and fetch you back from the airport instead of taking a taxi? (33-34)

With this reception, Dozie didn't have a choice than to apologise to Ije quickly for not telling her before embarking on the Port Harcourt trip. "... I'm very sorry I had to leave without prior notice." (34) Dozie had made the trip without telling Ije. An offence capable of provoking nagging and a face-off between husband

and wife. But on the contrary, Ije used kind words and wisdom to get the man to open up and apologise to her. We notice that ‘D’ is a short form of the word ‘*Darling*’ (33). Ije uses this pet name for a delivery of the emotional effect of love, to which Dozie reacted positively.

Similarly, the authorial voice discloses Dozie’s dependence on Ije’s opinion and sense of judgement “... He (Dozie) sought Ije’s opinion now and again” (63), see also (38). Ije understands the ego of the African man and would not want to puncture it in the name of feminism. Her non-confrontational approach, is a pointer for the reader to the stand of Okoye on feminism. She recognizes and upholds the knowledge that:

... a man never stops growing, besides, when you push a man to the wall and there is no other way open for him to escape, he turns around and fights for his life even if he had been a coward all along. (116).

All men react when their patience is stretched to the limit, even the weakest ones. This utterance is a warning that men should not be taken for granted in the pursuit of feminist goals.

The phrase ‘*pushed to the wall*’ is an idiom used to express a point of no return on an issue. A point where the victim must react. The literal meaning is that one cannot penetrate the wall when pushed to it, one would rather bounce back (reaction).

4.3.2 The Issue of Mother-in-Law in Some Utterances in the Text.

While some feminists are busy fighting men’s oppression, they fail to recognize that women’s antagonism against women is also counter-productive for

the feminist cause. So many utterances in the text buttress the fact that women are often their own worst enemies. This issue is exposed in this text using the relationship between Ije and her mother-in-law. A cat and mouse relationship exists between Ije and her mother-in-law, Ije's mother-in-law's hates ije because the latter is educated, barren and is married to her son against her wish. The diction that establishes hatred in her utterances is carefully selected by Okoye to express, disgust, anguish, caricature, rejection and intolerance. Okoye's diction successfully incorporates these issues in the utterances of Ije's mother-in-law and those of Ije as well.

“...’*white woman*’, *what else can she do but sleep (91)* Mama refers to Ije as a ‘*white woman*’. The labelling of Ije as a ‘white woman’ is rather derogatory than complementary. In the African thinking, a white woman does not work hard. She is respected and treated like a goddess especially when married to a black man.

Similarly, on page (91) Mama asks “... *where is my new ‘missisi*’. This utterance is designed to show preference for the new wife ‘*Virginia*’ who is pregnant for Mama’s son, Dozie. This is calculated cruelty designed to annoy Ije and openly show mama’s hatred for her.

The word ‘missisi’ is an Igbo phonetic approximation for (Mrs) used among uneducated people. It is used to accord respect to a married woman who is well accepted in the family and community. ‘Missisi’ is a word assigned to the appropriate character like the uneducated mama by Okoye, to address her son’s new wife. Another utterance of Mama that reveals her ill feelings against Ije occurs where she accused her son of not marrying another wife. Mama in

anguish says "... I know why you don't take another wife. Ije is the cause of everything, she has bewitched you!" (65). The purpose of this utterance is to blackmail Dozie to see if he would agree with mama's judgement and prejudice against Ije. Notice, that the word "bewitched" as introduced in the utterance is an African mythological belief to spice up her diction in order to give it an African colour and context. Witchcraft is believed held so high in the traditional African society to account for certain misfortunes that people encounter and or experience. Thus, the choice of the word '*bewitched*' becomes most appropriate in this context to let the reader understand Mama's thinking concerning the misfortune of her son's childless marriage to Ije.

On the other hand, some utterances have been in line with the image already painted of Ije as a model of the African woman. An authorial voice ascribed good qualities and good nature to Ije for a pre-determined purpose.

...Ije, a good natured woman by any standard had tried her best to bring the cold war between her and mama to an end, but had not succeeded. (39).

This utterance supports Okoye's intention to create a new image of an African woman. It seeks to suggest what feminists should adopt and preach, as against confrontation and rebellion. Ije neither confronted nor rebelled against Mama. The use of the idiom '*cold war*' is used metaphorically to describe the relationship between Mama and Ije and it captures and summarises all the nasty experiences and encounters between Mama and Ije. It is common knowledge in the African society that mothers in-law struggle for the attention and control of their sons with their wives (daughters in-laws). The word '*but*' in the phrase "*but*

had not succeeded".(39) suggests that women antagonism against one another has not and will never end. Perhaps, this attitude is entrenched in hatred and jealousy which most women are positive carriers. *'But'* is a cohesive device in the utterance used to achieve contrast between *'had tried'* and *'had not succeeded'*.

On another occasion Ije exhibited panic and fear over Mama's visit as she (Ije) remarked in a whisper

"Mama has come with a bombshell. I can see that from her face. I wonder what I have done wrong this time (60).

The metaphorical use of the word *'bombshell'* to describe Mama's visit is to create the impression of impending violence, war and chaos. *'Bombshell'* as a word creates in the reader, the mental imagery of tension. Mama's visit is usually not an event to look forward to. Her facial expression personifies and concretizes fear as Ije admits: *'I can see that from her face'*. The choice of the compound word *'Bombshell'* is most appropriate: idiomatically, it creates the effect of terrorism and explosion which describes Mama's conduct in the text.

Another instance is on (42) "*... she called her daughter in-law all sorts of name ... Ije did not say a word.*" *'not say a word'* is an idiomatic expression for *not reacting, revenging or retaliating*. It portrays Ije as respectful, especially to her mother in-law and shows her maturity and civility as an educated woman. She cannot afford to exchange words with Mama who is illiterate. Above all, the utterance sends the message of how an educated African woman should manage pain with dignity rather than respond with violence and confrontation. Other lessons that can be drawn from the idiomatic expression *'not say a word'* are:

- i. Silence is golden
- ii. Silence is the best answer to a fool.

Ije's 'silence' may have been deliberately highlighted for these effects. Silence is a non-verbal communication that speaks louder than words. There is strength in weakness which seems to be what Okoye tries to suggest here. The writer uses the utterance to show Ije's attitude to issues and to compare her with Virginia, who reacts in the opposite manner. Virginia exchanges words with Mama, telling her off from time to time. This is not surprising considering that Virginia is illiterate.

There are other utterances worthy of note which indicate the author's management of words for purpose delivery for example:

-her bulging belly, puffy cheeks and fat upper arms showed that she enjoyed food and ate more than was good for her figure. (25)

We notice that the underlined descriptive adjectives are consciously and deliberately chosen for a vivid description of an unattractive and an unkempt figure. There is a poetic effect created with the arrangement of the chosen diction in the utterance. Aristotle says the '*word*' is an echo to the sense. The underlined words readily create a mental picture of an obese and ugly looking person.

There is a lexical collocation in the utterance with '*bulging belly*', '*puffy cheeks*' '*fat arms*' that give a rhythmic effect. Similarly we notice another well-structured example in the use of repetition technique in an utterance delivered through Ije's advice to her friend.

Ugo, I can't imagine you dressing as flamboyantly as the other club members, I can't imagine you racing up and down our roads to attend the clubs numerous meetings. I can't imagine you taking part in the gossip and back-biting. I can't imagine you doing a host of other things. (31)

There is an effective use of repetition as a stylistic device for emphasis in the utterance. 'I can't imagine' is a deliberate repetition used to create emphasis of doubt and disbelief in Ije's thinking about the ability of her friend to cope with the ostentatious life of club members. It is a deliberate stylistic technique to create a rhythmic effect. The choice of diction in '*flamboyant*' echoes to the reader's psyche a feeling of ostentation.

Another good deployment of diction is evident in

“many versions of the incident erupted and each version ramified into different versions until no two peoples accounts of the story tallied. (83.)

An apt and beautiful description that captures the escalation of gossip as a natural phenomenon, 'Gossip' spreads like wild fire with its attendant mutations and adulteration as it goes on. Note the expression ...each version ramified until no two peoples account of the story tallied. The word '*Ramified*' is synonymous with exaggeration and or escalations. They are synonymously interchangeable with the word '*ramified*' because they share the same field of meaning with it. '*tally*' means '*match*' but for the purposes of giving an account or detail of an incident or event, the word '*match*' will not be a synonymous equivalent in that position of "tally" but the reader may still understand the word to mean '*match*'.

'erupted' captures the image of explosion, while wildfire becomes the best expression to describe the manner that gossip spreads. This is in adherence to the opinion of Jonathan Swift as adopted by Azuike that style is:

“a matter of the ability to slot in the right words in the most appropriate positions. Proper words in proper places makes the definition of Style” (120.)

This simply refers to the proper handling of diction as a stylistic device of great merit. The above linguo-literary analysis has revealed Okoye as a non-confrontational feminist. Her stand on complementarity feminism is obvious.

In *'Behind the Clouds'* Ifeoma Okoye also dwells extensively on a very sensitive issue in Igbo culture as in many other cultures; the issue of childlessness. This is one area that has defied the understanding of both the educated and the uneducated in the society. The issue of infertility is still widely blamed on the woman. Okoye addresses this matter by revealing that many childless marriages may not be the fault of the woman. She uses Dozie to buttress this fact, by proving that male infertility exists and is real. To achieve this, Okoye has carefully worded the utterances of Ije, Dozie, Ije's mother-in-law, the Doctor to illuminate and redirect readers opinion on this socio-cultural stigma against the women. In doing this, Okoye is advocating for the change she seeks – fair play on both sexes.

In *Behind the Clouds*, a happy marriage between Ije and Dozie is under attack due to the need for continuity of the lineage. Ije's mother-in-law becomes the traditional force that Dozie cannot totally ignore. Through this couple, Okoye explores the irony behind most childless marriages in the traditional Igbo cultural

context. The wife always accepts the guilt of infertility. Infact, in some cases male ego is protected by a discreet giving out of the wife to procreate through other men. Uchem (2001) decries the plight of women in childless marriages when she acknowledges that:

in a case of infertility, the woman is always blamed. Even if the man is impotent, he will not take the blame. Usually, after a marriage, people begin to look out for the arrival of a child. After a while, if there is no sign of a child forthcoming, people begin to wonder what is wrong and to drop words at the woman. The woman is suspected and accused of all sorts of things” (92)

Similarly, Okeke (1994) points out that

a major source of women’s oppression is the premium placed on having children. In the Igbo African cultural context, this particular issue, among others, determines a woman’s ultimate acceptability in marriage. To a great extent, it decides the stability of monogamous marriages (66).

In the text, Ije submits herself to harrowing experiences without the least suspicion of her husband’s infertility. She accepts the fact that the man is never at fault and should not be suspected. To her, the stigma of infertility rests on the woman. With this mindset even the Doctor’s insinuations did not suggest anything to her (68). Okoye rouses us to the true picture of women suffering in ignorance in a childless marriage. She introduces a greedy, vicious and promiscuous, but clever woman Virginia who understands that with pregnancy

she could get Dozie and wreck his marriage, and she did, by hanging another man's pregnancy on Dozie.

A friend of Ije, Beatrice had the same problem as Ije. But, Beatrice understands the hypocrisy in the whole patriarchal context on this matter, and she feels that if infidelity could save her marriage, why not explore it. Okoye's new image of the woman is presented in Ije as an ideal wife, loving, trusting and faithful. She rejects advice that will make her behave to the contrary. (27). She dismisses the advice of Patience with a smile and assurance to her that her husband Dozie is not capable of extra-marital affairs. Women are not left out in the case of infidelity, especially when they feel their marriage is under threat. Beatrice's case in the text is a case in point.(61). Beatrice confessed to Ije that:

My infidelity has saved my marriage for my husband was on the verge of sending me away and taking a new wife. (61)

The introduction of Beatrice's case in the text, shows how fair Okoye would like to be in her portrayal of the sexes. Okoye did not fail to expose the hypocrisy behind faith healers especially as it concerns infertility cases. (55) Ije's and Beatrice's experiences with Apostle John become an eye opener. Most women have compromised their fidelity just to keep their marriages. Okoye also directs our attention to the practices of some medical doctors who give false hope and perform wrong surgeries on women in order to correct infertility. For instance, at the end of *Behind the Clouds*, we see that it is not Ije that is infertile but Dozie. It is obvious that Okoye has consciously assigned utterances to the appropriate characters to pass this message across to the society. Her authorial voice serves as a channel for the realization of thematic harmony. The authorial

voice is used to support Ije's role as an epitome of the new image of the African woman. And for that matter to reveal the characteristics of the ideal feminist who does not contest traditional values but tries to accommodate them with civility and maturity.

Many writers would use passers-by, house-maids, house-boys, community members, friends as important characters whose utterances and roles often help the reader to understand and follow the story line. The inclusion of these minor but important characters is a good stylistic skill which a writer uses to give a lead to an unfolding plot.

In this text, Okoye uses the gossip between two community members, whom she labelled as one fair and beautiful woman, and the other, made up in height what she lacked in beauty (68) to highlight the societal concern on the issue of barrenness. The tall woman asks:

“They say he has no children.”

“His wife is barren” (68)

And next, the short woman queries:

What is going to happen to his money if he has nobody to leave it to? (68)

And again the tall one concludes:

‘He’ll certainly marry another wife unless he’s a fool’ (68)

The utterances that made up the gossip between the tall woman and the short woman are deliberately formulated to expose the thinking of the average Igbo person, and by extension, a typical African on the issue of infertility and or

bareness. In the context of the gossip between the two women the word ‘*certainly*’, linguistically connotes the obvious fact that marrying another wife is imminent for Dozie as long as Ije cannot bear him a child. Also, the word ‘*certainly*’ has been properly deployed in that context to lay emphasis on the obvious. It suggests the unconditionality of the values society has placed on the issue of bareness. We have also noticed that through the utterance of the short woman in this gossip, Okoye has alluded to the issue of inheritance as a serious societal value as she assigned the expression. “...what is he going to be doing with his money if he has nobody to leave it to” (68) to the short woman.

It is obvious that this utterance was made through the short woman just to illuminate the attachment the Igbo culture assigns to the issue of inheritance. It is for the same reason they prefer male children to female as well as a cause for polygamy in some cases. Okoye is aware that this is one of the major reasons men succumb to the pressure of their families, friends and even the society at large, to become victims of polygamy, promiscuity and failed marriages.

The issue of inheritance is of major traditional value in Igbo culture and in many parts of Africa. Many wealthy men opt for polygamy when they feel that one woman cannot bear enough sons to inherit their wealth. There is some stylistic significance created in making the utterance of the short woman in form of a question and not just as a statement. “*What is he going to do with his money if he has nobody to leave it to.*”(68). The reason, may be perhaps to recreate exactly the way such questions are posed to the men when family members begin to mount pressure on them to take another wife in cases of childless marriages. The question the short woman asked the tall one may not be different from that which

Dozie's uncle Udo may likely have asked Dozie after attending the launching where Dozie donated a huge sum of money to the community. Although Okoye did not state it explicitly but it was obviously implied (69).

Mama's utterances and actions have been used to stress the high premium placed on having children in a marriage as well as the frustration and disgust that arise when a marriage is not fruitful. In most cases, pressure and concern start from mother-in-laws and later to other members of the family. Dozie's mother, pressurizes his son until he succumbs. On one occasion, Mama says to his son:

Dozie why have you kept on denying me a grand child? ... Why can't you get a second wife?, what is wrong in marrying again when your wife cannot give you a child? (64)

Mama is the appropriate character to ask those rhetorical and emotional questions to his son, in order to appeal to his conscience. Those questions are carefully crafted to brain-wash and blackmail Dozie so as to make him change his mind and dance to the traditional tune. Mama's million-dollar rhetorical questions have only one answer. Dozie should marry another wife who can bear grand children for his parents.

On another occasion, Mama visits when her son is away. She doesn't hide her frustration as she insists she would stay until her son comes back so she could talk some sense into him. She says in disgust:

“I must see him (Dozie) before I go. And probably this is going to be my last visit to this house. Unless he takes his time and behaves like a man” (59)

Mama's anguish over the childless marriage of her son is made obvious in this utterance. The idiomatic expression 'behaves like a man' which is contained in Mama's utterance is referring to the fact that Dozie is not sufficiently courageous and brave to take another wife. 'behave like a man' as an idiomatic expression connotes '*strength and power*', '*authority*', '*courage*', '*bravery*' and '*decisiveness*'. Mama thinks her son lacks these qualities by remaining in a childless marriage with Ije. It will not be wrong to think that Mama by her utterance is trying to encourage her son to try flirting around with other women. There is a stylistic aesthetic in this utterance which is realized through cause and effect. Mama '*will stop visiting her son*' because '*he has not taken time to behave like a man*'.

Mama's unfriendly attitude to Ije simply borders on the fact that Ije doesn't have a child yet. She so much traumatized Ije, her daughter-in-law, with this misfortune that an authorial voice acknowledges that "Mama had brought so much trouble with her whenever she visited her son that Ije had come to dread her visits as one dreads a terminal disease." (57)

Note that the voice didn't say "whenever mama visited the family", but "visited her son". It portrays Mama as a selfish mother-in-law who feels that without children there is no family yet. Ije's fear of Mama is likened to a terminal disease. The metaphor '*terminal disease*' tries to qualify the extent of Ije's fear of Mama. Some terminal diseases are for example, cancer, heart failure, kidney failure amongst others. The victims of these illnesses don't survive them except by a miraculous divine intervention. This is the situation Ije finds herself with

Mama. Thank God, such intervention later came to Ije's rescue, otherwise, like a terminal disease Mama's wrath would have consumed her.

Other utterances have been located in the text in relation to the ordeal, trauma and humiliation barren women go through in the traditional African society. Ije's encounter with Virginia is a recreation of the social reality of polygamy, as well as an effort to expose the indignity barren women take from their co-wives who are lucky to have children. Okoye has created a nasty character in Virginia for purposes of humiliating Ije, who is being used to reveal the humiliation barren women undergo. Okoye has deliberately equipped Virginia with nasty words and utterances which are very suitable for the role she is playing for an obvious purpose and effect.

The very first time Virginia would be meeting Ije, things immediately fell apart between the duo. As soon as Ije introduced herself to Virginia, there was an exchange of fire with words as in combat. *"I'm Mrs Apia,"* Ije introduced herself, *"I don't think we've met before?"* Then Virginia replied defiantly *"I'm Mrs Apia too, I am carrying Mr. Apia's baby and I've come to take my rightful place in this house",*(75). The effect of Virginia's reply was explained by an authorial voice as

"Ije was stunned. The room seemed to be spinning round, or was it her head? She wanted to scream, to call the visitor an impostor, a liar. But she braced herself and said as calmly as she could "There must be a mistake. May be you mean another Mr. Apia." (75)

Okoye's good sense of managing diction is exhibited in this statement. Naturally, the old portrayal of the African woman would have involved shouting,

abuses or even a fight with Virginia. But the new image of the African woman reconstructed in this text by Okoye is one that is educated, civilized and courteous. The juxtaposition of the old image of the African woman and the new here, is a good stylistic technique. In this context, Ije and Virginia are being used for this comparison.

As if the first blow from Virginia was not enough for Ije, Virginia continued:

Don't be stupid, ... I know whom I am talking about. I'm carrying Dozie Apia's baby. You are his childless wife aren't you? I can't live outside with his baby while you, who have given him no child all these years, stay in and enjoy everything. (75)

Compared with this, Mama's bomb shell was a child's play. Virginia made sure that she repeated that she was carrying Dozie's baby just in case Ije did not hear it in the first instance. Linguistically, 'repetition' is used to create 'emphasis'. Virginia needed to emphasise this fact that she is carrying Dozie's baby to disarm Ije in this word combat between them. The pregnancy gives her confidence, right, and infact, supremacy over Ije. And truly, Ije was disarmed and defeated as she ran to her friend Ugo according to the omniscient narrator crying: "I'm ruined, Ugo she cried bitterly and collapsing into a chair, she began to sob like a child".(75)

This is a typical expression of pain. The word 'ruined' also means 'finished', 'defeated', 'hopeless' in this context. It means she has completely lost out in this battle to keep the marriage without a child. Crying is a natural reaction to pain, especially, for women. The inclusion of '*cried bitterly*' is therefore most

appropriate for the incident. This same reaction is well captured in another instance by the authorial voice to lay emphasis on the grief Ije had to cope with as a barren woman:

Tears of anger, hurt, disappointment, regret and uncertainty flowed copiously down her cheeks. She did nothing to stop them, she must let them flow or they would choke the breath out of her. (77)

The authorial voice has used the right diction suitable for expressing one's emotional state. '*anger*', '*hurt*', '*disappointment*', '*regret*' and '*uncertainty*' belong to the same set linguistically. They are semantically related in this context for the purposes of emphatically expressing emotional trauma.

It wasn't long after the arrival of Virginia that Ije realized she was contending with three forces. Virginia, Mama and even Dozie her husband. It is obvious that her problems and pains increased by the day, because of the same issue of her barenness. Virginia is full of herself and has no atom of respect for Ije. She is stubborn and uncouth. On one occasion, Ije had to advise Virginia to be a little orderly in the house. Virginia responded by shouting that "this house does not belong to you alone ... it's mine too and I'm going to behave as I like in it. Who are you to direct me in this house?" (95)

And Mama supports the pregnant wife of her son by adding "Don't mind her (Ije). You have more claim to this house than she does. Don't let her upset you. (95).

These two women have joined forces to torment their fellow woman, Ije, using her misfortune against her. It is not by accident that these women have been assigned these roles and utterances. Okoye designed this antagonism amongst

these women to reveal that men are not the only enemy women need to contend with, but women are their own problems and enemies first and foremost. She directs the readers attention to an issue that should be of concern to the feminist. Feminist ideology focuses on the liberation of women from the clutches of patriarchy. Okoye feels that charity should begin at home by exposing women's inhumanity to women as an area to address first, even as they are fighting the battle against subordination and subjugation in the patriarchal society.

Mama asserts that Virginia has more claim over the house than Ije because Virginia is pregnant and Ije is not, disregarding the fact that Ije and Dozie built the house and have been living in it peacefully. Mama's reaction and that of Virginia are almost the same. An adage has it that birds of a feather flock together. This is the type of relationship that binds Mama and Virginia. They both belong to the old order of the nagging, wild and unreasonable women, as portrayed in the works of art by many male writers while Ije belongs to the new order, the new image of the African woman. She epitomizes this new image by showing restraint in the event of provocation and pain. She does not join issues with the illiterate group, and club women, such as Mama and Virginia respectively. She is not a parasite like Virginia; she is economically independent and contributes to the up-keep of the family. She lives above the level of women like Mama and Virginia, that is why she ignores them and does not nag them back. This is the message Okoye is passing to the reader and the picture she tries to paint about the new African woman. Ije is a role model of an African feminist.

Ironically, when the joint forces of Mama and Virginia succeeded in driving Ije away from the house, there was no longer a common enemy to fight.

As it is often the case, Mama and Virginia turned around to fight each other. They couldn't stand each other and Mama left the house for the village unceremoniously.(115)

However, the text does not end without Okoye extending her skillful management of diction through Dozie's utterances to show that we still have men who are gender-friendly and sensitive; men who can still stop to apologise for wrong doings and make things up, men who still believe that women are the force behind every successful man and in fact, men who still believe in the complementary roles of a man and woman for ultimate success in the family. Dozie has been used to express this basic fact through his utterances while addressing Ije: "I couldn't have done so much without you. I don't know what would have become of me if I hadn't married you, (65).

We have noted earlier in this analysis how supportive Ije has been to Dozie and Dozie in turn shows appreciation and gratitude by praising Ije and noting that she has been the brain behind his success. This is a true confession which is rare among some men. But what is even more striking and interesting is that Dozie at the end, accepts the responsibility of the childlessness in their marriage. He apologises to Ije for subjecting her to several traumatic experiences when he was actually the cause: "I'm sorry that you've subjected yourself to all kinds of treatment, unpleasant ones and dangerous ones, when I have all along been the cause of our childlessness," (118).

Similarly, he apologized to Ije over the nasty episode with Virginia. The text says he did this with grief remorse and regret:

I'm extremely sorry for all I've done to you, Ije. I've wronged you in every way. All I ask of you is to forgive me. I've made a grievous mistake in life but I promise you. I'll never do such a thing again. I've learnt my lesson and I have learnt it the hard way. Pg.118

This is a happy ending with a genuine note of apology from Dozie. Notice the word 'sorry' and 'forgive' as correct diction and registers suitable for an apology. The second 'sorry' in the second apology was qualified with a gradable adjective 'extremely', 'extremely sorry' suggesting intensity of feeling in language use. It shows that the 'sorry' in the second apology is intensified because Virginia's episode is a worse offence than the later discovery of Dozie's infertility case which he had corrected. Dozie did not cause Ije as much pain as Virginia did. Most female feminist writers find it difficult to acknowledge the good sides of the men in their works. This is where Okoye champions a departure from the traditional norm of feminist literature. She seeks to uphold the good sides of both sexes for a better society.

4.3.3 Violation of Character-Code Concordance in *Behind the Clouds*

A Linguo-Literary analysis of *Behind the Clouds* cannot be completed without pointing out the 'Violation of Character-Code Concordance' in the Text.

We notice a violation of character-code concordance in *Behind the Clouds* in some instances. Azuike (2004) states that, "a novelist in his attempt to create credible and easily identifiable characters consciously and perhaps unconsciously introduces character types whom the readers are familiar with. He maintains that a violation of this expectation can be seen as a deviation from a stylistic norm which is capable of destroying the aura of make-believe for the readers. (26).

Our observation in *Behind the Clouds* is that all the characters, except Mama in some cases and James, speak good English. It leaves one to wonder whether Okoye was mindful of her management of diction while assigning utterances to characters such as Teresa, who is a house-girl, and even Adaku and Gabriel who came from the village, the tall and short women who perform the gossip role, Dozie's uncle amongst some others, as they all speak impeccable English which is not consistent with the roles assigned to them. Azuike further stressed that:

“The codes available to the Nigerian novelist are Standard English and it's translated or transliterated variety. Pidgin English and indeed indigenous languages. With this repertoire of codes, the novelist then constructs characters that he equips with the facility of one or two of the codes which accord with the roles such characters are playing in their different contexts” (27)

Okoye has by this oversight exhibited therefore, a significant and conspicuous departure from the stylistic norm of diction and character harmony or concord in this work. This is obvious, as we can see from the following examples from the text.

We start with Virginia, who is portrayed as a club girl in Owerri. The reader expects this character to be a school drop-out, or one with limited educational background or none at all. Virginia should have been equated with the likes of Rosa and Jagua who are prostitutes in Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana*, as they operate in similar environment. But in *Jagua Nana*, the codes with which Rosa and Jagua relate to people is pidgin. One would have thought that for a proper

assignment of code, Virginia should not have been seen to be speaking impeccable English by the role assigned to her. The following utterances of hers are noticeably in conflict with concord of code and character. On page 85, we note that Virginia snapped at Dozie by saying “Aren’t you ashamed to tell the mother of your baby to live outside your home while a woman who’s useless to you occupies it”. (85)

In another instance, Virginia shouted at Ije in correct and grammatically, correct sentences. Virginia addressed Ije: “...who are you to direct me in this house? (95).

And addressing Mama on the same matter, Virginia continues “She won’t let me feel free in this house. She thinks the house belongs to her alone. Imagine that!

On page 109, Virginia reported to Dozie on the whereabouts of Ije. ‘Ije left with her

belongings. She took Teresa with her, Good Riddance! (109)

Also on page 111, Virginia spoke a well educated person’s English even though she was said to have done that shamelessly. She shouts at Dozie:

I had better tell you the truth now; the baby is not yours. I chose you as it’s father because you’re the richest of the lot – and because you wanted a child so badly. Do you call yourself a man? Look here, if you don’t give me that money, I’ll tell the world about you. Wait till your friends know you for what you are!”.(111)

There is a revelation here in Virginia’s utterances. She is obviously likely to be a prostitute, but the code accorded to her is surely that of a well-educated woman.

There is therefore discordance of code and character in the presentation of her profile.

This is similar to the casting of Teresa who is given the role of a house-girl. Teresa is consistent in her communication with her Madam in good and Standard English. The following instances can buttress this point:

“Madam, it is for your sake that I have been in this house up till now”, (Teresa said with tears in her voice). The new Madam is treating me badly even master has joined her in scolding me all the time, even when I have done nothing bad. And look at what she is doing to you, too. You who have treated me like your little sister. Every time you’re away, the new madam tells master lies about you. I’m tired of staying in this house! (89).

It takes a well educated person to produce such an utterance which is devoid of grammatical error. This is definitely not the language expected of a house-girl. A violation of this expectation as in this case can only be regarded as a deviation from a stylistic norm.

There are other instances on pages 91 and 108.

On page (91) Teresa replying Mama’s question says: “Sorry Mama, I didn’t hear you, my mind was far away” (91) and on page (108), Teresa to her Madam, Ije, “Madam, she will kill me if I stay in this house without you. If you don’t want me to go with you I’ll go home to my people.” (108)

Other instances are located at pages 13, 44, 56. It is rather surprising that Teresa is operating with this type of code when we have not been told anywhere in the text about her educational background and exposure. Teresa’s code of operation

is seen as inappropriately assigned. This same situation applies to Gabriel and Udo – Dozie’s uncles.

Gabriel is a village boy who lives with Dozie’s mother in the village, but we notice that when Mama sent him on an errand to her son, Dozie, he spoke in a code that does not match what and how a village boy is meant to talk. We can see this on page 30 when Gabriel replied to Dozie’s enquiry about his visit:

“Yes, sir, she sent me to you. She said you and Madam should come home with me”, (39).

If we believe the concept of style as the individual, then Gabriel has been clothed in a borrowed robe in this context. Do we accept that Gabriel is educated and yet he is serving Mama in the village? Something is not well placed here and that is definitely the code. This same improper assignment of code affects Udo. Udo is supposed to be Dozie’s Uncle who had attended the launching where his nephew Dozie, was made Chief-Launcher. This Uncle, like Mama his sister, is known to be uneducated. But ironically on page 69 the utterance of this Uncle is discordant with his person. He says to Dozie his nephew, *‘I want a ride in that beautiful car of yours’*. The word *‘ride’* is not Udo’s age dialect; so it is out of place in his utterance. *‘Ride’* is an adolescent age dialect. Okoye failed in matching these identified characters with the appropriate code. The proper thing would have been to assign them pidgin and some ungrammatical utterances for the realization of character-code concordance.

Nevertheless, we will not fail to point out that some utterances of Mama and James are good examples of character-code concordance. James for example always related to everyone in pidgin code. For instance, on page 13, his reply to

his Madam's question is, "*He say you get ready for party in the night. He say he will be late for afternoon food,*" (13).

On page 20, James replies to his Madam's question:

"Master come home. He say he no want lunch because he go miss plane. Then he left with blue box. The one he take when he want go for tour," (20).

On page 22, James replies to his Madam's question: "*Madam, she no come back yet. She stay long when she go tie her hair*", (23).

James is a house-boy in the text. We can agree that those utterances are typical of house-boys. They are usually not educated. His utterances are in contrast with that of his co-house-help, Teresa. James, unlike Teresa, operates with the appropriate code in this context.

Similarly, Mama's utterances are well fashioned and appropriately aligned and delivered. We can see such examples on page 91 where Mama asks "where is my new missisi"? On page 65, Mama says to Dozie: "*I know why you don't take another wife ... she has bewitched you,*"(65).

On page 91 Mama requested for water thus: "*Get me some water to drink ... not the type that pulls my teeth*". This is a direct translation, metaphorically used.

Mama's utterances have been deliberately applied for purpose delivery. Mama plays the role of a typical traditional mother-in-law and her reaction to the issue of barrenness reflects this. Mama is supposed to be illiterate, meanwhile, her utterance did not accord with this expectation. For instance on page 58, Mama said to Teresa, while referring to Ije her daughter-in-Law: " I don't blame her.

Why can't she sleep for hours on end? Has she any work to do? Has she any children to look after? In another instance, Mama addressed Teresa, thus:

Why are you standing there looking at me like that? Have you nothing better to do? Do you mean Dozie did not tell you when to expect him? I must see him before I go. And probably this is going to be my last visit to this house. Unless he takes his time and behaves like a man (59).

In another development, Mama asked her son, Dozie:

“What is wrong with marrying again when your wife cannot give you a child? Who says educated men don't take more than one wife? I don't have to go far to give you examples. You know the doctor whose father's house is near us... Are you more educated than they? (64-65).

When dozie did not react nor respond to Mama's sentiments, Mama continued:

... she has used medicine to make you not to look at another woman. The medicine has even affected you attitude to me. You used to obey me, but now my words to you are as useless as pouring water on a stone, (65).

Mama's utterances obviously violate character-code concordance. Okoye leaves us to wonder what Mama's educational background is. It is possible that Okoye does not want to litter her text with so many ungrammatical utterances since she is addressing educated women on the type of feminism that is workable in the African context. Audience factor may probably have caused this stylistic omission and exclusion.

4.4 *MEN WITHOUT EARS*

In the opening paragraph of this text, the writer immediately introduces the reader to the frustration passengers encounter at the Lagos Airport as experienced by Chigo:

“Lagos Airport was pandemonium. I felt ill at ease as I picked my way through the chaos to the checking-in section. Surprisingly, the airport officials seemed to thrive on the disorderliness or their countenances showed a benign contentment, a sort of silent approval of the confusion. (1)

She uses this paragraph to capture the social problems of disorderliness and indiscipline in Nigeria. The airport has been used as a micro-society to represent the macro-society – Nigeria. The topic sentence ‘Lagos airport was pandemonium’ is catchy enough to produce the desired effect of confusion. The choice of word ‘*pandemonium*’ is the best metaphor to describe the situation at the airport. ‘*pandemonium*’ is an appropriate diction to express a state of commotion and disorderliness. The word also has an onomatopoeic effect to the reader or hearer of it, because it sends to the human psyche a feeling and sense of chaos and confusion. The word has been stylistically placed at the opening paragraph of this text to capture the reality of the Nigerian situation. A country that is in a state of pandemonium, is where indiscipline does not surprise anybody anymore, rather it has become a tradition. One feels out of place if you are not part of the madness. Uloko observes that “people will doubt your wisdom and even sanity if, “... you do not do what others are doing.” (67). That means one who is not part of this madness is regarded as the mad person himself instead. *T*

felt ill at ease' (1). Chigo felt very uncomfortable with what he saw. '*ill at ease*' is an idiomatic expression which describes the feeling of '*disgust*', '*disappointment*' '*frustration*' even, '*embarrassment*' by its semantic extension. The writer deliberately chose that expression to help us understand and feel the intensity of Chigo's dissatisfaction with the extent of decay his country has degenerated to within a few years he was away. Uloko also confirms the messy state of the airport using the metaphor '*mad house*' to equate it. '*Lagos is a madhouse*', (10), he agrees with his brother Chigo. '*madhouse*' connotes '*dirt*' and '*disorderliness*' in the airport environment.

Chigo's disappointment with the situation at the airport is in contrast with the attitude of the airport officials who are described as '*thriving on the disorderliness*' (1), the choice of word '*thriving*' in this context is well placed. It is synonymous with "*benefiting*" '*enjoying*' and '*profiting*' from the situation. This is evident from the attached phrase which describes the officials as giving "*a sort of silent approval of the confusion*" (1). The use of the airport environment to capture a socially degenerating Nigeria complies with a stylistic norm which requires the writer to sustain the readers interest by plotting and setting from and within the readers environment.

From the opening paragraph, Chigo's disgusting experience appears to have just begun. The next encounter brought him face to face with the impunity with which people offer and receive bribe at the airport. He was shocked to learn that bribery has been entrenched in the system like a tradition. It is conducted like a syndicate business where the touts are the field workers. For Chigo to get a boarding pass, he needed to bribe his way through as a normal thing. What

transpired between him and a tout was an eye opener to the reality on ground in Nigeria. The encounter goes thus:

- Tout: 'You de travel sir?'
- Chigo: 'Yes'
- Tout: 'To where sir'
- Chigo: 'Enugu'
- Tout: 'You don get boarding pass sir?'
- Chigo: 'No'
- Tout: 'I fit help you get sir'
- Chigo: 'It's extremely kind of you to want to help me'
- Tout: 'Just give me fifty naira, sir, and I'll check-in your luggage for you and get you a boarding pass'
- Chigo: 'Get out of my sight before I call the Police!'
- Tout: 'You go see .May be you new for this place. Nobody fit give you boarding pass unless you give am money'. (2)

The author's well dramatized dialogue between Chigo and the tout captures real-life experience for most readers especially those who use the airport often. To them, this encounter is not strange. The writer reveals a socio-economic predicament which has defied any solution-bribery. We notice an effective use of

character-code concordance in the dialogue between Chigo and the tout. Chigo is educated and civilized so the code of Standard English assigned to him is most appropriate, while the tout uses pidgin as the proper code for linguistic operation in the given context. This stylistic harmony of character and code creates an aura of make-believe which captures and sustains the readers interest:

The choppy pidgin sentences such as

- (i) 'you dey travel sir'?
- (ii) 'To where sir'?
- (iii) 'You don get boarding'?
- (iv) 'I fit help you get one sir.' (2)

as used by the tout suggest that a sharp practice is involved. The deceitful, courteous use of the word '*sir*' is part of the art of this business and its repetition is meant to lure the victim into the act. The pidgin sentences are put together like a poem which he recites uncountable times in a day. We notice that when he didn't succeed he removed the word '*sir*', for instance "*you go see*". (2)

The airport officials are not alone in not living up to their responsibilities as they condone and abate corruption and indiscipline. We have another example where a police officer joined the traffic rule breakers instead of helping to clear traffic congestion. Uloko observed that "*Even a police officer in a police vehicle left his lane to join the traffic-rule breakers instead of helping to clear the congestion or at least setting a good example by keeping to his lane*" (15). The indictment on the police when this text was written so many years ago is still valid today in the country. The word '*even*' is very important to us in this context for three reasons. First, it functions as an element for 'presupposition'. Second,

for its connotative quality and third as a cohesive device in the paragraph. We need to note that starting that sentence with the word '*Even*' pre-supposes that a police officer is not expected to be involved in such behaviour being a law enforcement agent. It also connotes disappointment. Without the word '*Even*' the implication of that sentence would not be fully appreciated. The choice of that word is so important that it is placed at the position of the head word for highlight and prominence. It needed to come before the noun phrase subject of that sentence (NP). "*A police officer in a vehicle*" for a special semantic effect. The word also serves as a cohesive element, in that paragraph linking Chigo's observations and creating coherence in the paragraph.

The analysis of this text reveals the theme of greed which breeds other social problems in the society. This subject is introduced with the activities of the rich men in the society. The high value for the acquisition of titles in order to gain recognition in the society is the major driving force for the greed and craze for money described in the text.

Uloko and his friends acquire titles such as Orimili – the sea that never dries (21). Akajiaku – The custodian of money (21); Osi na ami ego – The tree that bears money as its fruit – (22); Odoziaku – one that manages wealth, (22). The ones we have identified in the text are those exclusively reserved for the very wealthy in Igbo land. In Igbo cultural context, these titles are not only associated with wealth but also with some remarkable achievements in the society. The title holders are respected. They are accorded recognition because they make things happen in the community. They attract praise-singers who always give them false impression of life and wealth. Most title holders strive to maintain their

status by wearing expensive clothes and riding in expensive cars, attending parties and launchings to donate money publicly. Uloko's dressing was described by an authorial voice when he went to pickup Chigo at the airport:

He was dressed in a beautiful white lace agbada. Three rows of coral beads and a long gold chain with pendant as large as a saucer feminised his neck. He wore a red cap without a feather, and held a big round leather fan in his right hand (10).

One wonders whether this is not overdressing for just going to pick up a brother from the airport. But Uloko is the Orimili of the community and cannot be seen to dress casually. He also came in a prestigious Mercedes-Benz car. We notice the authorial voice's sarcastic description of Uloko's dressing. His 'pendant' is described with a simile of '*saucer*'. This creates an imagery of something that is out of proportion, too big and out of place or order. The stylistic effect is to deliberately ridicule Uloko's dressing. '*Saucer*' has been used as an adjective to qualify the size of this pendant. Note also the phrase '*feminised his neck*'. This is a negative compliment. Uloko looks like a woman by this dressing. He must have looked very funny which is counter-productive. The other titled man '*osisi na ami ego*' dresses in a gorgeous agbada lace and rows of coral beads always like Akajiaku who also wears agbada lace and rows of coral bead. Their women are not left out. They wear four to five gold chains at a time and some have all their fingers and some of their toes adorned with enormous glittering rings. (24) 'agbada', 'coral beads', 'red cap' 'leather fan' are costume which are culturally associated with opulence in the Igbo traditional society. By identifying these items in this context, the writer gives the reader a touch of cultural flavour which

spices up the discussion in the text. We observe that 'agbada' does not have an English word equivalent so the author retains it in vernacular all through.

There are yet others who are not titled men but they go by aliases such as '*young millionaire*', '*money maker*', '*Ichie Gold*', '*Swiss Bank*' and for the women '*cash madam*', '*Madam True Money*', '*Bank*'. The semantic implication of the aliases is obvious because one way or the other each of the aliases is attached to money and or wealth. All these people share the belief that without money life is not worth living. Uloko confirms this when he told Chigo that 'without money you are noting' (42)

To maintain status-quo, these men must live ostentatious life by hook or crook. They borrow money from people and banks to cover up financial embarrassment. (57) Uloko borrows money from Chigo. They believe money is the only yard stick for measuring success and it also guarantees happiness. This impression and belief are confirmed from Uloko's utterance which the author couched in rhetorical questions. When Chigo asked Uloko whether money was the only means for measuring success. He answered thus:

Tell me what else is? Education? Children? A high post in the government service? Political Power? Are all these not means of acquiring money? To me to be wealthy is to be successful. (63)

The writer consciously designed these rhetorical questions to show some logical thinking on the part of people like Uloko. His argument sounds credible and convincing at first reading because his summary is based on the premise he presented. Like his other friends with a similar mindset, Uloko has deliberately avoided reference to integrity in his list, as part of success.

Chief Alike Otaka alias ‘the young millionaire’ has earlier on, made a similar statement:

I’ve made nonsense of education with my success. I stopped at Standard six, you know. What you now call elementary six in the primary school. But that has not prevented me from being a success. A professor’s salary is less than what I give my wife for chop money. (56).

In comparison, the two men see education as not comparable to other pursuits that give them wealth. To them therefore, education does not stop one from attaining financial success and fulfilment. A semantic analysis of the final declaration of the young millionaire’s utterance that “A professor’s salary is less than what give my wife for chop money”. (56) shows that the young millionaire’s utterance contains the following semantic

implicature:

- i. A show of inferiority complex
- ii. A professor’s salary is meagre
- iii. Education is useless (since his wife’s chop money is more than a professor’s salary).

These meanings are decoded from the utterance because the word ‘Professor’ represents the highest level of educational qualification and or attainment. This helps the reader to understand better the young millionaire’s mindset. The writer has made the right choice of word in ‘professor’ for this specific purpose.

Uloko and his likes live false and ostentatious life. They are involved in dubious businesses such as borrowing money from the banks without collateral

but by giving the bank managers a percentage of the money borrowed; borrowing from individuals and not paying them back; taking advance payments from people as contractors and not rendering the services. We have some examples to support this life style. Uloko complains to his brother Chigo that:

He (father) flares up when he learns that I have borrowed some money from friends or banks. Am I the only person who borrows money?.. Father should not expect me to live the way he did when he was my age. Times change. He must admit that. And we have to change with them. All I know is that I won't be left behind, Never!
(59)

On another occasion, he confesses that he borrowed money from the bank because he donated a huge sum of money at a launching to the utter amazement of his brother. "To tell you the truth, I had to borrow that money from the bank"
(89)

He sees nothing wrong in doing things that are against his conscience or convictions as long as other people are doing them. We need to note that the rhetorical question "Am I the only person who borrows money?" (59) is not meant to be answered by anyone. Uloko uses this question in his utterance to reveal to the reader that he is not alone in this practice. Corruption has a bandwagon effect. Father 'flares up' (59) is the right idiomatic expression to describe father's reaction to the life of borrowing which his son is living. It suggests 'objection' and 'dissatisfaction'. An appropriate choice of expression to describe a natural reflex action of a parent over his son's misbehaviour. The dependent clause 'to tell you the truth' shows that Uloko truly wanted to be frank

with his brother with a note of disguised guilt. It represents confession in the context of use.

We may recall that earlier on, father had complained to Chigo about Uloko's excesses:

I'm sorry to tell you that, I've lost my influence over Uloko. He is on the path of self-destruction. Making money has become an obsession that rules his life. I'm sorry to say that I cannot rescue him from the fatal plunge he has taken before he goes too far' 'you must have noticed the strained relationship between us. It is all because I have tried to stop him from the big chase for naira which is now the rage in our country. It is all because I have tried to stop him from becoming a slave to debt for life in order to secure things which he cannot afford but pursues simply because others have them. (47 – 48)

The writer has used this admonition from Uloko's father, to indicate the predicament of other fathers who find themselves in the same situation. He speaks their minds. We notice that father's utterance has been designed to summarise Uloko's counterfeit life and by extension the lives of other greedy people in the society generally. This family problem is not unfamiliar to the reader because father and Uloko his son, represent the next door neighbours, colleagues in the office, uncles, cousins and nephews, fellow worshippers in a church or mosque and family friends. With father, the right thing is said by the right person on the right occasion. The writer's effort meets the expectations of the reader. But father has not finished complaining about the effort he has made to correct his son without success. He continues:

“... I have tried to restrain him from actions that will be fatal to him. I have told him several times to stop bothering about what others might think about him; to stop wearing himself out by trying to be like those men with false pretensions and counterfeit appearances. How can I make Uloko realise that true popularity does not consist in having a large following of men bent on getting something out of him. How can we save him from the fatal step which he is bent on taking? The rat that joins a lizard for a frolic in the rain will remember only when it is too late that he will not dry himself as easily as the lizard. P.48

Father ended on a proverbial note. (48) An Igbo proverb used commonly as a piece of advice to an erring person. He believes that some day his son may not be as lucky as his friends. The stylistic effect of proverbs is invaluable in a work of art. It is particularly significant as a social control mechanism amongst the Igbo people of Nigeria. Although, the use of proverbs is not limited to the Igbo people alone, other Nigerian ethnic groups and other Africans also find proverbs useful to enliven conversations and speeches. The observation of Dundee (1965) as cited by Azuike (2004) lends credence to the writer's reason for concluding father's admonition with a proverb. Dundee states that proverbs are

used to express social approval and disapproval; praise for those who conform to accepted social conventions and criticism or ridicule for those who deviate; warning, defiance or derision of a rival or enemy and advice, counsel, or warning to a friend when either contemplates

action which may lead to friction, open hostilities or direct punishment by society. (230).

Father has used the proverb for reasons of warning, counsel, disapproval and even defiance as contained in Dundee's statement. (Azuike 2004)

Father's proverb has a metaphorical quality, because it is not directed to a child or to a foreigner but to a 'son' and an adult who can decode the meaning without difficulty, and fathom the implication with ease. Nevertheless, we must agree that Okoye is not a fan of proverbs. She uses them sparingly. This may have been one of the reasons simplicity is a hallmark of her writing. We also notice that in this one stretch of complaint to Chigo about Uloko, father has used 'repetition' to lay emphasis on his effort to correct Uloko

(1) 'I have tried to' stop him from the big chase for naira... (48)

(2) 'I have tried to' stop him from becoming a slave to debt ... (48)

(3) 'I have tried to' restrain him from actions that will be fatal to him ... (48)

Repetition here creates emphasis and relevance. By this, father's effort is properly highlighted. Further in the text, we meet a defiant Uloko who does not care about his father's concerns for him. He says:

Father should not expect me to live the way he did when he was my age. 'Times change.' He must admit that. And we have to change with them. All I know is that I won't be left behind. Never! I do

what most people do. These people have not suffered. They have not perished. Why must I?" (59)

Uloko is adamant to father's wise counsel. No one can talk him out of this resolve. 'Times change' (Reason)

'Never!' (an exclamation)

'Why must I?' (question)

These are linguistic features in the utterance that imply or suggest rage and disagreements in real communication. Uloko does not agree with father's thinking. He feels he does not belong to the same generation with father. Perhaps the generational gap between him and his father renders father's wise counsel obsolete. We notice that Uloko has always given sound and logical arguments to defend his actions. But it must be pointed out that his arguments are full of hasty conclusions and generalizations. 'If everyone is doing it' what of father and Chigo? If people are killing themselves, must you also kill yourself? But as usual Uloko calculatively replied: '*I do what most people do*' (59) which shows that many people are involved in one criminal activity or the other in the society. "*they have not suffered*" (59) "*they have not perished*" (59). No one is ready to bring criminals to book, rather they are the most respected members of the society because of the amount of wealth they control. The writer is aware that most delinquent children pose similar questions to their parents by just looking around in the society. This may have informed her choice of a string of those questions by Uloko.

Uloko's utterance is deliberately framed to serve as a reminder of the title of the text '*Men Without Ears*'. It also helps to illuminate the fact that most

parents are at the mercy of the peers and friends of their children. These forces are capable of erasing good family upbringing from a child. Evil association corrupts good manners. It is possible Uloko is a victim of these forces and the society at large. In the text, we identify that greed and craze for wealth and money are not limited to the illiterate and drop-outs. A medical doctor is reputed for extorting money from patients in a government hospital in order to give them special attention. (29) ‘He loves money more than Judas’ (28). Uloko’s wife refers to a doctor as ‘*Judas*’. The word ‘*Judas*’ is a biblical reference of a man who took bribe and betrayed his master – Jesus. The word ‘*Judas*’ serves as a metaphor for greed and bribery. Perhaps, Uloko thinks he has a point when he says that everyone is doing it. But that does not make it right as Uloko is eventually consumed by this evil trend.

The end of Uloko gives father a post-humous vindication. After father’s death, Uloko continues his false life of robbing peter to pay paul, donating borrowed money at launchings for media publicity and bribing people in order to be a member of the Igwe’s cabinet. What followed these was something he could not bribe – Death.

Suddenly Uloko took ill and we learnt from the wife that:

His friends have deserted him because he cannot pay back the loans they gave him. Even Young Millionaire has abandoned him ... Worst of all, he has been expelled from his club because he can no longer meet his financial obligations” (154)

The reader can reason that it is possible this development gave Uloko high blood pressure which resulted to stroke and death eventually. We must appreciate the

artistic summary which the writer provides through the utterance of Anny, the wife of Uloko. This summary captures the consequences of the type of life Uloko lived. It leaves the reader with the right guess of what is to follow – end of the road for him.

We must note the registers (diction) of doom and misfortune which the writer included in the utterance of Anny to create the desired effect

- He was ‘abandoned’
- He was ‘deserted’
- He was ‘expelled’

This quickly reminds us of the definition of Style as “proper words in proper places’ as asserted by Turner in Azuike (1992:120). It is the ability to place the right words in the most appropriate position for a desired effect.

In *Men Without Ears*, Okoye is first and foremost a social critic exposing the corrupt and decadent society as we have analysed above. The consequences of greed and craze for money are given prominence in the text. She believes this tendency is not gender specific. Both sexes are involved. The utterances which Okoye has deliberately assigned to the characters are aimed at revealing her attitude and opinion on these societal ills as they affect men and women. As the story unfolds, we see Okoye’s female characters through their utterances, activities and roles, direct us to Okoye’s effort at recreating the image of the African woman, without undermining the writer’s crusade for complementarity of roles between male and female genders.

Although we have noted that okoye acted predominantly as a social critic in this text, but we still identified certain utterances in the text which reveal Okoye’s

feminist concerns. This brings us back to our emphasis in this thesis. We note father's complaint to Chigo, his son, about how much time Adaego gives to her business to the detriment of the family.

“Every day she leaves for the market very early in the morning. And when does she come back? Does she ever care about cooking meals for me or the children? Of course not. All she thinks about is making money. I wish I knew what she's going to do with all that money she's making”. (33 – 34)

We can see from father's utterance that the home front is totally neglected. The rhetorical questions in father's utterance reveal pain in his heart as he wonders how unreasonable Adaego has become in the name of making money. On another occasion, Ogoji chides Adaego “*keep on neglecting Father. Keep on running after money. You'll learn your lesson one day, the hard way.*” (44) These are well strategised complaints assigned to the appropriate characters to enhance thematic unity and consistency of purpose. Okoye assigned another scornful utterance to father in order to highlight this all important family matter. Father remarks scornfully to Chigo: She'd make a good wife for Uloko.. Both of them will do anything for money”(115) .This short utterance is loaded with meanings.

In the text we understand Adaego does petty trading to support the family. She is not a liability. She strives for financial independence though in an unacceptable and unprecedented manner. Perhaps this accounts for her short comings in her domestic responsibility. Okoye is aware that some women pursue money in such a way that the family is abandoned and children and husbands are

neglected. The consequences of this are grievous to the family and to the society at large. We can see that men also suffer oppression, abandonment and neglect from women, and someone needs to talk about it. Our understanding and verdict here is that Okoye believes in the family and fair play from both sexes.

In Igbo language *Adaego* means ‘daughter of money’ literally. Semantically, the name ‘*Adaego*’ is an echo to a mental association with wealth. *Adaego* is the female version of the likes of *Uloko*. *Uloko* has been identified in the text as a very greedy man, whose insatiable appetite for money led to various dirty business deals that landed him into trouble at the end, and eventually, premature death. When father added that “Both of them (*Adaego* and *Uloko*) can do anything to get money”, Okoye wants us to understand that greed is not gender discriminatory. We can see how fair Okoye can be in her assessment and judgement of the sexes. *Adaego*, like *Uloko*, believes in money before any other considerations in life. The semantic implication of “*She’d make a good wife for Uloko*” as father observed, implies that *Uloko* would tolerate *Adaego*’s excesses as long as she brings home money. They are compatible. They share the same high appetite for money. People are naturally joined by common interest.

Adaego however, defends herself by saying “*I have to provide for my children*” (116). This is a modern time reality; A socio-economic awareness that is spreading rapidly amongst women globally. It is an offshoot of feminism. Many women these days would not like to fold their hands and watch their children starve. Father, *Adaego*’s husband, is old and retired. He does not earn money. He depends on what his elder children give him. This is never enough for the family. *Adaego* does not want to depend on father’s children to sustain

her family. '*to provide for her family*', is the right expression to explain Adaego's drive.

However, Okoye quickly provides another utterance to counter Adaego's assertion, to prove that provision of food for the family should not be the only way to care for it. Family values cannot be sacrificed at the altar of business and career commitments. The reply to Adaego's excuse by Chigo is appropriately worded to make nonsense of such excuses in a family setting. He tells Adaego that:

many women in this village cater for their families single handed, yet they do not neglect them nor do they come home from market late.

This is the last time I will speak to you about this matter." (116).

However, this utterance also comes in handy here to stress the fact that women also do fend and cater for their families. Even in some cases they are bread winners and yet would not make noise about that nor do they neglect their families. These women are different from Adaego's type. The purpose of this utterance is to expose the reversal of roles in the family in modern times, where women work and fend for their families with little or no support from their husbands. Stylistically, the depiction of the reversal of role in the family is a departure from the traditional role usually assigned to women in literature. In this context, women are no longer the ones who stay at home doing domestic chores, answering 'oriaku' (an Igbo word which suggests that women are consumers of wealth), bearing children and nursing them. Okoye tries to paint a new picture of the African woman as industrious, diligent and financially independent from the man. However, Okoye does not fail to caution that the

family should not suffer as a result of this emancipation. This is in line with her purpose in *Behind the Clouds* where Ije is used to portray this same image of the African woman; she is financially independent and supportive to the husband and even the extended family. In all these, the purpose is to make Okoye's feminist thinking obvious; a non-radical approach which can fit into the African traditional cultural context.

Further in the text, Uloko's wife Anny, is cast by the author as an accomplice. She never warned her husband, Uloko concerning his excesses. Unlike Ije in *Behind the Clouds*, Anny never advised Uloko properly. This is an indictment on the part of the woman. Anny represents some women who are fair-weather wives; Father and Chigo represent social critics in the society. There is a ray of hope that there are still good people around. Chigo is portrayed as a feminist by the extent of his care and concern for Anny, his brother's wife. On page 164, he says: "As I watched Anny overcome by grief, I resolved I would not fail her. I would not go back to Tanzania". Men still make sacrifices for women. We do have feminists among the men in the society, Okoye insinuates.

4.5 *The Trial and Other Stories*

This text captures the inherent gender bias and inequality in most traditional African societies. The work speaks for women who often bear the brunt of some inhuman traditional rites in a patriarchal culture when they become widows. It exposes the trying experience of widows in Africa and in the Igbo tradition in particular. The plight of the widows is addressed in this text through a collection of fictional short stories which the writer has used to explore the experiences and circumstances of women in the society. There are nine short stories in the text

namely: (i) Soul healers (ii) Women (iii) A Strange Disease (iv) The Voiceless Victim (v) The Trial (vi) The New business woman (vii) From wife to Concubine (viii) Second chance and (ix) Daughter for sale. The writer draws our attention to the traumatic experience which widows are subjected to in most African cultures and traditions. Nevertheless, the work equally explores viable options for redressing this social injustice and human right abuse.

We have analysed and highlighted how the writer has drawn most creditably upon a variety of linguistic registers, utterances and expressions that we encounter regularly in everyday life, as a stylistic means of achieving her purpose. She conforms to a particular fictional narrative style as upheld by Bradford (1997) who cited Greimas (1966, 1970) thus:

Fictional narratives, should reflect the deep-rooted ‘grammars’ of human society: *Syntagmes contractuels* – formal contracts, family bonds, close relationships, institutional ties, *Syntagmes performanciels* – trials, arguments, the performance by taste; *Syntagmes disjonctionnels* – physical movements, departures, arrivals. p (54)

In the syntagmatic axis of a sentence, each word or phrase is tied to an accumulative sequence which generates larger units of meaning. Similarly in fictional stories, incidents, events, issues and experiences are explored by the writer who designs and assigns utterances, expressions and roles in a text which are pieced together by the reader to get the message.

Often, the intended message of the writer may not be grasped merely by the piecing together of the utterances and expressions of the characters in the text.

For example, we can understand an utterance ‘I need a drink’ as a simple combination of pronoun, verb, indefinite article and noun, but its meaning can change radically when some sociological and non-linguistic background of the speaker is considered. If we know that the speaker is an alcoholic speaking over the phone, or someone who speaks to us from the football pitch or at the end of a marathon, the contextual circumstances will effectively determine the message of that utterance. (Bradford 1970:56 – 57).

In view of this, all the nine stories are based on widowhood. At this point it is necessary to disclose that the writer of this text is a widow, herself. This knowledge can help us to understand the peculiarity of this text. It may also play a part in our perception of the style and message of the text. Stylistic analysis involves an integration of the linguistic and sociolinguistic elements to determine the meaning and message of a text.

4.5.1 Story I – Soul Healers

The text opens with its first story entitled ‘Soul Healers’, which has a metaphorical implication. ‘Soul Healers’ refers to children who are often a source of succour and hope for the widows. They are regarded as treasures and investments worth dying for and or living for. They lend psychological and emotional support to their mothers thereby helping to cushion the trauma of widowhood.

In this story Somadi, a widow, resolved to either die or languish in jail than to continue to live without her children who have been taken away from her by her husband’s family. She declares:

I can't continue to live without my children, my soul healers. I can't let them suffer while I'm still alive. I'm prepared to die for them or languish in jail for them. You can take me to the police station if you still want to, if you don't believe my story" (14)

We note the word '*languish*' as an appropriate diction to explain the nature and degree of the suffering Somadi is willing to endure for the sake of her children. '*languish*' also collocates with '*jail*'. In fact, she is prepared to receive the capital punishment, '*I'm prepared to die for them*', (14) rather than give up on her children. The African woman places a high premium on raising her children. This virtue is the writer's target as expressed in Somadi's utterance. This portrays a good image of the African woman, one who loves and cares for her children.

Somadi, who was accused of killing her husband by her late husband's family, lost all her possessions to the family, but she was determined to battle the family over the custody of her children. She needed the children to heal her soul and soothe her pain. In her desperation, she went to her children's school and lured them to abscond with her. On their way an omniscient narrator tells us

She looked lovingly at her children now united with her she knew the battle would continue. Her husband's people would try again to take Ada and KC (the children) away from her, but "She would guard them as a mother hen guards her chicks from the ravenous kite (.4)

The simile as a '*mother hen*' is used to describe Somadi and by extension, the typical African woman. This is a figurative expression which stresses the kind of attachment women have with their children in the African society. Women

hardly abandon their children to the *'ravenous kite'*. *'Ravenous kite'* is used metaphorically to represent Somadi's husband's family and the unsafe society at large. The writer wants us to understand that the way the *'mother hen'* protects and guards its chicks jealously from the ravenous kite is similar to what women do for their children. This comparison of the woman to the mother hen offers the reader an understanding of the depth of love and bond which exists between mothers and their children. There is a quick reminder to the reader in the utterance that the widow's battle was not yet over *'She knew the battle would continue. Her husband's people would try again to take Ada and KC away from her ...'* However, it is a battle she was determined to fight even with her life. Somadi gave us a glimpse of the humiliating experience she had from her late husband's family during his burial:

When we arrived at the village for the burial, my husband's brothers and sisters, his uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and cousins, all jeered at me and spat at me and called me a murderer. They said that if I hadn't left my husband to go to Lagos that he wouldn't have died.

(13)

Usually in the Igbo society, a widows' ordeal does not end with the immediate family of the man. It comes from left, right and centre, accommodating all the man's relatives as enumerated by Somadi in her utterance. *'Jeered'* and *'spat'* are registers of humiliation and insult well deployed in the utterance to reveal the dehumanizing treatment meted on the widow by her late husband's family. They called her a *'murderer'* because they believed she deliberately killed her husband.

As the story progresses we notice the writer's usual style of introducing and addressing topical, social problems with her central theme. At the time she wrote *'The Trial'*, the prevalent social issue was the kidnapping of children from schools for ritual killing. Today, kidnapping has taken another dimension in the society. People are no longer necessarily kidnapped for ritual but for ransome. However, these days children are less the kidnappers target, the high and mighty are the most sought prey. Somadi was wondering whether her children would recognize her let alone allowing her to take them. The authorial voice said she reminded herself that:

‘Kidnapping was rampant in the country and children were being warned by their parents and teachers not to talk to strangers and not to accept gifts from people they didn't know. For a fleeting moment she saw herself being accused of kidnapping and being thrown into a police cell among armed robbers and murderers. (6)

Somadi was aware of a court injunction granted in favour of her husband's family for the custody of the children. She reflected on what will be her fate if she was caught. Her utterance at this point is a deliberate means of exposing the Nigeria Police and the Judiciary. If this adventure turns sour, she soliloquises:

she would spend months or even years in Police custody before her case would be brought before a judge. The trial will take ages as was often the case in Nigeria. Her children would go back to Martha and her Husband. (10-11)

This soliloquy is a direct indictment on the Nigeria Police and the Judiciary System in Nigeria. It seeks to direct the reader's attention to the failure

of these two important institutions. There is alleged abuse of power and roles in the Police Force and the Judiciary. Our Judiciary does not believe nor recognize that justice delayed is justice denied. Many have died awaiting trial while a host of others spend months and years in Police custody before they are charged to Court to face another long wait. The utterance is significant for its role as a positive criticism of these decadent institutions.

The story makes reference to the all important issue of financial independence for the women. Okoye has been consistent with her reference to economic and financial empowerment of the women as a way out of oppression and subordination. Somadi defends her action of going to Lagos to work by asserting that:

... work didn't mean earning money only. It also meant freedom, empowerment, self-fulfilment and self-esteem. It meant meeting people, gathering experience, building character and leaning to live. She didn't go to University only to end up as a piece of furniture. A woman without any income of her own would always remain someone else's slave'. (12)

This is a warning and or advice to the women that without education, financial independence and economic empowerment, they will soon realize that feminism is only a literary movement that has not produced the desired corresponding character or attitudinal change.

The indefinite pronoun 'someone' in the utterance is not referring to women remaining slaves to the men alone but to anybody who must be dependent upon someone for daily bread as a slave does. The word 'slave' is a metaphor for

bondage. A quick reminder to women who do not earn any income, to understand that they are in bondage. The writer believes that practical feminism, should among other things advocate income earning for the women for the betterment of the family. That is why Somadi says: ‘Well, I couldn’t fold my hands and watch my children die of hunger’ (12) This is the exact utterance of Adaego in ‘*Men Without Ears*’ (116). ‘*Fold my hands*’ (12) is an idiomatic expression which means ‘*idleness*’ or ‘*laziness*’. The African woman is urged to do some work and earn some income to support the family like Somadi resolves to do so.

In conclusion, the writer has deployed appropriate and effective diction and utterances to actualize the theme of ‘widowhood’ as well as highlight other social issues in the story. The writer’s management of the central theme in addition to other satellite themes in the text, is a good stylistic technique which demanded of her a careful assignment of utterances to the right characters for purpose delivery.

4.5.2 Story II – Between Women

This story features Ebuka, the widow who must work even as a house-help to provide for her five-year old child and her mother-in-law. The story exposes the oppression and subordination of women by their fellow women. It also touches on the theme of physical violence as well as a woman’s determination to liberate herself from a deplorable situation.

Ebuka works as a house-help for Mrs Edet, a wicked, self-centred and inconsiderate woman. At a point, the relationship between the two women became so sour and volatile that Ebuka suffers physical and verbal abuse from

her madam, Mrs Edet. Most times it comes as a misplaced aggression from Mrs Edet who after fighting with her husband will direct her unspent anger at Ebuka.

On one occasion when Ebuka had too many things to attend to at the same time, the egg she was frying for Mrs Edet got burnt, it resulted to this: ‘you are a stupid girl... out of mysight’ (18) As Mrs Edet shouted, she threw a serated table knife at Ebuka. The knife hit her right on the left eye brow (18). This is a deliberate attempt to underscore that women are even the worse culprits and more deadly when it comes to domestic violence. They merge verbal violence with the physical-a very terrible combination. Ebuka suffered double jeopardy of physical and verbal violence which are unleashed on her often by Mrs Edet.

When Mrs Edet threw a knife at Ebuka and injured her, Ebuka still stayed for fear of losing her financial source to support her child.

“... she thought of leaving the job, but the fear of her daughter being without food for days or even months until she found another job made the idea horrifying. She has tried plaiting women’s hair for money in the village, but that did not fetch her enough money for food. (20)

The fear of the unknown future is an indefinite fear. It keeps people glued to a deplorable situation. The magnitude of the fear of losing her economic power to face an unknown future has turned the idea of liberating herself into a metaphorical horror. The choice of vocabulary ‘*horrifying*’ is deliberately made to create an image of a monster in the readers mind to stress the ugliness of joblessness.

The story took a dramatic turn when Mrs Edet refused to grant Ebuka permission to go and see her five-year old daughter who was reported to be lying critically ill in the hospital. We would recall that Ebuka was ready to tolerate the harsh treatment she has been receiving from Mrs Edet just to keep her source of income. But she would not abandon her daughter for the job. A mother's love for her child becomes more powerful than the fear of the unknown. When the fear of this love got hold of Ebuka, she decided to call Mrs Edet's bluff. She started weighing her options in the night before she left as the authorial voice reveals:

“the night dragged on. She made decisions and discarded them. She alternated between short naps and wakefulness. Could the night be so long? She was about to doze off again when the alarm went off.

(24)

‘Night’ has been personified to drag on to describe Ebuka's state of mind. She couldn't wait for the morning to come to carry out her threat. She said the same thing using a rhetorical question at the end ‘*Could the night be so long?*’ The expression ‘*she made decisions and discarded them*’ suggests that the plan to escape from the Edets was not a walk over. She needed to fine tune her escape operation to avoid encountering any hitches. The poor girl, no doubt suffered insomnia out of anxiety. We could deduce that from the sentence ‘*she alternated between short naps and wakefulness*’. This captures the state of anxiety and emotional disturbance which Ebuka must have been passing through that night. The narrator continues:

At five-thirty in the morning and before the Edet family woke from sleep, Ebuka sneaked out of the compound with all her belongings tied up in a plastic shopping bag. Leaving Eno, Affi and Effiong tugged at her heart.(25)

Ebuka took a leap of faith and left the Edet family, liberating herself from the oppression of a fellow woman and from the fear of the unknown. Ebuka's decision and action aims at sensitizing women to resist oppressive conditions and situations. It encourages women to challenge and question subordination and subjugation and to take a decisive action against it. But it also teaches them to understand that there is always a price to pay for freedom. The authorial voice told us that '*Ebuka sneaked out of the compound*'. The choice of the adverb '*sneaked*' is apt and vividly captures the manner in which Ebuka escaped. We also notice the use of the adverb of time 'five-thirty' an appropriate time to sneak out; a linguistic collocation of time and event. Also the expression, 'her belongings tied up in a plastic shopping bag' creates an imagery of penury. The reader is left with the impression, that Ebuka must be very wretched, in fact an indigent. How can all the belongings of someone be tied up in a plastic shopping bag? The writer fell short of saying that Ebuka left with nothing. The writer's purpose here is very obvious. The reader is meant to sympathise and pity Ebuka, the poor widow.

The writer, as usual did not fail to slot in her objective feminist opinion. This time she reveals that not all the men could be accused of wife battery and assault. That even women are not exempted from the crime of assault and battery. Mrs Edet is a case in point. The writer introduced this issue through

Ebuka's confession after witnessing several episodes of fighting between Mr and Mrs Edet. She compares her husband and her father with Mr. Edet. We are told that:

Her parents, poor as they were, didn't fight each other and didn't beat her either no matter what she did or didn't do. Her mother instead had resorted to lashing her with her tongue. (16)

We can understand from this expression that domestic violence was strange and alien to Ebuka. The dependent clause in that compound complex sentence 'poor as they were' gives an additional information implying that a happy marriage is not dependent on money or wealth. It is therefore a supposition. Also the clause 'didn't fight each other' suggests the compatibility which takes two to achieve and maintain in a marriage. Ebuka's husband on his part had cared for her and throughout their brief married life, had never hit her no matter how angry he was with her' (17)

Ebuka compares these marriages and wonders why Mr and Mrs Edet who have everything, fight each other from time to time. The writer does not believe that all men beat their wives. Ebuka's father and her late husband are good examples. We still have good and caring husbands. Feminism should redirect attention to the good qualities of the male gender rather than over-flogging the issue of oppression of women by men. Violence and oppression are traits that could be found in both sexes.

4.5.3 Story III – A Strange Disease

This story draws attention to what obtains in a typical African polygamous family. Constant quarrels, rivalry and jealousy among co-wives,

wife battery and assaults have been identified as permanent features in polygamous homes. The writer uses Enu, the widow in this story to demonstrate that widows can resist the tradition of being inherited by their late husband's brothers or relatives. She does not spare men's high propensity for promiscuity and infidelity. No one frowns at these crimes when the men are involved but the reverse is the case for the women. In some cultures and religion, women's punishment for committing adultery is death penalty whereas it takes two to commit the sin. The man never gets any punishment for that.

At the onset of the story, the writer introduces the twin issues of insecurity and harassment by men, which widows contend with. Onumba has been pestering Enu the widow, to be his third wife. Enu didn't like the idea but was being careful about how to handle the issue in order to avoid incurring the man's wrath. Her fear is founded because Onumba is reputed to be a bad man. An authorial voice reveals this as Enu's considers the whole matter:

‘He was an insidious man who didn't take kindly to any words or actions he felt were humiliating to him and he would harm her and her two teenage sons if she refused his proposal in a way he found humiliating’ (26-27)

Faced with this dilemma, Enu felt very insecure and dreaded Otumba's advances. As a result of Enu's fear, the writer's choice of diction in ‘insidious’ becomes the best adjective to qualify Onumba. That means, he is a man capable of doing evil. The choice of diction in ‘insidious’ matches the person of Onumba. According to Azuike (1992), “The diction selected by the writer has a tremendous effect on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the message” (121). Perhaps, the writer uses

him to represent those fetish men in the village who go about intimidating people especially widows in order to acquire their late husbands lands and property. Anyone who dares them pays heavily for it.

The story embraces the counsel of the wise and experienced women in a traditional setting. They give sincere and selfless advice from the bank of their wisdom. Often they act as mentors to the younger women. The writer uses Ebube to illustrate this purpose. When Ebube, an elderly woman and Enu's neighbour meets Onumba in Enu's house, she becomes worried and discusses it with Enu. Ebube addresses the matter diplomatically, having sensed danger. She starts by asking probing questions mixed with proverbs:

“Why is Onumba in your house every evening these days? This handshake is passing the elbow and is beginning to look like a kidnapping. Does he want to marry you? (30)

When Enu answers her questions in the affirmative she continues:

‘Marry him if you want to be in hell fire for the rest of your life. Marry him if you want to lose your sons share of family land to him. That's all I want to say for now. You don't tell a clever child to come out of the hot sun’ (30)

She concludes with another proverb when she notices hesitancy in Enu.

‘Remember that it is procrastination that prevented the toad from growing a tail’.

p.31.

The three proverbs in the old woman's utterance are loaded with valuable pieces of advice. First, *“This handshake is passing the elbow and is beginning to look like a kidnapping”* (30). This proverb is meant to alert Enu that Onumba's visits

are becoming too frequent for comfort. She needs to watch it and be on her guard lest, the visits may grow into a very strong relationship. Second *'you don't tell a child to come out of the hot sun'* (30). Experience is the best teacher. The older woman wants Enu to use her brain to assess Onumba's antecedents in the community and take a decision for herself and the third, *'Remember that it is procrastination that prevented the toad from growing a tail'* (31). With this last proverb she urges Enu to take a decision fast before it is too late. It also implies that delay is dangerous. And the interrogatives; *'why is Onumba in your house every evening?'* *'Does he want to marry?'*

They are simple and direct questions. It is obvious that Ebube is a well respected neighbour who perhaps sees Enu as her own daughter. We also note the repetition of *'marry him if ...'* (30) for emphasis to drive home her point to Enu.

The writer uses Ebube to represent wise counsel, to the generality of widows who are represented by Enu. There is a need for them to beware of men like Onumba. Further in the story, the writer draws attention to the misplaced aggression that commonly occurs in the event of infidelity or adultery in marriage. When Onumba's wife Akubia caught her husband in Enu's house, rather than blame her husband she turned around to fight Enu her fellow woman. The man didn't take any blame. On the other hand, Akubia got the beating of her life for daring to confront her husband's new found love. The authorial voice reveals that Onumba shouted at his wife *'... shut up or I'll kill you instantly'*. (32) He began to beat his wife mercilessly. Enu went to help her fellow woman and some of the blows meant for Akubia landed on her face. How dare Akubia challenge tradition? (32). It is not difficult for the reader to understand that the

imperative sentence “shut up or I’ll kill you instantly” is a command loaded with bitterness and rage. There is a possibility of carrying out the threat and heavens will not fall.

Wife battering is still prevalent in most African traditional societies. Part of the reasons Enu would not marry Onumba is that she knows Onumba beats his wives for the flimsiest of reasons. And she remembered that she herself had had enough battering from her late husband. (31)

The story ends on a good note because wise counsel prevails at the end. Enu had to fake that she had been affected with a strange disease. Onumba got discouraged and walked out of the relationship. Enu regained her freedom (34). Enu’s solution to her problem is consistent with the writers submissions in Okoye (2005) that:

“Sometimes the solutions to our problems are just around the corner waiting to be discovered. Sometimes they are simple we choose to ignore them. But what does it matter if our self-generated solutions are simple or naïve or even unconventional? The important question is ‘can they solve our problems?’ (2).

4.5.4 Story IV: The Voiceless Victim

This story centres on the consequences of child marriage, child widowhood and a world of imbalances arising from gender bias. The story also berates beggars, especially the able-bodied ones. The writer urges the reader never to patronize beggars, adding that they need jobs or skills not charity. And to the widows in particular, the story shows that they can do something by themselves to solve some of their problems. They may seek help when it

becomes absolutely necessary. The writer believes that widows should try and solve their problems themselves in order to maintain their self dignity, self confidence and self esteem.

In this story, Ebele, the young widow was confronted with the questions

“why were you in such a hurry to marry? See where it has got you.

Your mates are still in school or learning one trade or another’ Where

are your husband’s brothers? Where are his sisters? Can’t they help

you? What about your brothers and sisters? (40)

She confessed that they needed her bride price to take care of her father’s protracted illness, (40). Ebele is a victim of circumstances. A victim of child marriage and child widowhood. Many families in most African societies still encourage early marriage for their daughters in order to use their bride price to solve some family financial problems. In some cases, the bride price may be used to train the male child in school or start and or support his business. The interrogative sentence “why were you in such a hurry to marry?” is meant to provide background information that led to Ebele’s present predicament. The narrator does not stop at that, she adds the second sentence ‘*your mates are still in school or learning one trade or another*’. This is to make Ebele to understand that she is at the wrong place. The sentence also implies that the narrator has no sympathy for Ebele as a beggar.

Similarly, an earlier encounter between Ebele and the omniscient narrator was even more nasty. As Ebele and her two toddlers approached the narrator and asked for alms, she shouted angrily, ‘Get out! ... you have no money and you’re

breeding like a guinea pig. Go and find yourself a job. Find yourself something to do. There is nothing wrong with you' (37).

Using this utterance, the writer expresses her disgust with women who are lazy and dependent. She berates the business of begging as she considers it an indecent thing to do especially for able-bodied people. The command 'Get out' suggests 'disgust' 'irritation' and 'rejection'. 'guinea pig' is used as a simile to explain the quick succession of pregnancies that resulted in Ebele having two kids already at her age. Guinea pigs are known to breed very fast at a time. The utterance obviously contains imperative statements of advice 'Go and find yourself a job. Find yourself something to do'(37). The writer urges women especially widows to liberate themselves from mental slavery or dependence. Her aim is to achieve a mental rehabilitation of the widows to enable them to realize that widowhood is not a disability.

Ebele understood the pieces of advice in that utterance and therefore challenged her addresser thus:

'I want to work. I can't find a job. I don't want to beg. I don't want to sell my body for money. Now if you think I don't want to work, if you think I'm just being lazy, find me a job and prove me wrong.
(41)

The writer has carefully worded Ebele's response to the advice. She is meant to speak the minds of many widows out there. They are challenging the society that they can do something for themselves if someone is ready to listen and help. They need the net not the fish.

Ebele has used the following simple sentences:

- i. 'I want to work'
- ii. 'I can't find a job'
- iii. I don't want to beg'
- iv. I don't want to sell any body (p.41)

to make her demands clear to her addresser, Simple sentence aids comprehension and makes presentations in communication apt and sharp. And finally, the summarizing or concluding sentence '*find me a job and prove me wrong*' embeds the challenge from the widows to the rest of humanity. Most widows may be willing to work if only jobs would be provided for them.

The story ends with the narrator's conviction about Ebele's predicament. Ebele got an instant gift of money from the narrator and a promise of a job, (42-43).

4.5.5 Story 5: The Trial

This story recreates the ordeal which widows in the Eastern part of Nigeria are often forced to go through in the hands of a powerful women's group known as '*umu-okpu*' or daughters of the lineage. The group is notorious for subjecting widows to certain traditional rites and rituals that deprive them of their dignity and human rights and it is reputed to be ruthless and resolute in its decisions. It is therefore, a force to reckon with when it comes to applying traditional laws and sanctions. The writer captures the activities of this traditional institution or group in order to redirect the reader to its oppressive practices against the widows.

The dehumanizing rites which the '*umu-okpu*' traditional institution forces widows to go through in the Igbo society, underscores the ideology

underlying feminism. This is because the modus operandum of this group makes caricature of the women's agitation against oppression and subordination by men. In this story, we have seen oppression and subjugation coming not from the men, but from the women. The '*umu-okpu*' group is an exclusive women's enterprise.

Okoye has been consistent in her effort to expose some of the latent issues which feminism should address inside its own house first and foremost. She believes women should share in the blame of the oppression of women in the society.

The trial is like a satire of the writers nasty experience with the '*umu-okpu*' group. Recall that we noted in the introduction that the writer is a widow. It is possible, that her personal experience may have informed her inspiration to tell the story of the widows.

In '*the trail*', Anayo the widow is accused of killing her husband. Her brother-in-law, Ezeji masterminded this allegation and tabled it before the *umu-okpu* group. Consequently, Anayo must stand trial before the *umu-okpu* to prove her innocence. Eletty, the leader of the *umu-okpu* interrogates her;

‘Anayo, your brother-in-law, Ezeji is accusing you of killing your husband Zimuzo, It is our duty to find out whether this accusation is true or not. What have you to say for yourself?’ (46)

Anayo denies the allegation. But before the bewildered Anayo could put herself together to give details against the allegation, the leader quickly adds

Watch your tongue young woman; “Answer our questions and nothing more. Be rude to us and we’ll deal with you squarely’ You

understand? No nodding here; you are not a lizard. You have a tongue and you'd better use it. (46).

The way the utterance of the leader has been put together and the manner of delivery, give a scenario of a typical court of law. 'What have you to say for yourself?' We have to note that this question which the leader poses to Anayo is not a 'true' or 'false' question nor 'yes' or 'No' question. The question demands a long tale from Anayo to the entertainment of the *umu-okpu*. The leader did not fail to establish their mandate and terms of reference as a defiant disciplinary group, by adding that 'it is our duty to find out whether this accusation is true or not' (46). The leader's utterance is therefore significant for achieving the desired purpose and effect.

In the second part of the utterance, we notice a flavour of autocracy in it. The leader who did not take kindly to Anayo's hesitation in answering her questions commanded '*Answer our questions and nothing more*'. This was followed by intimidation with the expression '*Be rude to us again and we'll deal with you squarely*'. (p41) The sentence is a threat which aims at humiliating and intimidating Anayo. Next is mockery with '*No nodding here; you are not a lizard*' (p.46). Anayo's behaviour is being compared with that of a lizard. The *umu-okpu* was not satisfied with Anayo's denial as Eletty, the leader finally ruled against Anayo by saying;

... before your husband's body is committed to our mother earth, you'll go through our traditional trail by ordeal to prove your innocence. If you refuse to do this, we'll ostracise you. (48).

Anayo resisted the women by rejecting the verdict by saying ‘I will not submit myself to such a trail’ (48).

The authorial voice tells us that Anayo had expected sympathy and understanding not insensitivity from the women, more so as she was one of them (46). She is therefore reminding them that;

You are being unfair to me. You know Ezeji is framing me yet you are going along with him. He wants to take over my husband’s property. This is not the first time such a thing has happened in this village. “We should be sticking together. It could be one of you next time we shouldn’t let men use us to Police ourselves” (48)

Anayo needed to remind them that they were there at the instance of a man’s plot against a fellow woman. ‘Sticking together’ is an idiomatic expression for unity. A quick reminder to the women folk that they are missing out something very vital for their liberation from the men by not working together and by allowing the men to use them for selfish interest. She made an appeal to their conscience with the sentence ‘*it could be one of you next time*’ (48). This episode leaves one to wonder how feminism would be able to achieve women’s liberation when women themselves are the slave masters. Liberation must therefore start from within. Charity begins at home, they say.

While the trial of Anayo was on, the voice told us that:

She stood waiting for the educated amongst the group to support her, to speak out on her behalf. She waited for them to fight against this injustice, this dehumanizing and humiliating tradition, but not one woman spoke for her (48).

Through the authorial voice the writer expresses her disappointment with the educated women who saw an opportunity to demonstrate feminism but failed to do so. The inaction of the educated women leaves some doubt about the effectiveness of feminism as a liberation movement. Perhaps, it is a mere academic discourse. Like the nature of women, feminism accommodates too much talk but with little or no action. Reference was made to Tope a Lecturer who talks often about feminism and her brilliant conference papers (49) but could not act when the opportunity came. Infact, the voice told us that:

Because of Tope's education and eloquent mini lectures to any small gathering of women on the subject meted out on them by men (Feminism), Anayo had expected her to have matched her words with action when the opportunity came. (49)

But Tope failed her completely as she watched Anayo being humiliated and subjugated not by men but by her fellow women and endorsed it with her silence. The movement seems to be scoring against it's team. Perhaps, feminism looks more like a toothless bull dog. This may not be far from the truth. The wording of utterances and expressions in the story reveals and establishes purpose and it is dependent upon the writers effective management of diction and the assignment of it's delivery. *'She stood waiting for the educated amongst them to support her'* (48) The pronoun 'She' represents Anayo, but by implication the widows and the generality of women. And 'her', refers to the issues that the feminists have failed to address. *'the educated amongst them'* refers to the feminists who failed;

- *'to support her' call for 'Back-up and unity'*

- 'to speak out on her behalf' call for 'Defence and courage'
 - 'to fight against this injustice', call for 'Resistance and Revolution'; and
- at the end - 'Not one woman spoke for her', 'Inaction' and 'failure'.

With the use of the 'infinitive to', the writer is still clamouring for action from the women. The writer is conscious of the choice of words that make up her syntactical structures which invariably produce the desired utterances and expression as can be seen from the analysis.

The words which the writer put together to form the verdict of the *umu-okpu* were carefully chosen to convey the meanness of the group. When Anayo's testimonies did not satisfy the *umu-okpu*, the leader stopped the cross-examination and passed her verdict with the approval of the members of the group. Saying: 'As far as we are concerned the only way for you to prove your innocence is to go through the trial by ordeal' (49).

We can see that what informed the title of this story and the book *The Trial* is a clipped version of 'the Trial by ordeal'. 'Trial by ordeal' connotes the dehumanizing traditional rites and rituals which widows are subjected to by the *umu-ada* in Igbo land. Often, widows are meant to go through this ordeal out of prejudice, sheer jealousy, false allegations and accusations and hatred. The ordeal comes in different manners. For some widows, they are meant to sit on a hard bare floor for three months, others may have their hair scrapped with a blunt object, some are ex-communicated or ostracized. In the case of Anayo, with the weighty accusation of killing her husband she is meant to drink the water used in washing her late husband's two hands. The leader's verdict started with a clause

'As far as we are concerned' denoting a note of finality and meanness as well as a collective decision.

Fortunately, for Anayo, nemesis caught up with the perpetrator of the ordeal at the nick of time. An observant and vigilant Anayo, noticed that her accuser Ezeji had dipped his forefinger into the bowl of water she was meant to drink, possibly dropping a poisonous substance into it. She refused to drink the water. The story took a dramatic turn when Ezeji was asked to take a sip of the water first to prove his innocence. What followed can only be described with the personification of the words *'tempers'* and *'voices'*. *"Tempers rose"*. Accusations and counter accusations. (P.54). *'Voices rose'* and *'shook the room'* (54). At the end Anayo's courage to speak out saved her from the ordeal.

4.5.6 Story 6: The New Business Woman

In the past, many widows abandoned their husband's businesses, or sold them off or even left them at the mercy of apprentices who in most cases run such businesses down. In other instances, some widows have also allowed their late husbands' brothers or relatives to take over their husbands' businesses and they had paid dearly for it.

In this story, Mercy is a modern-time widow. She is determined to take over her late husband's business against all odds. Her determination to succeed attracted goodwill to her. The writer believes that women who are hardworking and who show enough interest in economic empowerment often get support from individuals, state agencies and non-governmental organizations. The story recreates the new image of the widow. On Mercy's first day at her late husband's shop, the authorial voice captures her experience thus:

Mercy decided to inspect the store. Peugeot car parts of all shapes and sizes, with some still in their packaging, stared at her from their places on tall wooden shelves lined along the walls. She stared back at the parts, trying to figure out without success what each part was. They were so bewildering to her as the letters of the alphabet are to a child just beginning to learn to read. (58)

The writer's vivid description of late Mercy's husband's shop with 'tall wooden shelves', 'parts of all sizes and shapes, creates in the reader, a mental image of a typical motor spare parts shop at coal camp Enugu, where the author lives. We consider a writer's style attractive if the writer makes conscious effort to reduce abstraction in the text. Okoye manages her lexical and structural items well in order to effectively communicate ideas, situations, events which take place in real social contexts of human environment.

The use of personification in '*parts of all sizes and shapes, stared at her...*' gives the effect of stationary objects that are not capable of verbal communication with Mercy. This is meant to increase her confusion and anxiety in her new and unfamiliar environment; Bewildering collocates with the experience of a child just beginning to read (58). This expression conveys vividly, the experience of mercy during her first day at her late husband's shop.

Along the line, there was a plot to discourage Mercy, as she was told that motor parts business was not meant for women. They advised her to sell the business or give the shop out for rent. But Mercy was determined when she says: 'I'm sorry but I've made up my mind about the business and I don't want to go back on any decision' (60).

The expression '*I don't want to go back on my decision*', becomes necessary in Mercy's utterance considering its implication. It gives the reader the following impression about this widow:

- i. She has will power
- ii. She is resolute
- iii. She is determined
- iv. She is courageous
- v. She has self confidence

These are the qualities the writer wishes that widows should adopt. Every correct analysis of most expressions and utterances in the stories has been identified to relate or refer to the writer's feminist concerns and considerations in one way or the other. The utterance assigned to Odo 'the senior apprentice in the shop', 'I don't know of any woman in the business' (60), delivers an effective message on men's ego in the African societies. Odo says to Mercy:

I hear you want to run this business yourself, and I don't want to work under a woman. This is not a woman's business'. (62)

Linguistically, Odo's utterance is not diplomatic, it is rude, categorical and defiant. This is deliberate. The reader sees the typical African man in Odo, who doesn't take kindly to being under a woman. There's a hint of gender bias in his utterance "This is not a woman's business' (62). Similarly, Adim told her 'it's a man's business, not a woman's (60). The writer uses the utterances of these men to remind the reader of the endemic professional and career gender bias and discrimination against women in the society. Mercy is willing to break this jinx with the way she replied Odo 'Am happy to be the first' (60).

Nevertheless, the writer is not ignorant of some men who are willing to co-operate with women and, who believe in the complementarity of gender roles- the male feminists. In this story, Ezelue and Afoke represent such men. While Afoke pledges his loyalty and support '*Madam, I will not leave you*' (p.63) Ezelue provided Mercy with moral support matched with actions as soon as he saw her confidence and determination to succeed. Ezelue said to her;

‘I see you are really determined to run the business, ... you are determined to succeed; ... I’ will be a very happy man if my two daughters grow up to be self-confident and enterprising as you’ ... I’ll help you succeed (65).

Men can complement the efforts of the women. Team work is what the writer advocates. With this understanding and agreement, Mercy and Ezelue plunged into action the very next day.

4.5.7 Story 7: From Wife to Concubine

This story exposes the wicked act of coveting a widow’s property by some brothers-in-law. The reader discovers a calculated cruelty and meanness of a brother-in-law who rebrands his late brother’s wife a ‘concubine’ in order to disqualify her from the inheritance of her husband’s property. The story serves as a warning and lesson to widows and non-widows to guard jealously, important and sensitive family documents. Death does not announce it’s visit. Many widows and non-widows have often found themselves in a big mess for not being able to produce documents to back their claims over certain properties and possessions. Men are also meant to learn from the story as some of them keep

vital documents or properties away from their wives only to put their families in trouble in the event of their death.

We also come across the issue of non-acceptability of cross-cultural or inter-tribal marriage. This is still very much frowned at in most parts of Nigeria, especially in Igbo land. Lastly in the story, the writer advises widows to make positive use of the experiences of widowhood rites. Rather than allow the trauma of the experience to consume them, it should rather strengthen them and make them wiser and bolder. She revealed that after Arit, the widow, had passed through the dehumanizing widowhood rites at the death of her husband, she resolved not to allow any such oppression and intimidation from any person or group of persons. The experience had toughened her. She realized there was no need to dwell on the past with tales of woes. And so, when she learnt from Munachi that her brother-in-law Paul, was planning to dispossesses her of a block of four flats in the commercial town of Onitsha, she decided to confront him. She had reasoned that she wasn't going to allow the man snatch from her what would ensure daily bread for her and her children. Moreso experience has thought her never to give in to intimidation and subjugation again in life after the widowhood rites experience. She sums up her determination this way:

This time around, I was determined to fight with all my wits. I had become wiser after the event (widowhood rites). I had learnt that once you gave in to other people's attempt to subjugate you, they would most likely continue to subjugate you (p.68).

The writer's stylistic use of figurative language in the utterance of Arit is intentional.

It conceals the effort of confrontation and rebellion in the utterance.

The idiomatic expression to '*gave in*' means

- i To admit that one has been defeated by somebody or something
- ii To agree to do something one does not want to do
- iii To surrender to another's will

The expression becomes very significant for the purposes of stating what Arit would never allow to happen again. The repetition:

- i. 'I was determined to...'
- ii. 'I had become wiser'
- iii. 'I had learnt that ...'

is used to highlight and give prominence to Arit's resolution and her emancipation. It is also stylistically significant for its rhythmic effect. The writer is obviously conscious of the purpose which Arit's utterance should serve and had deliberately deployed the right choice of words to actualize it.

Arit soon realized that she didn't have the right weapon to fight the battle of proof of ownership for the property under contention. She neither had her marriage certificate nor the documents of the house she needed to claim. She felt

'Paul must have removed the documents immediately after Fred's (her husband) death when shock and grief had plunged me into a state of stupor' (70).

This utterance serves as a warning to the widows to be mindful of important documents even at the height of grief and sorrow of bereavement. Many widows have lost important documents such as: C of O, Car documents, business document, and certificates during mourning periods. We note that 'shock' and

'grief' have been personified to stress the devastating effect these emotions had on the widow. Shock and grief had '*plunged*' me into a state of stupor' p.70 '*Stupor*' is metaphorically used to describe the state which grief and sorrow had put her. Like an alcoholic, she could not think or act wisely in that state.

Arit may lose her property for lack of documents to back her claim. Paul asked her:

How can you prove that you built the block of flats?... In case you don't know it, the Customary Court will demand some proof. They are not going to listen to that fairy tale of yours'. (71).

Paul's utterance seeks to alert women on the danger of not registering their properties in their names or not having any legal documents to back landed properties. Most women are either ignorant of this or simply laissez-faire about it. Even some of the wiser ones, in some cases, had registered their properties in their husband's names in the name of love. Many women have sad stories to tell about such mistakes. Arit is the owner of the block of flats, but she registered it in her late husband's name. That is why her husband's brother is contesting the ownership of the property even though he knew the real owner. The writer has described Arit's verbal claim with a correct diction, a '*fairy tale*' (71) which no court of law is ready to entertain. 'Proof' collocates with the courts demand.

Paul was going to throw Arit out of her own house for lack of proof of ownership of the house. A providential intervention came to Arit's rescue when she remembered a murder case against Paul. She threatened to expose Paul, who knowing the implication of the threat returned her documents to her by post and gave up the fight. The question is how many widows will be this lucky?

4.5.8 Story 8: Second Chance

This story of Ogoli the widow, captures the loneliness, the psychological and emotional difficulties a widow may have to cope with. It reveals the necessity of man and woman relationship, stressing that the two sexes need each other for companionship. Ogoli exhibits the natural craving of a widow for a man for obvious reasons. She wishes to re-marry but finds herself in a dilemma of the traditional implication of doing that. She stands the chance of losing the custody of her children to her late husband's family if she should re-marry. Rather than risk abandoning her children to her late husband's family as tradition demands, in the event of her remarrying, she gives up the idea for the sake of her children. But luck smiles on her when Gerry, the widower who wishes to marry her assures her of taking care of her and her children. He promises to defy the tradition in order to get the custody of the children in her favour.

The reality of widowhood had descended on Ogoli shortly after the death of her husband. A long list of lacks drawn by Ogoli makes it obvious

She needed someone to spend her life with, someone to share her problems. She needed financial help. She was in debt. She could not feed her children well. She could not buy them decent clothes. She could not pay their school fees on time. And then there were the bills- water bills, electricity bills, sanitation bills. Her landlord had increased the rent and was threatening to eject her if she could not pay (81).

The writers exhaustive list of Ogoli's problems leaves the reader with a sympathetic feeling for the widow. It gives us an insight to the issues that

widows contend with. The stylistic manoeuvre to give a sense of numerical strength to the list, lies in the use of the simple sentence to introduce each of the needs. Using one stretch sentence and commas only, to separate the list, will not do the trick. The list contains the following simple sentences in the order of occurrence.

- i. She was lonely
- ii. She needed company
- iii. She needed someone to spend her life with
- iv. She needed financial help
- v. She was in debt
- vi. She could not feed her children
- vii. She could not buy them decent clothes
- viii. She could not pay their school fees

Simple sentences are easy to understand. Syntactically and semantically, it only accommodates one idea. We can identify two different categories of problems: internal problems and external problems, although the problems are linked together by ‘and’ the co-ordinating cohesive device. The compartmentalization of assortment of items, or issues, helps the readers’ easy flow of thought. Note the repetition of the pronoun ‘she’ which continues to refer to Ogoli and no other. It is stylistically significant for prominence and emphasis which leave the reader thinking of the so many problems that the widow has to bear alone. The register ‘eject’ is deliberately placed to give the effect of anxiety and desperation. An action that collocates with non-payment of rent, ejection is eminent.

A critical sociological assessment of the list draws our attention to the basic and natural fact that women need men to cope with the endeavours of life. The writer wants feminists to recognize this undeniable truth. Feminism as a movement needs the complementarity of the men to achieve most of its goals. We can see the vacuum created in the life of Ogoli by the absence of a man of the house. Feminists need a man in the house if they hope to achieve total success. The load becomes a lot lighter when both sexes work together.

The story also draws attention to the unfairness of some traditional practices against women in most African cultures. When Ogoli confided in Agu, her brother-in-law about her intention to remarry, surprisingly, he didn't raise any objections to that. However, he didn't hesitate to disclose the implications to her when he says:

Well you are free to remarry. You're still young... You won't be taking the children along with you when you remarry. I hope you know that' (74).

Ogoli wanted to know why she shouldn't take her children with her, he continued:

...Because they are our children, because they belong to our family, the extended family of Anachuna. They don't belong to your family (Ogoli's family). They don't belong to the family of the man who wants to marry you. (74 -75)

And when Ogoli reminded him that the children were hers, Agu now exposed her to the traditional reality of the situation by saying:

‘Your children bear our family name of Anachuna and not your family name of Ude. They belong to Anachuna family. Their roots are our roots. We won’t let another man bring them up for us, especially the boy who will continue his father’s line. We have our own way of doing things, our customs and traditions which we will pass on to our children’ (75).

The writer has consciously designed Ogoli’s encounter with her brother-in-law, Agu in this story, in order to illuminate a gender-biased tradition against the women. This purpose obviously informed Agu’s utterances.

Note the statement ‘I hope you know that’ which sounds a note of warning to Ogoli. The discourse feature ‘*That*’ placed at the objective position in that sentence stands for knowing the following;

- The implications of her action
- The sacrifice of leaving her children
- The traditional demands from her on remarrying
- The choice that she has

Note also the emphasis on;

- ‘They don’t belong to your family’ (74)
- ‘They don’t belong to the family of the man who wants to marry you’ (74-75).

and the reversal of the statements still emphasizing;

‘they belong to our family’ (74)

‘they belong to the Anachuna family’ (75)

The contrastive language use in the utterance is stylistically significant to show two sides of the issue. The effect of the emphasis is to give prominence to the obvious facts on the fate and status of the children. It is regrettable that child custody in our tradition is so gender insensitive and biased. The man takes it all. Similarly, tradition subjects widows to nasty experiences that are not applicable to widowers. Widowers do not undergo any widowers rites. They do not lose their children to their wives families in the event of re-marrying, only the widows do. These traditions are women unfriendly.

At the end of the story, Ogoli gets a second chance. She and Gerry agreed to get married and damn the traditional consequences. (82). A lesson for widows to resist some traditional practices that infringe on their human rights.

4.5.9 Story 9: Daughters for Sale

This is the story of Mata, a victim of child marriage and childwidowhood. Mata's father was an alcoholic. He needed to service this addiction with all the money he earned. When he exhausted his money on drinks, he resorted to borrowing. And when his reputation blocked his chances of borrowing, he turned to his wife and drained her life savings. With this, Mata's father ended up impoverishing his family. For the man, the only option left was to give out his teenage daughters for premature marriage. That was how Mata's journey to the land of suffering started at the age of sixteen. Although, the story centres on child widowhood, the writer also addressed the issue of alcoholism. It is a social problem which so many families are battling with today. The reader is meant to understand that alcoholism is a cankerworm capable of dealing a financial and

psychological wreckage on the family. Most domestic violence are not unconnected with it.

The writer's image making of the African woman is also evident in this story. Mata's mother represents the new African woman in the story. She is strong, industrious and enterprising. In addition to her petty trading, she farms. Often any attempt by a woman to resist intimidation and subjugation meets with stiff opposition from the men in the traditional African societies. The general perception is usually that the woman is going mad or is becoming wild and wayward. She is seen to be challenging tradition. This issue is raised in a soliloquy which the writer assigned to Mata, the widow. She says to herself:

‘Mata has gone mad. Mata has gone mad. That's the song everybody in the village is singing now. It was my brother-in-law Uko, who started it all. He thinks I've gone mad because I'm beginning to challenge him, because I won't let him continue to treat me like a goat being dragged to market for sale. I wasn't mad when I was obeying him like a dog. Greedy man. (P.83)

Mata discloses to us a wave of gossip and blackmail going on in the community against her. This is an expected societal reaction towards her emancipation. Her resolve to challenge her greedy brother-in-law is not a welcome development. It is likened to ‘madness’. ‘*Mata has gone mad. Mata has gone mad*’ (83). In the past, Mata behaved ‘*like a goat being dragged to market for sale*’ (83)

The use of the ‘Simile ‘like a *goat*’ in the expression is meant to explain Mata's behaviour in the past as a foolish, naïve and ignorant woman. In the Igbo context, a goat is regarded as a foolish animal. Similarly, a dog is regarded as a

loyal and obedient animal. That was Mata's attitude towards her brother-in-law in the past. *'I wasn't mad when I was obeying him like a dog'* (83) 'Dog' is also used as a simile to stress Mata's loyalty to her brother-in-law. *'I won't let him continue to treat me like a goat ...'* (83) suggests emancipation, awareness and resistance from the widow. *'That's the song everybody in the village is singing now Mata is mad, Mata is mad'* (83). The madness connotes feminist movement. That is the song everyone is singing. Mata represents feminism in the text. As the story progresses, Mata recalls the trauma of subjugation and intimidation, the pains of bereavement and other nasty experiences of widowhood. She continues

‘Tell me, why shouldn't I be mad at everybody? Why shouldn't I be mad with the world? Who will go through what I've gone through and still remain sane. Show me the person’ (p.84)

Mata's reminiscences of her life experience may have plunged her into depression. The traumatic experiences of child marriage, child widowhood and the loss of her two sons are capable of driving her mad. Most widows have gone mental out of emotional trauma.

The writer has deliberately arranged the rhetorical questions as a continuation of Mata's soliloquy in order to disclose her psychological state to the reader. From those rhetorical questions we can detect a certain degree of mental instability in Mata. Suffering is driving her crazy. 'Everybody' and the 'world' represent people and the system respectively. Individuals, her father, her inlaws, relatives, friends have all contributed one way or the other to her problem. Above all, the system itself, the tradition, culture, oppressive customs

gender bias, subjugation and intimidation have all contributed to bring her down to the situation she has found herself.

The reader needs to know Mata's family background to appreciate her determination to resist, challenge and rebel against those forces that have contributed to her present predicament. For this purpose, the writer therefore, has skilfully chronicled Mata's family background information to reveal the root of her ordeal from its genesis. Mata reflects on the origin of her present circumstances:

My father began it all. He was brought into this world to make people miserable. He was a carpenter. He earned good money but he drank it all away. Then he turned to my mother's earnings and beat her up if she refused to hand over to him all the money in her possession. She was a strong woman and earned good money. She traded in dryfish, worked on her cassava and cocoyam farms and worked on other peoples' farm for money. When my mother had no money to give to my father for his drinks he began to borrow money from other people. Soon there was nobody ready to lend him money because he didn't pay back what he borrowed. Then he had a wonderful idea. He decided to sell his four young daughters one after another to men who could pay the highest price. (84)

Mata's account was rendered in good reported speech. It allows the reader to savour a free flow of account of Mata's life history. From Mata's information, we can extract that her father was an alcohol addict, a social problem often associated with domestic violence as he 'beats her up if she refused to hand over

to him all the money in her possession' (p.84). He was so irresponsible that he could not provide for his family, 'earned good money but he drank it all away' (84). He impoverished his family with his drinking habit. On the contrary, Mata's mother is portrayed as responsible, supporting and providing for her family. She is a model of the new African woman who craves for economic empowerment. She is industrious, strong and enterprising. She farms and trades so as to augment the man's provisions for the family but she ended up being the bread winner. In a typical African family, where the head of the family is a drunk, the wife and children are usually the victims of the consequential reckless and violent behaviour associated with drunkenness. This explains '*he was brought into the world to make people miserable*' (p.84). Alcoholics are nuisance and irritants to people around them.

Note the repetition of the pronoun '*he*'. It gives Mata's father the prominence required to emphasise his numerous "sins". 'He' is used nine times in that single speech. The use of simple sentences is also to deliver the message succinctly and one after another. For instance, '*My father began it all*' '*He was a carpenter*' '*He borrowed money from other people*' (p.84). Note that the word '*it*' in the opening sentence '*My father began it all*' is used objectively to represent the totality of Mata's problems while '*all*' is a gradable adjective expressing no exception. We also notice the application of tenses designed for grammatical correctness, which also impacts on meaning. There is consistency in the use of the past tense for the reported speech e.g. '*began*', '*brought*', '*earned*', '*was*', '*drank*', '*turned*', '*beat*', (irregular tense) '*refused*', '*earned*', '*traded*', '*worked*', '*had*', '*began*', '*was*', '*didn't*', '*decided*', and '*could*'. The speech

contains an ironical expression '*he had a wonderful idea*'. He decided to sell his four young daughters ...' What a wonderful idea indeed?. The writer leaves the answer and verdict to the reader.

There are compound sentences which the writer has used to join related issues e.g. 'He earned good money but he drink it all away' 'She was a strong woman and earned good money' and there are also compound complex or multiple sentences to accommodate some other information e.g. 'Then he turned to my mother and beat her up if she refused to hand over to him all the money in her possession'. 'She traded in dry fish, worked on her cassava and cocoyam farm and worked on other peoples farm for money'. The writer made effective use of cohesive devices to stick together all the pieces of information e.g. 'Then', 'because', 'soon', 'when' as well as coordinators such as 'and' 'but' 'because'. Some collocabilities are noticed e.g. 'earn good money', 'beat her up', 'hand over', 'borrow money', 'bride price', 'lend money'. These devices are put in place in the speech for the proper understanding of it's purpose.

However, Mata soon discovers that her father was not the only culprit, that even her brother-in-law collected high bride price on Awele (Mata's first daughter) just to settle debts and repair his leaking roof. (86) Greed on bride price is a vicious circle. It is consequential to the extent that the victims turn around to be the woman not the man who paid the high bride price nor the man who collected it. In many families, it is used as a weapon in verbal assault on the woman. In the past, perhaps, even till today, some families in most African societies bank on high bride price to settle debts, train male children or even start a trade for the boys. The fate of the girl as a result of this, is not considered.

Mata's first son-in-law bears grudges because of the high bride price he paid on her daughter. As a result, he took away his expensive wife and abandoned Mata. She laments: "Awele's husband has taken his expensive wife and has abandoned me" (86).

Mata will not allow this to happen to her again. On the day her second daughter, Ikechi, will be getting married, she braces up for a fight against this injustice. The volatile Mata, headed straight to Uko, her brother-in-law, who will be hoping to collect another high price to solve his personal problems. She exploded in front of the man's house saying:

'I hear you're desperately waiting for Ikechi's bride price to pay off your huge debt. I hear the person who lent you the money is after your throat and you have told him you will pay him tomorrow. You are banking on the bride price, you are going to extract from my new son-in-law this evening. Now listen and listen very carefully, Uko I'm going to disrupt the bargaining this evening. I'm going to chase everybody away with axe. And let me tell you this. Anyone who tries to stop me will be a dead person' (87)

From the phrasing of the utterance, the reader can easily confirm the desperation of Mata which has been misunderstood as madness. Although, it is also possible that the injustice meted to mata must have driven her mad for real. Mata's resistance is timely and justified. The writer wants to pass the message that some resistance to and rejection of some traditional practices that deprive woman of their human rights should be encouraged. By this reaction and action, Mata attracted the attention of the family elders. They came and pleaded with her for

restraint. And later, they all reached an agreement that would benefit everyone. (88).

We notice the idiomatic expression ‘after your throat’: this means after ones life and so Uko’s reliance on the payment of the debt is a matter of life and death.

The imperatives/commands

- i. ‘Now listen and listen very carefully’
- ii. ‘Let me tell you’.

Suggest defiance and her readiness to carry out her threat. Also the use of the indefinite pronouns ‘everybody and anybody’ refers to no one in particular; that means, not just Uko but any person or persons who try to stop her will pay the price. Mata’s utterances are very effective for the writers purpose delivery. A lesson for the widows and women generally that if they do not speak out or act, against injustice, the status-quo-ante remains.

4.6 CHIMERE

Okoye is one feminist who believes in an objective assessment of the two genders. She does not think all men should be condemned in the name of feminism. The writer seeks to establish in most of her works that good nature and good behaviour are not sex-dependent. She recognises the fact that oppression and subjugation are neither male nor female gender specific. She believes that oppression is not the sole enterprise of men. Women also oppress fellow women, and are capable of oppressing men too. We noted such instances in *Men Without Ears* (pgs 33, 44, 48) and in most of the stories in *The Trial*.

In *Chimere*, the writer presents issues such as prejudice and misconception against men, teenage pregnancy, quest for self identity and actualization, and other social problems in the society. These issues are not explicitly stated, but through a stylistic analysis of the linguistic forms which the writer explores, those issues are revealed and addressed.

Wales (1991) states that Stylistics tries to analyse how elements of content (plot, characterization, events, and themes) are actualized in linguistic forms (92). Our focus here is on the writer's deployment of diction and utterances through the characters in the text for the realization and actualization of her purpose. The stylistic analysis of the linguistic forms in some of the utterances selected from the text assists the reader to understand the author's themes and purposes. From the onset, the writer introduces us to a campus setting. A university environment where love and romance blossom among young undergraduates. Chimere and Jide meet and fall in love. Unfortunately, this romance was short lived. Chimere had a nasty experience with Jide, and as a result, she formed a negative impression about men.

Chimere, a product of child pregnancy and a victim of paternal denial and abandonment, was jilted by Jide on the grounds of her background as an illegitimate child. Jide was influenced by his mother to do that. Things turned sour when Chimere visited Jide's family. Jide's mother resented Chimere at first sight while his father was warm and friendly to Chimere. The omniscient narrator told us that Jide's mother responded to Chimere's greetings without enthusiasm. (P.9) But his father received her well and said "I hope you will come

again, sometime. Feel at home (p8). 'feel at home' is an idiomatic expression for 'relax'. It can also represent 're-assurance'.

Chimere's encounter with Jide, changed her attitude to men. Some examples of her utterances and those of authorial voice from the text confirm this:

- i. 'Well, I don't like men that's all... They are unreliable' p.115.
- ii. She has decided to keep all men at a distance p.36.
- iii. She was even almost sure that she would not have anything to do with men again. P. 33.
- iv. All men are the same ... they are sweetness and smiles, gallant and chivalrous when they are out to woo, but untrustworthy, arrogant and callous when they have had their fill p.51.
- v. He sounded a pleasant person whose company one would enjoy. But therein lies some danger p.35.
- vi. Chimere wondered if any man could have a heart of Gold. Jide and her father had become a symbol of masculine male violence p.90.

Note that Chimere's utterances in i and iv, contain hasty generalization about men with the inclusion of the word 'All'

- i. 'All men are unreliable'
- ii. 'All men are the same... untrustworthy, arrogant and callous'

These conclusions are informed by her experience with Jide and her mother's experience with Mr. Enuma. Her premises were drawn from those encounters. There is a wrong analogy here, because her premises and conclusions are based on misconception. The utterances are contestable generalization. In the second

utterance (ii) she used an idiomatic expression ‘to keep all men at a distance’ to stress her decision not to have any close or intimate relationship with men. And in (iii) and (v) her impression of doubt about men is obvious. Note in (v) she tells us there’s danger in a man’s pleasantness. While in (iv) men are referred to with the simile ‘*Sweetness*’ “*smiles*’ ‘*gallant*’ and ‘*chivalrous*’ but later contrasted with the negative qualities of ‘*untrustworthy*’ ‘*arrogant*’ and ‘*callous*’. The writer identifies the positive and the negative qualities of men through these utterances. Chimere had her first encounter with men who possess the negative qualities and that affected her psychologically and emotionally, and thus, her impression about men. But will Chimere change her mind and attitude towards men if she gives men who possess positive qualities a chance? The writer seeks to change Chimere’s impression and opinion about men. Chimere represents the generality of women and in fact, the feminists who share the same impression of men with her. In order to achieve the reversal of the negative impression against all men, the writer deliberately plotted an encounter between Chimere and Weluche.

It began with an accidental meeting of Weluche and Chimere under a mango tree where they were both taking a shelter from the rain. A authorial voice told us that Weluche had an umbrella which he spread as he stepped near her holding the umbrella above Chimere’s head and asking simultaneously with mock seriousness: ‘May I have the pleasure of protecting you from the rain?’ (.35) The writers symbolic use of the object ‘*umbrella*’ is very significant. ‘*Umbrella*’ represents protection and accommodation from Weluche. It is also a symbolical expression of love and care. This suggests that some men do care for

women and they are capable of protecting and accommodating them. ‘Umbrella’ is also a symbol for shelter or roof. Offering a shelter to Chimere to stop the rain from beating her is the understanding which the writer targets by the use of the symbol ‘*umbrella*’. ‘*Rain*’ is used metaphorically to represent, insecurity, suffering, pain, trauma, and stress women go through. Men and women must support one another for peaceful co-existence. This is the view of the writer. Note the courteous and polite manner Wulechi addressed Chimere ‘May I have the pleasure...’ (35). It shows respect for the woman. This is contrary to the way Jide treated her. Jide was arrogant and mean to Chimere. She experienced a devastating verbal abuse from Jide when he told her she had a stinking background and could not afford to continue to go out with a girl of such background (13). He called her an illegitimate child (p.14). The word ‘stinking’ feels as it sounds. It has an onomatopoeic effect which echoes its meaning as an insult. He equates Chimere’s background as a child born out of wedlock, metaphorically with the word ‘stinking’. Only rotten things stink.

Convincing Chimere otherwise about men wasn’t going to be easy.

Weluche suffered misplaced aggression as Chimere continues to bluff him:

- i. ‘I told you bluntly I wouldn’t want to see you again’ p.45
- ii. ‘I’ve told you to leave me alone and I mean it’ p.50

and to his questions, she merely nodded without uttering a word (46). Action speaks louder-than-words attitude. Her mother’s story had conditioned her to be wary of men’s overtures, (134). With those utterances, Chimere wouldn’t want to give men another chance. The reader’s possible conclusion to this attitude is once beaten twice shy. But Weluche did not give up on what he believes in. He

applied a touch of humour: ‘Chimere you remind me of a lizard on a mud wall by the way you nod your head’ (46). This metaphorical comparison of her nodding of head with that of the lizard spiced the encounter with humour which eased off tension and opened up chances for consideration of a second chance to a man, by Chimere. Weluche’s humorous utterance while Chimere was bluffing depicts, understanding, calmness, endurance, tolerance and determination on the part of the man to win the affection and attention of a woman.

Chimere compares Weluche and Jide and finds out that Weluche is a better person in many ways. Weluche has respect for women, but Jide doesn’t. (128)

When Chimere refused to answer Weluche’s questions for obvious reasons, he asked her to take her time and answer at her own time

“If it were Jide, he would continue to pester her with questions about the matter on hand until she divulged the whole secret to him”. (134)

But Weluche on the other hand respected her right to privacy and discretion, p. 134.

- ‘Do you mind if I see you home?’ pg.51
- ‘As you wish’ p.134

The utterances the writer assigns to her characters help us reach conclusions that reveal her intention and purpose. The events and roles of the characters in the text provide the elements of content which the writer has consciously designed to refute some misconceptions about men. Ezim’s response to Chimere’s generalization about men is a case in point when she says: Why not say some men are unreliable. Just as some women are unreliable. P.115. This utterance is

logical enough to refute Chimere's misconception. In another instance, a man shook his head in disapproval over Azuka's treatment to Chimere. This depicts that men can be nicer than women sometimes.

Patriarchal system has done so much damage on the image of the men. Prejudice against men is a history that is passed on from generation to generation. (Pgs.170, 134, 82). Perhaps, men may need to work hard too, on their image even as women are doing so.

Weluche's strategies worked because of his perseverance and determination to succeed. He was determined to correct Chime's wrong impression of him and her coldness toward him when he said "Next time I visit you, Chime, I'm going to shake you out of your refuge" (47). '*shake you out of your refuge*' is an idiomatic expression meaning to change her perception of him. '*her refuge*' is a metaphor for her resentment and disenchantment. He didn't have to use force or intimidation on her, rather he applied patience and tolerance. The writer used the following utterances to reveal his endurance and patience with Chimere. On one occasion, he said;

'My mother has thought me not to peep into a parcel which I will eventually open' (135).

A perfect proverb meant to convince Chimere of his promise never to seduce her and his resolve to wait until she fully accepts him and to express his decency and self control. Unlike most men, Weluche didn't want to take advantage of Chimere. Although that may have been counter-productive because Chimere would not like to tread the path her mother trod and paid heavily for that. Note the inclusion of 'my mother has thought me'; Weluche was well brought up. A

credit to his mother. This gives the reader an insight to the type of mother he has which has positively impacted on his life, attesting to the roles of mothers in the upbringing of their children. In another instance, Weluche made a similar statement to further emphasise his self control and sincerity to Chimere with another proverb;

‘a bachelor who insists that a wife be engaged to him today or tomorrow, should ask himself if he had not been enduring his bachelorhood for years’. (144).

Those proverbs are meant for assurance and reassurance to convince Chimere beyond all reasonable doubts about his sincerity of purpose. A lesson to men on how to win a lady’s affection especially those who have bad impression of men. As a mother, the writer is also advising young people to restrain from sexual relationship during courtship or in the process of wooing a woman. Many decent girls may quit relationship because of undue sexual advances. Marriage should be consummated after it is contracted not before. This is the entailment in that proverb.

Like Stanley Burnslaw’s belief in linguistics and time, so is ours over trauma and time. “No experience, pain or trauma is immuned to times erosion. (in Azuike 1992:120). With time, Chimere started realizing that all men are not the same, all men are not callous and untrustworthy. With time, Weluche has healed her heart and corrected her impression. The writer attributes some confessional statements to Chimere to confirm her new vision of men. She says to Weluche:

‘my mother believed that all men are fickle and callous. I had come to agree with her because of what Jide and my father had done to me.

But now, I know that there are good men in the world. I will tell my mother when she says that again that my Weluche is not like other men and is neither fickle nor callous' (170).

Apart from Chimere's experience with Jide, we can also see the extent to which her mother's experience has affected her perception of men. She continued: "one thing at least has struck me, you have proved my mother wrong and her cynical view of men is not always true' (170).

It is easier to convince the new generation of women that some men can be trusted than the older generation of women. Perhaps education and exposure are responsible. If Chimere is won over, what about her mother? She said to Weluche "*... we will have to work hard to win my mother's consent and neutralize her distrust for men*' p. 171. The utterances of Chimere and her mother contain several apt diction and idiomatic expressions which describe the bad men. Some of them are listed below:

- i. Conceited mean fellows p.14.
- ii. Dangerous p.35.
- iii. Shallow and unreliable p.14.
- iv. Chivalrous p.51.
- v. Untrustworthy p.51.
- vi. Arrogant p.51.
- vii. Callous p.51.
- viii. Selfish p.96.
- ix. Fickle p.170.
- x. Unstable p.96.

xi. Disgusting p.103.

xii Symbol of masculine malevolence p.90.

The readers judgment is obvious. Chimere and her mother are not completely right. The writer is one feminist whose sense of judgment of the sexes is that of fair play. Hasty generalization is not the right attitude feminists should adopt. Even in the patriarchal society, people should be treated as individuals entirely on their own merit. She also believes in reconciliation of differences in the interest of both sexes:

‘Our next assignment therefore ... is to reconcile them. I have no doubt we will succeed ... And it will be wonderful if we do succeed.
(175).

This is Weluche’s suggestion to Chimere. But beyond this, we can identify the voice of the writer herself. This is her assignment as a feminist. Rather than engage in a protracted fight with the men in the name of feminism, reconciliation and complementarity should be pursued. She is optimistic that this wonderful idea would succeed in the interest of all. Note that in that utterance, the pronouns represent the stake holders and their mission:

- ‘Our’ stands for the feminists
- ‘them’ stands for the two sexes
- ‘we’ stands for feminists
- ‘it’ stands for positive result

Apart from salvaging men’s image from misconception and prejudice, the writer addresses other social issues in the text. We could extract the issues from

the utterances of the victims of teenage pregnancy and abandonment, Chimere's mother;

‘when I discovered I was pregnant, I ran to Enuma because he was responsible. He was as scared as I was, and warned me not to mention his name in connection with that (p.73)

Note the clause ‘*because he was responsible*’. This is a euphemism for expressing the act that resulted to pregnancy. It is also a euphemism meaning the father of the child. A woman's dialect forbids vulgar words especially in matters regarding sex. ‘he was responsible’ means ‘he impregnated her’.

Even her aunt didn't spare her;

‘My aunt was an experienced and clever woman; she soon found me out and immediately threw me out of her house; she didn't even give me any chance to plead for mercy (73).

Her step mother rejected her too: ‘My stepmother warned me not to step into her house again’ (73). The society frowns at it; ‘In my village it is still an abomination for an unmarried woman to have a child in her father's house (74).

Mother and child are obviously the victims of teenage pregnancy not the man responsible for it. Apart from the consequent abandonment, the stigma, emotional and psychological problems resulting from it are capable of plunging the victims into depression, loss of self-esteem and self-confidence. Chimere once said to her mother;

Please mother, tell me who my father is and where he is now. I have suffered much humiliation because I know nothing about him...
Please mother don't let people laugh at me anymore because I can't

tell them anything about my father. Spare me the embarrassment of not being able to answer questions about my father (59).

From this, the reader can feel the agony of a child born out of wedlock. This effect is the writer's purpose for the utterance. There are other examples in the text to this effect.

Bothered by the taunts of her playmates at home and in the primary school 'she had pestered her mother about her father' p.10.

Jide called her 'an illegitimate child' p.14.

And for Chimere's mother the experience led her to conclude that 'all men are fickle and callous' p.170.

Note the collocation in that utterance:

With 'to plead for mercy' p.73.

Note also the appropriate diction in the choice of word 'abomination' 'A great sin in the traditional igbo society'. Single parent phenomenon used to be alien to the Igbos and in most societies in Africa. But today, it is being tolerated gradually in our society. Perhaps, this change, is not unconnected with the feminists struggle female and human rights proponents. Weluche did not mind the circumstances surrounding Chimere's birth; he was only interested in her as a person.

The text also explores the theme of quest for self-identity and self-actualization using Chimere's search for her father. In this text, Chimere searches for her father to erase the stigma or illegitimacy. But beyond this search, is the message of women's emancipation and self-discovery. Feminism encourages women to seek self-actualization and identity. Chimere's right to know her father is her human right. Women are urged to persevere for their human rights in spite

of all odds. Although, the writer does not advocate the use of rebellion, radicalism and or confrontation to achieve this, she opines that through a woman's hardwork, education, economic empowerment and working with the men, self-actualization emerges naturally, making it impossible for any person to tamper with their human rights. People do not negotiate human rights and recognition, they earn it through hard work and achievements. That way, the human right is permanent. An authorial voice tells us in the text how Chimere feels each time people seek to know her identity or background.

Her identity is unclear and her background not palatable. 'Once again her past history began to race through her mind like a bad film. There had never been a father in her life. Bothered by the taunts of her playmates at home and in the primary school, she had pestered her mother about her father' (10).

Searching for identity produces a burning desire in man. Note the word 'pestered'. It is a verb whose action results to annoying somebody especially by asking for something many times. There is a cause and effect relationship in the utterance: 'pestering is caused by *'the taunts of her play mates', 'play mates at home and in the school'* (10) to explain *'her past history'* to the reader. Bad film, like a horror film is capable of haunting some people over a period of time especially children. The imagery of a 'bad film' explains Chimere's feelings to the reader vividly. *'There had never been a father in her life'* (10) is an idiomatic expression implying, lack of identity, lack of security, lack of paternal love, lack of fulfillment, a vacuum in her life, incompleteness and lack of confidence. The idiomatic expression is both linguistically and stylistically significant for the

message it has conveyed to the reader. The last word '*father*' in the utterance stands for 'identity'. The determined and unrelenting Chimere, not despondent by nature, and never easily deterred by obstacles, continues to pester her mother on the quest (59). The writer seeks to stress the need for confidence and perseverance in the woman's quest for identity and self-actualization. (112) Chimere matched thoughts and decisions with action. When her mother was not forthcoming with any information about her father, she placed an advert in the newspaper (123) which her father got and replied, supplying her with a valuable but sparse information about herself. She took a leap of faith and travelled to Makurdi to meet the man (152 – 155). Chimere met her father one on one. (155). Although, this meeting was not as fruitful as she would expect but it marked a starting point for the reconciliation yet to come. From the day of this contact, the motion is set. Mr. Enuma lost his peace until he made it up with his daughter, Chimere. The writer's message with this incident is that even little efforts for self-identity and actualization would pay off sooner or later. What matters is initiating the action and following it up. Initiatives are concretized by action.

At last Chimere was fulfilled when her father wrote to her apologizing for abandoning her and her mother. He says among other things in the letter:

'Nobody's action should be judged in isolation but in relation to the circumstances under which the action was carried out. I am feeling very miserable and have no one else to turn to ... let me stop rambling and wasting your time. Tell your mother to forgive me if she can ... (172- 174).

From the tone of the letter, we can sense the state of a finished man. He describes his excuses as rambling an appropriate description for “rigmarolling and cock and bull story”. ‘Rambling’ means confused and incoherent speech. His action in the past messed him up. But the good thing in that letter is a note of apology from the now repentant and miserable man. ‘Tell your mother to forgive me’. (72) The writer’s message to the feminists is that men are ready for reconciliation. So many men come down remorseful over past mistakes. Mr. Enuma sought for forgiveness and reconciliation after so many years of abandoning his family. By the proposed family reunion, Chimere’s identity would have been completely established. (175).

We also identify hints on women’s antagonism against fellow women. Apart from Chimere’s encounter with Jide’s mum on p.10, the nasty experience she had from Azuka the Secretary, is the height of hostility of one woman against another. Chimere’s mother also had a taste of it from her step-mother and her aunt who threw her out on discovering the helpless teenager was pregnant p.73. The writer assigned appropriate utterances to these characters in order to actualize this purpose.

As Chimere went to see the MD of the Company to which she applied for a vacation job, she met Azuka the Secretary, busy making-up her face in the office. Azuka’s attitude and response to Chimere’s enquiry to see the MD was that of hatred at first sight.

‘Azuka looked Chimere up and down. The expression on her face was cold and naughty giving an impression of someone who was not only full of herself and her power but jealous as well. (76).

The authorial voice captured the incident in a way that the reader could see through her eyes what must have transpired between Azuka and Chimere. The idiomatic expression ‘*up and down*’ means ‘*sizing up*’. As soon as she sized Chimere up, her facial expression changed out of jealousy. Perhaps Chimere is more beautiful than she is or Chimere is perhaps MD’s new girl friend and wants to compete with her. These possibilities also informed the name she called Chimere – ‘*oku enu*’ on pg. 77, a derogatory Igbo slang for ‘*call girls*’. Her reception of Chimere was said to be cold and haughty because of the prejudice she has for Chimere by her assessment of her as she looked her ‘*up and down*’. The choice of diction in ‘*haughty*’ perfectly describes Azuka’s attitude because she acted in a way that shows she finds Chimere more attractive or presentable than herself. She exhibited open jealousy against Chimere.

In another occasion, Azuka resurfaced with open malice against Chimere. This time she came to visit two of her colleagues and incidentally ran into Chimere. Rather than using that great opportunity that presented itself for reconciliation, positively, she raged further. She tried to turn the minds of her colleagues against Chimere by saying:

‘Beware of her, you two; she is the fast and uppish type. She insulted me in my office because I was doing my work. But I will get even with her before she leaves this place’ (91)

The writer reveals the stock-in-trade of many women in that utterance which includes, black mail, lies, gang-up, intrigues, empty threats, gossip. The imperative ‘*Beware of her*’ serves the purposes of blackmail and warning. ‘*She insulted me in my office because I was doing my work*’ is a lie against Chimere.

There is a threat in the idiomatic expression ‘*get even with her*’ which means to retaliate. The use of the adjectives ‘*fast*’ and ‘*uppish*’ to qualify Chimere was a complete opposite of Chimere and uncalled for in the context Azuka used it. ‘*uppish*’ means one who behaves as if she is more important than the other especially if refusing to obey instruction is involved. Azuka simply uses those adjectives to paint Chimere black for no just cause. Other instances of women against women are found on pgs 72, 73 through the encounters of Chimere’s mother with her aunt and step-mother who threw her out because of her teenage pregnancy. Men sometimes may have reason to be nasty to women, but on the contrary, women often do not have any good reasons to antagonize their fellow women. If you sample the opinion of many women on this issue, you will be surprised that the only answers you can get as reasons would be jealousy, competition and or complex. Feminism should seek to address the issue of women fighting against women. This is what the writer is highlighting here.

4.7 *The Power of a Plate of Rice*

This is a short story which cannot be completely appreciated from its literary interpretation alone, but by a linguistic and stylistic analysis of it. This way, the writer’s purpose and underlying message in the story can be unravelled. In line with the writer’s determination to paint a good image of the African woman. This story opens with a tribute to mothers. Mrs Cheta Adu eulogizes her late mother:

mother was a philosopher of sort. Poor woman, she died before I could reward her for all the sacrifices she made on my behalf, forgoing many comforts just so that I could get some education and

for carrying the financial burden of the family during my father's protracted illness and even after his premature death (91)

This post humous encomium which Mrs Cheta Adu poured on her mother is a conscious effort by the writer to salute and recognize women's contributions and supportive roles in the family and the society at large. The writers choice of 'philosopher' as a sitting adjective to qualify mothers is instructive. Referring to mothers as philosophers is a way of depicting them as the embodiment of wisdom. Mrs Cheta Adu recalled her mother's common precepts: 'Do nothing in anger. Wait till your anger melts like thick palm oil placed under the sun' p.91. These words of wisdom by her late mother checked and restrained her when she thought of confronting her boss, Mr. Aziza in anger. The philosophical undertone in Mama's precepts earned her mother the qualification of a philosopher. If we try to decode Mama's precepts we may tend to agree with Cheta.

'Do nothing in anger', a thoughtful advice to weigh ones option before acting and to avoid violence but always to opt for dialogue. Till your '*anger*' '*melts*' '*anger*' objectified and which can melt' '*like thick palm oil*'. A simile to express how much one's anger is supposed to melt before one should act. '*melting of the oil under the sun*' demonstrates and compares with how ones anger should come down. Mama's teachings must have made an impact in the life of Cheta even long after she was gone. The writer gives this credit to mothers.

Apart from the wisdom and values which mothers inculcate in their children, they make other sacrifices such as helping in training the children in school, feeding the family and even denying themselves pleasures and comfort of

life in the interest of the family. They support the family when the head of the family is down in health. And even in the event of the death of the bread winner, women do not allow their families to starve. The writer as a woman, a mother, a feminist and as a voice for the women thinks these attributes are worth commending.

Social criticism has always been part of the thrust of Okoye's works. We have noted this fact in our earlier analysis of her texts. This story did not go far before the attention of the reader would be directed to the issue of non-payment of salaries. A problem which the reader may even be a victim of. An utterance used by the writer to address this issue was delivered by Cheta who saw no justification in working without pay or for irregular payment

‘We were paid irregularly. Although, it was the end of January, the salary in question was for October of the previous year. Four months without salary and yet we went to work regularly (92).

The issues that the reader comes across are not unfamiliar to him or her. The interest of the reader is sustained as he longs to see how such issues are resolved at the end. Non-payment of salary is an issue many readers may have experienced personally; as a result, the reader feels happy that someone is talking about it. In effect, the reader and the text are in agreement or harmony. This is the writer's stylistic strategy.

As a result of the irregular salary and her headmaster's decision to withhold hers a little longer, Mrs Cheta became desperate. She is a widow and she needs money to feed her two children and an elderly mother-in-law. She went to Mr Aziza to demand for her right. *‘Desperation had given me a form of*

courage I had not experienced before’ p.99. Many women become desperate out of hardship and responsibilities. This in turn has given women courage to do a lot of positive and negative things. Note the personification of ‘*desperation*’ as it gives courage to Cheta.

Mr. Aziza, a hardliner, would not bulge until Cheta devised a means of survival by going to his house to eat a plate of rice served as his lunch. He emerged from his room to see Cheta eating his food. He barked at her ‘*Get out. Go to the bursar. Tell him I said he can pay you now*’ p.99. But Cheta reasoned that the bursar may not act on verbal instruction and she demanded for a note from Aziza. ‘He scribbled a note and threw it at me and I grabbed it’ p.99.

Note the continuous use of the imperatives commanding Cheta, ‘*Get out, Go to the ...*’, ‘*Tell him ...*’. The use of ‘*now*’ is a deictic reference for the time of the event, so ‘*now*’ is then.

Note the choice of diction in ‘*Scribble*’. It captures the state Mr. Aziza was in at that time—tension and rage put together. He wanted to get rid of Cheta from his sight. Scribbling means writing in a hurry. It is usually a short note. The expression ‘*scribbled a note*’ contains apt collocation considering the incident. The word ‘*grabbed*’ gives the reader an insight to how Mrs Cheta received the note. She needed to act fast before the man changed his mind. Because Cheta devised an effective survival strategy, she got what she wanted at last. This reminds us of Enu in ‘*The Trial*’ who had to feign carrying a strange disease to free herself from the pestering of Onumba. A lesson for the women to use their initiatives at all times as occasion demands.

4.8 *The Pay-Packet*

In line with the writer's feminist concerns and considerations, this story centres on how some women lose their freedom when they get married. As soon as a woman becomes a man's wife, she becomes the man's possession. The man uses intimidation, subjugation and in some cases physical violence to deprive her of her earnings. Marriage is no longer a union of two where one supports the other. At the beginning of the story, we met Mrs Iba, lamenting over the loss of her freedom in marriage. She recalled the good old days of spinsterhood when she managed her pay packet the way she liked. She used to look forward to the pay day. But now as a married woman, she dreads the pay day. An authorial voice reveals that:

... these days pay days had become a great terror, something that she longed for and dreaded at the same time. The blissful pay days were gone – gone forever, she thought unless she summoned courage to do something about the cause of her problem' (15).

This utterance helps the reader to appreciate Iba's dilemma. But we are yet to unravel the cause of this fear. This is a stylistic strategy to create suspense in the reader in order to arouse curiosity in him. Note the writer's choice of words in '*great terror*' and '*blissful*'. There is a sense of comparison and contrast here '*these days pay day*' is a '*great terror*' in the past pay days were '*blissful*' representing single/married phases of her life. Note the metaphor used to describe the extent she dreads pay days in '*great terror*'. There's another comparison with '*longed for*' and '*dreaded*' using opposite in meaning (antonym) to explain the meaning of the other.

As the story progresses, clues to her problem started emerging. The authorial voice discloses the background to her problem:

... her problems actually started about a month after her wedding, ... when she received her first salary as a married woman, her husband had demanded all of it. Basking in the euphoria of the newly married, she had failed to notice the implications and consequences of such a demand and had gladly complied with it. (17)

First, the writer has used the authorial voice to sound a note of warning to the women who get carried away with love in their relationship with men. Love should not make women foolish or lose their senses. From the onset, a woman should learn to set her priorities right. Men don't take kindly to any attempt to resist what a woman had complied with from the beginning of the relationship. The writer captures the state women usually find themselves when they sign away their freedom and right in the expression '*Basking in the euphoria of the newly married*'. The choice of diction in '*euphoria*' captures this feeling vividly. It means an extreme feeling of happiness and excitement that usually lasts only a short time. Usually, when this euphoria clears, many women realize that they have staked their freedom, property, conscience, and privacy. A warning to the women is sounded with Iba's euphoric mistakes. When Iba realized she had lost her financial independence and economic empowerment, she began to resist what she had complied with:

'I don't think it's proper for me to handover my entire salary to you every month...I have every right to spend my salary the way I want'
(18)

Trying to assert her individuality and human right at this juncture drew stiff opposition from her husband who reacted violently saying:

‘I see you are now getting ideas into your head. Some women in that bloody school of yours are feeding you how to grow wings, but I’ll clip your wings before they start growing. I want the money this minute before I lose my temper’ p.18.

When she would not comply, with his orders he beat her to submission (18). She surrendered the money to him by force to save her life (18). The utterances which the writer assigned to the authorial voice and the characters are most suitable for the message she wishes to pass on to the reader. This episode recreates common domestic problems in many families in the society. Money is usually a major factor in most marital problems.

We note the expression Iba’s husband used to describe her assertion of her right ‘*growing wings*’. This is an idiomatic expression referring to Iba’s emancipation and new awareness in this context. He also addressed her decision to keep her money as ‘*getting ideas*’ into her head. The quest for freedom by women is often considered thus, by most men. He alluded that Iba is getting the idea from the women in the ‘bloody’ school of hers. The ‘*bloody school*’ metaphorically represents feminist movement and ideology. Feminism is a school. The women in the school are feminists. They are teaching Iba to rebel against her husband’s intimidation and oppression and demand her right to economic freedom. Note the metaphor ‘*bloody*’ – killer of the traditional values. Also note the idiomatic expression ‘*clip her wings*’ before they start growing, is a resolution never to allow her the freedom she is demanding of him. It is a threat that the subjugation

and subordination must continue. These utterances are thought-provoking to the reader. And they are designed and assigned for that purpose. Iba is not alone in this experience. Other women in the text confess the same situation for instance, Phoebe says '*My husband insists that I use my salary to feed the family*' p.19. In most families these days women have become bread winners as a result of economic empowerment. Also Ukachi and Uzo had similar stories of their husbands controlling their salaries. P.19. Their collective opinion over this issue is that men are terrible and greedy p.19.

True to Iba's husband's threat, he continued with the physical violence of beating his wife to submission. On one occasion, he gave her a beating to the point that sparks of fire flashed from her eyes. p.23. Surprisingly, rather than fight back with physical violence, she kept saying: '*I must not hit back. I must not hit back*' p.23. Iba knows the implication of hitting her husband back. Note the repetition in her utterance. It is emphasizing restraint on the part of the woman. A lesson for the woman not to confront men with physical violence because the consequences can be grievous.

As the story comes to an end, we see how Iba's non-violent and non-confrontational approach brought her husband to his knees. He confessed to her: '*I am very sorry*' p.25 and disclosed that it was Iba's father that made him to do all he did to her. She used her wisdom and diplomacy to rob the man of his ego. Authorial voice tells us: "He gave her a peck on the cheek as if a tacit agreement had been reached between them." P. 25.

Reconciliation at the end. Note the kind of agreement they reached 'tacit'. The choice of diction in tacit to express the type of agreement is apt considering what

had transpired between the two. It is an unwritten agreement to cooperate with each other to make progress. This is the writer's attitude towards feminism. Her feminist concern is based on complementarity and reconciliation of sexes and not the rebellious and confrontational approach.

CHAPTER FIVE

COHESION, PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE AND ROLES, PUNCTUATION AND SENTENCE PATTERNS IN OKOYE'S TEXTS

5.1 Preamble

This chapter discusses cohesion and cohesive devices, paragraph structures and roles, punctuation and sentence patterns as used by the writer to create a natural connection of thoughts, speech or ideas in her texts. It also provides the views of some scholars on these concepts to facilitate a broader understanding of the subject, and how they have been deployed in the texts under study in this thesis. Excerpts would be sampled from all the texts for the analysis of these concepts to determine their cumulative effects and roles towards the author's purpose delivery.

5.2 THE CONCEPT OF COHESION.

The concept of cohesion is principally based on semantic relations of meaning in sentences within a text. It is dependent on the interpretation of some elements in the discourse through some other elements such that one element presupposes the other and can only be decoded or explained with reference to it.

According to the Webster Dictionary of English Language cohesion means "co-hering",. It creates text meaning and expresses consistency or continuity throughout from one portion of a text to another. This consistency enables a reader to fill in the missing points for the interpretation of a text.

Also Halliday and Hassan (1976) define cohesion as:

... part of the text forming component in the linguistic system. It is the means whereby elements that are structurally unrelated to one another are linked together through dependence of one on the other for its' interpretation. The resources potential of language, having a kind for catalytic function. (27)

In another instance, they opine that cohesion in discourse structure:

... is set up to account for relations in discourse without the implication that there are some structural units that are above the sentence. Cohesion refers to the range of possibilities that exist for linking something with what has gone before since this linking is achieved through relation in meaning... What is in question is the set of meaning relation which function this way: the semantic resources which are drawn on for the purpose of creating text (10).

Halliday and Hassan think cohesion impacts on semantic relations in a text. And by extention, Diction is involved because it demands an appropriate choice of words for the achievement of the writers aim and grammatical construction. The absence or wrong placement of cohesion ties, may hinder the flow of thought and obstruct the text message to the reader. They named functional–semantic units of cohesion in the linguistic system as:

- a) Ideational unit
- b) Interpersonal Unit, and
- c) Textual Unit

The ideational unit is concerned with the expression of content and the function of what language is about. It considers an ideal speaker or writer as an observer.

It could either be;

- I. The Experiential: This is directly concerned with representing what Malinowski calls “context of culture”. Ifeoma Okoye’s texts fall into this sub-units of ideational cohesion which we shall elaborate on, later in the analysis.
- II. The Logical: This tends to express abstract logical relations through indirect experience.

The interpersonal unit is concerned with the social, expressive and the connotative functions of language, thus showing the speaker’s situation, motive, attitude, and judgement. Again, Ifeoma Okoye’s texts can be grouped into this unit considering her presentation of the social issues in the society and her capturing of real live events in the work of art. Finally, the textual unit is the text-forming unit which in fact is cohesion, where the structural unrelated items (non-structural items) are two words linked together and depend on one another for interpretation. This is the focus of our analysis in this section.

They further observed that like other semantic relations, cohesion is expressed through the strata organization of language. By this, they mean that the language which can be explained as a multiple coding system comprises three levels, the semantic (meaning) the lexicogrammatical (forms) and the phonological and orthographic (expression).

Geoffrey N. Leech and Michael N. Short (1981) consider cohesion as the rhetoric of text control. By that, they mean the way in which the message is segmented into units.

They describe cohesion as “ways in which one part of a text is linked to another, the ways in which sentences are connected” (79). Cohesion, they concluded, should most often be seen as a background to more significant style markers, just as a framework which makes a building hang together. (244).

Widowson (1978) describes cohesion as.... a relationship that could be established across sentences or utterances by reference to formal syntactic and semantic links between sentences and their parts. In view of this, he defines cohesion thus:

Language use has to do with propositions and the act they are used to perform. But these do not occur in isolation; They combine to form discourse; if we focus our attention on the way in which sentences are fashioned to ensure there is a link between propositions they express, then we are concerned with what I call cohesion. Thus, given a set of sentences, we can modify them in a number of ways to produce a variety of cohesive combination whereby the proposition in one sentence is linked with the proposition in the text (28).

Coulthard and Yule try to draw a distinction between cohesion and coherence. Coulthard (1977) in his own submission says that “the combination of sentences he says are aspects of grammatical cohesion. He further adds that utterances combine to form discourse and that, relations between them are

aspects of discourse cohesion”. (7). While Yule (1996) says: The ‘connectedness’ which we experience in our interpretation of normal texts is not simply based on connections between the words. There must be some other factor which leads us to distinguish connected texts which make sense from those which do not. This factor is usually described as coherence. (106).

Halliday and Hassan, also add that cohesion harmony in a text makes it possible for the presupposing and presupposed elements to be linked or integrated. This integration is known as a tie. Tie brings out the cohesive properties and gives a systematic account of the pattern of texture. It also helps to establish logical relationship between components of a discourse.

This directs our focus to the five cohesive ties which we shall explore in our analysis to follow.

5.3 TYPES OF COHESIVE DEVICES

We present below, the analysis of the five cohesive devices or ties as identified and labelled by Leech and Short (1981: 79 & 244). They include:

1. Reference
2. Substitution
3. Ellipsis
4. Conjunction
5. Lexical cohesion

5.3.1 REFERENCE

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) define reference in discourse as “a number of signals which mark what is being said and what has been said before. It has in

common a ‘deictic’ reference as it points back (anaphoric) or points forward (cataphoric) in discourse using “this”, “here” and “it” (302). In addition, reference makes a generous use of personal and possessive pronouns such as ‘I’, ‘my’, ‘you’, ‘me’, ‘it’, ‘his’, ‘she’, ‘us’, and ‘we’ in texts. Generally, a given instance of reference is either exophoric or endophoric, while exophoric is a reference to something outside the text; endophora is a reference to something within a text.

Reference comes into play as a cohesion relation when the information to be retrieved is a referential meaning. That is, the identity of things being referred to and the cohesion lie in the continuity of reference whereby the same thing enters into discourse a second time. In most language use in texts across all genres, it is possible for a reference to be both exophoric and endophoric at the same time.

Therefore, endophoric reference should be given more attention here. It is the form of references which plays a part in cohesion. Endophoric reference is reference within a text. It is of two types:

- a) Anaphora
- b) Cataphora

Anaphora is a textual reference preceding text, while cataphora is a textual reference which follows: While anaphora refers back to the past, cataphora refers to the future text.

Let us consider the following examples in the utterances below:

- a) Okocha has won a Gold medal for Nigeria. That is news.
- b) This is news. Okocha has won a Gold medal for Nigeria.

The references in sentence ‘a’ and ‘b’ are textual and therefore endophoric. The demonstrative “That” in example “a” refers back anaphorically to the news item. It is therefore an anaphoric reference. On the other hand, the demonstrative “This” in “b” refers forward to the news item that was later read. ‘This’ in ‘b’ is an example of a cataphoric reference.

Anaphora could be restricted, in which case it is realized as exophora or elaborated upon. On the other hand, anaphora could be rhetorical in which case it is marked by the same grammatical element at the beginning of successive sentences. The anaphoric reference in example “a” above is really an extended anaphora since the statement “That is news” must have served as a coder after many news items have been read. Cataphora are personal, demonstrative and comparative references. We have noted three cases of personal, demonstrative and comparative references. Personal reference functions through categories of persons, as in ‘I’, ‘my’, ‘you’, ‘me’, ‘it’, ‘he’, ‘his’, ‘she’, ‘us’, ‘we’, etc. Demonstrative reference function by the use of words to approximate either as presupposed item or presupposing item in a text in terms of;

- i. Near with words such as ‘this’, ‘these’, ‘here’ (now).
- ii. Far with words such as ‘that’, ‘those’, ‘there’, ‘then’, and
- iii. Neutral with ‘the’.

However we must observe that Comparative reference is used to draw general comparison in terms of identity, similarity and difference as well as

particular comparison. For instance: “same”, ‘identical”, “equal”, “similar”, “additional”, “so”, “likewise”, other, else, different, better.

The three referential relations classified above are contained in Halliday and Hassan (1976).

5.3.2 SUBSTITUTION

According to Halliday, substitution serves as “place-holding device, showing where something has been omitted and what its’ grammatical function would be”.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) further add that substitution is:

a device for abbreviating and avoiding repetition. Most of the substitute or pro-forma within sentence are also used across sentence. It is therefore a way of avoiding repetition by replacement that is replacing an item with another, but with corresponding item. (294).

Substitution may take the form of a Noun, whether subject or object position, Normal substitution includes normalised items such as ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’, ‘they’, ‘we’, ‘him’, ‘one’, ‘ones’, etc. In verbal substitution we have such words as ‘do’, ‘admires’, and ‘loves’ etc. While clausal substitution such as ‘so’ and ‘not’ which report modality or condition whether positively or negatively.

5.3.3 ELLIPSIS

Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short (1981) define ellipsis as omission or deletion of elements whose meaning is “understood” because it is recoverable from context. (79). Similarly, Halliday and Hassan (1976) define it as “the

intentional omission of a uniquely recoverable item in an utterance that is the form of substitution in which the item is replaced by nothing” (88).

From the above definitions, we can say that ellipsis is a form of substitution but the difference between them is that while ellipsis creates cohesion in text by omission, substitution does so by replacement. Ellipsis is substitution by zero. The omission referred to means that the item is not present but recoverable by presupposition. It is implied but not expressed. It can also be regarded as something left unsaid.

There are three types of ellipses namely; nominal, verbal, and classical ellipses.

Nominal ellipses, involves the upgrading of a word functioning as deictic, numerical, epithet from the status of modifier to the status of head. The examples are: ‘these’, ‘any’, ‘all’, ‘both’, ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘last’, ‘next’. Verbal ellipsis has to do with the presupposition of either one or more words from a previous verbal group, for example ‘Yes, I have’ where ‘I have’ presupposes one or more words as in Have you seen your result? The third form of ellipsis known as classical form occurs in response to question which is either, Yes or No. They can occur in such a way that the entire single clause is omitted.

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973), Ellipsis in dialogue/ response form could take place under three conditions which could also occur in various combinations:

1. Repetition – Speaker ‘B’ repeats what is said by Speaker ‘A’.
2. Expansion – Speaker ‘B’ adds to what is said by Speaker ‘A’.

3. Replacement – Speaker ‘B’ replaces what is said by Speaker ‘A’ with new materials.

These, according to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) could occur in

- a) Question and response pattern – with a possible combination of expansion and replacement.
- b) Statement and question pattern – with a possible combination of repetition and replacement;
- c) Statement and statement – with a combination of repetition, expansion and replacement. (305)

5.3.4 CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions known as both connective and conjunctives have to do with words that connect sentences, clauses and words. They are linkages. Conjunction may be structural or textual. Conjunction could be in form of co-ordination or sub-ordination.

Quirk and Greenbaum explain co-ordination and subordination as follows:

1. That the co-ordination refers to asyndetic co-ordination e.g. ‘and’, ‘or’, ‘but’, and asyndetic co-ordination i.e. when coordinator is absent but could be supplied or is implied, it is usually marked off by a comma.
2. That subordination is a non-symmetrical relation, between two clauses with one being part of the other. Sub-ordination marker includes: ‘however’, ‘because’, ‘since’, ‘before’, ‘while’, etc. (309)

Halliday and Hassan (1976), give account of four types of conjunctions. They include:

- a) Additive conjunctions which give additional information, with markers such as ‘and’, ‘or’, ‘but’ etc.
- b) Adversative conjunctions which give contrary or opposite idea to what is expected e.g. ‘yet’, ‘though’, ‘only’, ‘however’, etc.
- c) Casual conjunction expresses cause or purpose. It indicates reason e.g. ‘because’, ‘since’, ‘so’, ‘then’, ‘for’, ‘in this respect’, etc.
- d) Temporal conjunctions indicate time sequences e.g. ‘finally’, ‘at first’, ‘in the beginning’, ‘at last’, ‘next’, etc.(253 & 309)

5.3.5 LEXICAL COHESION

Lexical cohesion can be defined as the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabularies. Lexical cohesion may involve accompanying features associated with grammatical reference but this is not a necessity. Lexical cohesion can be a function simply of co-occurrence of lexical items in a text. In lexical cohesion we can separate reiteration and collocation.

Reiteration as a form of lexical cohesion involves the use of one item to refer to another. These items must have a common reference.

Five reiterative items could be;

- a) Repetition of lexical items
- b) Synonyms which refer to words with similar meaning in a text.

- c) Super-ordinate, which refers to an all-embracing word that is general class which can be broken down, example “parents” which can be broken down to “mother” and “father”.
- d) General nouns, which refer to a situation where a super-ordinate term is preceded by “the”, example, the “parents”
- e) Hyponymy are words that refer to part of a term, that is the sub-units of a unit example “father” and “mother” are to Parents.

Halliday and Hassan summarize reiteration as “identity of lexical reference”

Collocation according to Firth is the co-occurrence tendency having a semantic basis and a considerably greater probability that is implied by their overall frequency in language.

We can say that collocation refers to instances of lexical cohesion other than reiteration. Halliday and Hassan define it as “similarity of lexical environment” such as some or associated lexical item.

Collocation may occur in the under listed:

- a) Pair of opposites as in “black” and “white”.
- b) Complimentaries as in “boy” and “girl”.
- c) Anonyma, as in “love” and “hate”.

The extensive discussion on cohesion provides us with the theoretical framework and background with which Okoyes texts would be analysed.

Since cohesion creates text meaning and expresses continuity and consistency of ideas throughout, from one portion of a text to another, it thus, enables a reader to fill in the missing points for the interpretation of a text. Our analysis therefore

focuses on Ifeoma Okoye's deployment of cohesion as a linguistic device to enable her achieve coherence of ideas in her texts. Excerpts are collected from all the texts of Ifeoma Okoye for the purpose of this analysis.

5.4 THE ANALYSIS OF COHESION IN THE TEXTS FROM EXCERPTS.

5.4.1 Excerpts from *Chimere* TEXT I

The other children had stopped playing and were gazing at them¹. Bold ones waved at Chimere or greeted her and she returned their greetings². The adult inhabitants of the lane were still away at their place of work or in the market as most of them were traders or artisans³. P 53

Analysis:

(i) Grammatical cohesion in text I:

Reference: In sentence 1, "*them*" is an anaphoric reference to Weluche and Chimere. In sentence 2, "*her*" is an endophoric reference (within the text) and also an anaphoric reference to Chimere. Similarly, "*she*" is an anaphoric reference to Chimere within the same sentence. In sentence 3, "*them*" is an anaphoric reference to "*adult inhabitants-*".

Substitution: The word "*children*" is substituted with "*Bold ones*" in sentence 2.

(ii) Lexical cohesion in text i:

Synonym: In sentence 2, the word '*waved*' is a context synonym of '*greeted*' in the sense that they express the same idea within the same sentence.

(iii) Lexico – grammatical cohesion in text i:

Additive Connector: In sentence 1 ‘*and*’ is a structural connector because it links two parts of the sentence together. Also in sentence 2, ‘*and*’ functions as a structural connector because it links both parts of the same sentence. ‘*or*’ in the second sentence is an additive connector because it shows alternative actions in the same sentence. In the last sentence, ‘*or*’ shows alternative destinations of the inhabitants.

5.4.1.2 Excerpts from *Chimere* TEXT II

Jide threw out the stub of the cigarette he was smoking¹. First, he began, I’m broke and I want to get some money from mum². Second, I love you so much, I can’t leave you behind while I travel alone to Enugu³. Third, I want you to meet my parents⁴. P.3 Analysis:

(i) Grammatical cohesion in text ii:

Reference: In sentence 1, ‘*he*’ is an anaphoric reference to Jide. It is also endophoric because it is within the text. The ‘*he*’ in the first sentence and the ‘*he*’ in the second sentence form a tie. The ‘*I*’ in sentence 2 is an anaphoric reference to ‘*he*’ still within the same sentence. In sentence 3, ‘*you*’ is an exophoric reference (reference outside text) because it refers to Chimere who is not mentioned in the text. Also in the last sentence, ‘*you*’ is an exophoric reference, referring to Chimere whose name is not mentioned in the text.

(ii) Lexical cohesion in text ii:

a. Repetition of the same lexical items: In sentence 2 alone ‘*I*’ is repeated two (2) times to show emphasis. In sentence 3, ‘*I*’ is repeated three (3) times. The ‘*I*’ forms a tie with Jide in the text. Also it is used to lay much emphasis. There is

also the repetition of “*you*” in the text which is also for the purpose of emphasis in sentence 3.

(iii) Lexico-grammatical cohesion in text ii:

- a. Structural Connector: “*And*” in sentence 2 functions as a structural connector because it links two parts of the same sentence together.
- b. Additive Connector: The use of “*first*”, “*second*” and “*third*” in the text function as additive connectors in that they are used to reinforce reasons for certain actions or to make propositions.
- c. Temporal connector: The use of “*while*” in the third sentence is a temporal connector because it shows time relationship.

5.4.1.3 Excerpts from *Chimere* TEXT III

As she left George Johns street and turned into the shout lane leading to Okpara Hall, she resolved once again to keep her distance from Weluche and indeed from all men¹. But even as she reached this decision, she experienced a sneaky feeling that it might be difficult to carry it through in a capricious world of accidental encounters². P 51

Analysis:

(i) Grammatical cohesion in text iii:

Reference: In sentence I, “*she*” is an exophoric reference to Chimere. Although the name is not mentioned in the text, but the reference is made to her. Still within the same sentence, the “*she*” and “*her*” form a tie. The “*she*” in the second sentence is still an exophoric reference (outside the text) to Chimere.

Substitution: The “*it*” in the second sentence, seen in “*...to carry it through...*” is used to substitute “*decision*”.

(ii) Lexical cohesion in text iii:

Reiteration: this is the repetition of words in a text.

Repetition of the same lexical item: Throughout the whole text, “*she*” is repeated or used many times. This perhaps is used to show emphasis.

(iii) Lexico-grammatical cohesion in text iii:

a. Structural Connector: The “*and*” in the first sentence is a structural connector because it connects parts of the same sentence. Also in the same sentence, the “*and*” functions as a structural connector in that it links “...*distance from Weluche*” with “*indeed from all men*”.

b. Adversative Connector: “*But*” is an adversative connector because it expresses contradiction. It shows contradiction between the second and third sentences.

Halliday and Hassan (1976) lament that cohesion is the neglected aspect of linguistic system in the construction of a text, yet it is almost its most vital resources. We have observed that the writer has employed all the cohesion devices even in the short excerpts we have analysed. Without those cohesive items, the sentences would not make sense to the readers. Ifeoma Okoye exhibits a mastery of this proper application of the cohesive ties at all levels, of grammatical, lexical, and lexico–grammatical usage.

5.4.2 Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds* TEXT IV

*Dozie heard them out without a word*¹. *Then he said gravely, thank you for your concern*². *Dozie and Ije left for Enugu that same day, a little before five o'clock in the evening*³. *They had planned to pass the night in the village and go*

*home the next day which was Sunday, but the events of the day had made the atmosphere too grim for them to stay*⁴. P (43)

Grammatical cohesion in text iv:

Reference: In sentence 1 “them” is an *anaphoric* reference to Dozie’s uncles.

In sentence 2, “he” is *endophoric* (within the text) and at the same time *anaphoric* reference to “Dozie” in sentence 1.

In sentence 2, “you” is the same as “them” in sentence 1.

In sentence 4, “they” is an *anaphoric* reference to “Dozie” and “Ije” in the same text and also *endophoric* reference (within the sentence).

In sentence 4, “them” is the same as “they”

(ii) Lexical cohesion in text iv:

Direct repetition. Sentence 1 and 3, “Dozie” is repeated for the purpose of emphasis. It is a direct repetition, so “Dozie” forms a tie with ‘he’.

Sentence 2, 3 and 4, ‘day’ is repeated to achieve emphasis. It is a direct repetition.

Superordinate and subordinate: In sentence 4, there is use of “day” as a subordinate to “Sunday”, the superordinate.

General noun repetition: In sentence 4, “the day” is a general noun to “Sunday” which was mentioned earlier.

(iii) Lexico-grammatical cohesion in text iv:

Textual connector and adversative connectives: Sentence 4 “but” as a connector is used textually (within the text). It is known as inter-sentence connector. The “but” is also an *adversative* connective because it creates a contradiction in sentence 4.

Structural connector and additive connectives: Sentence 3, “and” links Dozie and Ije together within a sentence. It is known as intra-sentence connector. It is also an *additive* connective because it brings Dozie and Ije together.

Sentence 4, “and” links previous elements to “... go home the next day...”

Sentence 2, “then” is a *textual* connector because it links sentence 1 to sentence 2 (inter-sentence connector). It also performs the function of *casual* connectives because it expresses the result of hearing his uncles.

In Sentence 2, “before” is seen as a subordinator and *temporal* connective because it shows time sequence.

5.4.2.1 Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds* TEXT V

‘That will mean a long wait’, Ije said under her breath as she put the registration card, the receipt and the numbered card into her handbag¹. She walked past patients who were sitting dejectedly on a couple of long settees². (p1)

Analysis:

(i) Grammatical cohesion in text v:

Reference: In sentence 1, “that” is a reference (demonstrative). It refers to the sentence outside the text- “...to see the doctor”. It is an *exophoric* reference. Also

in sentence 1, “Ije” and “she” form a tie. “She” is *endophoric* reference (reference within the text) and *anaphoric* reference (backward reference) to “Ije”.

Sentence 2, “she” is also *anaphoric* reference to “Ije” because it is a pronoun referring back to Ije in the text.

(ii) Lexical cohesion in text v:

Collocation: here, we look at items that regularly go together or co-occur.

(i) Parts to parts relationship is seen in sentence 1 where “hand” refers to part of “Ije”. In sentence 2, “sitting” collocates with settees...”

(iii) Lexico grammatical cohesion in text v:

Coordinating conjunction in sentence 1, “... the receipt *and* the numbered card...” “and” is a *structural* connector (within the text) and additive (it joined the last element to the previous ones).

5.4.2.2.Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds* TEXT VI

Dozie and Virginia had had their biggest quarrel a while before and Dozie had told Virginia to leave his house at once¹. Neighbours and passers-by had watched the scene, some shaking their heads sadly while others saw it as a big joke².

(p116)

Analysis:

(i) Grammatical cohesion in text vi:

Nominal Ellipsis: Sentence 2, “neighbours” is ellipted from the sentence i.e.

“some (neighbours) shaking their heads...”

Nominal Substitution: Still in sentence 2, “neighbours” is substituted for “others” e.g., “...while others saw it as a big joke”.

(ii) Lexical cohesion in text vi:

1. *Reiteration:* In sentence 1, there is repetition of the same lexical item. “Dozie” is repeated twice. Also, “Virginia” is repeated twice in the sentence.

(iii) Lexico-grammatical cohesion in text vi:

1. *Connectivity:* Sentence 1, “Dozie *and* Virginia...” “and” is a *structural* connector (it links element within a sentence). It is also an additive connective (It brings “Dozie” and “Virginia” together. Also, the second “and” in the same sentence performs the same function as of the above.

In sentence 2, “and” connects “Neighbours” and passers-by” together. It is an additive connective.

Comments:

In *Behind the Clouds*, the writer is consistent with the use of the right cohesive ties or devices. Even though the excerpts are selected randomly from the text but because of the writers proper management of cohesion, even the least fragment of her language makes sense. This is a manifestation of how the texts run all through. We observe that readers would not have difficulty in following Okoye’s story. Every issue is well connected and linked from sentence to sentence, as they form the larger texts.

5.4.3 Excerpts from *Men Without Ears* TEXT VII

*My task lay before me clear as the day!*¹ *First, I would do my best to reconcile father and Uloko.*² *Second, I must do everything to make father happy and to make him live a comfortable life.*³ *Finally, I must see to it that Uloko understood the dangers inherent in the type of life father said he was living.*⁴ *Just before I went off to sleep, I decided to watch Uloko first, to confirm father's assertion, before embarking on the last task.*⁵ *After all, he might be exaggerating things as most old men are wont to do.*⁶ p(50)

Cohesion in text vii

Analysis:

1. Reference:

Sentence (1) 'first' is a cataphoric reference to 'my task'

Sentence (5) 'last task' is an anaphoric reference to 'my task'

2. Substitution:

Sentence (3) 'father' is substituted with 'him'

Sentence (4) 'Uloko' is substituted with 'he'

Sentence (6) 'father' is substituted with 'he'

3. Connectives:

Sentence (1) 'first'

Sentence (2 and 3) 'and'

Sentence (4) 'finally'

Sentence (2) 'second'

Sentence (6) 'after all'

Sentence (5) 'before'

5.4.3.1. Excerpts From *Men Without Ears* TEXT VIII

You won't believe me if I tell you the intrigues, the animosity and the greasing of palms that played prominent roles in the choice of the Igwe.¹ He stopped for a while and went on.² I had expected to be appointed one of the members of the Igwe's cabinet but I was disqualified because I am not rich enough and because I haven't a decent house in the village.³ p(41)

Cohesion in text viii

1. Ellipsis:

Sentence (3) 'appointed' is ellipted.

2. Substitution:

Sentence (2) 'Uloko' is substituted with 'he'

3. Connectives:

Sentence (3) 'because'

Sentence (1,2, and 3) 'and'

Sentence (3) 'but'

5.4.3.2 Excerpts From *Men Without Ears* TEXT IX

Whether you want your office refurnished or not, I want every item in mine to be changed.¹ 'It may not be your priority, man', I responded lightly.² 'Let me be sincere with you, Ama, I will not approve any money for furnishing your office.'³ p(105)

Cohesion in text ix

1. Ellipsis:

Sentence (1) 'refurnished' is ellipted in the phrase '....or not'

2. Substitution:

Sentence (1) 'I' is substituted with 'Ama'

Sentence (1) 'office' is substituted with 'mine'

Sentence (2) 'priority' is substituted with 'mine'

3. Connectives:

Sentence (1) 'or'

Sentence (3) 'but'

Sentence (1) 'whether'

4. Reference:

Sentence (1) 'I' refers to Ama

Sentence (2) 'It' refers to furnishing the office

Comment:

In *Men Without Ears*, the writer made use of reference and examples to many issues which needed cohesive ties to link them together for meaningful connections. Coherence wouldn't have been possible in this text considering the so many issues the writer raised in it but for a proper deployment of cohesive mechanism. Even excerpts are meaningful in isolation of the entire text.

5.4.4. Excerpts From *The Power of a Plate of Rice* TEXT X

That would make it five whole months without a salary¹. I am not interested in your calculations². Mr. Aziza was known for punishing his teachers by withholding their salaries³. But I had not known him to withhold any teacher's salary for more than two weeks at the most⁴ pg. 3

Cohesion in text x:

Analysis

“That” in sentence (1) is an anaphoric reference, referring to the total number of months of withholding the teachers salary.

“It” in sentence (1) refers to the withheld salary.

The repetition of “salary” in sentence 3 and 4 creates a lexical cohesion called reiteration.

“I” in sentence (2) is a cataphoric reference to “Mr Aziza”. In sentence (3), ‘their’ forms grammatical cohesion.

“His” in sentence (3) and “Him” in sentence (4) refer back to “Mr Aziza” in sentence (3) (anaphoric reference).

Teacher is repeated in 3 and 4 for reiteration and “their” refers back to teachers in sentence 3.

“But” in sentence (4) acts as an adversative connector that links elements across sentences, it is called a textual connector.

“I” in sentence (4) refers to Mrs Cheta Adi

5.4.5. Excerpts from *The Trial* Text XI

Somadi gave him and Ada a drumstick each and bottle of coke and as they began to tear at the drumstick, she continued with her story¹. My husband died suddenly². He had a stroke³. I went to Kano at once⁴. His two brothers had arrived there before me to make arrangement, for taking my husbands body to the village for burial⁵. They insisted that I should not enter the flat but my husband’s friends and neighbours persuaded them to work with me in making the burial arrangement⁶. P13.

Cohesion in text xi

Analysis:

In sentence (1) personal pronoun “Him” is anaphorically referring to K.C earlier mentioned in the passage. In the same sentence (1) the personal pronoun “they” helps to build cohesion by anaphorically referring to K.C and Ada. In sentence (1) also “She” is in a backward reference to Somadi. In the same sentence (1) cohesion is built by the repetition of the word “drumstick”, this is also reinforced by the use of definite article “*the* drumstick”, the repetition also provides emphasis. In sentence (3), the personal pronoun “he” engenders texture by anaphorically referring to ‘my husband’ in sentence (2).

In sentence (5), the word “there” is used as a substitution for the word “Kano” used in sentence (4), thereby building cohesion. In the same sentence (5), the personal pronoun “me” is in anaphoric reference to Somadi in sentence (1). In line (6) “they” and “them” ensure texture because they refer anaphorically to his “two brothers” in sentence (5), while “I” in the same sentence ties back to “Somadi” likewise in sentence (6) “burial arrangements” build lexical cohesion because the word burial has been used earlier in sentence (5).

5.4.5.1 Excerpts from *The Trial* Text XII

All of a sudden she stopped shredding the okra, threw her head back and laughed loudly¹. Her laughter pierced the still afternoon air² it was a one-person laugh which according to a proverb in her language rots the teeth³.P 83

Cohesion in text xii**Analysis**

In sentence (1) “she” refers back to Mata mentioned in the previous page of the text., while “shredding” collocates with “okra” thereby creating texture. The words ‘laughed’ in sentence (1), “laughter” in sentence (2) and “laugh” in sentence (3) also build lexical cohesion.

5.4.5.2 Excerpt from *The Trial* : Text XIII

At nine o'clock that morning I left my office at NITEL to post a letter and check my post office mail box¹. The NITEL offices were behind the main post office in Okpara Avenue². Not far from the gate of the post office was an old mango tree whose shady branches provided shelter for beggars, most of whom were women³. I passed this beggars 'haven' each time I went to the post office but I never patronized the beggars⁴. I had believed that time that beggars especially those that showed no visible disability of any sort, were despicable people, lazy⁵. P 35

Cohesion ties in text xiii

Analysis

In sentence (1), collocation which enhances cohesion is further realized by the use of such words as “post office” “letter” “mailbox”. In sentence (2), the definite article “the” is in reference to “NITEL” which has been mentioned earlier on, while NITEL itself builds cohesion because it has been mentioned earlier in sentence (1). In sentence (4) “the beggars” build texture because the definite article “the’ is a reference to the fact that beggars have been mentioned in sentence (3).and sentence (4), thereby bringing about cohesion and texture.

Finally the personal pronoun “I” in sentences 1, 4 and 5 refers to the omniscient narrator.

Comment:

The writer’s application of cohesive devices is so significant that the excerpts which we have used for analysis readily give clues to the detailed stories. This is because every part of the story is linked. No gaps are created that will leave the reader confused. Sentences are well linked as paragraphs are also developed by using references, ellipses, substitutions, conjunctions and lexical connections in them.

5.4.6. Excerpts From *The Pay-Packet* TEXT XIV

Boys always fight for things that are not theirs. Yes they are all greedy things². And I dislike them all, they are all horrible!³. P16

Cohesion in text xiv

In sentence (1) ‘theirs’ is a possessive pronoun referring anaphorically to the plural noun ‘boys’ at the beginning of the sentence. Structurally, pronouns are used to replace the noun in a sentence.

In sentence (2) ‘they’ is also a pronoun still standing for the ‘boys’ in sentence (1). Also in sentence (2) ‘are’ collocates with the plural pronoun ‘they’ in the same sentence to create grammatical concord. In sentence (2) ‘yes’ is nominal, functioning as affirmative in sentence (3) ‘and’ is an intertextual coordinator linking the first idea with the next. It can also be an additive cohesive device in that context in the sense that it has provided another information. Also ‘I’ in

sentence (3) refers to one of the girls who commented against boys and ‘they’ in sentence (3) still refers anaphorically to the boys in sentence (1) as well as ‘them’ in the same sentence (3).

From the analysis therefore, we have been able to prove that Ifeoma Okoye observed the linguistic rules of cohesion in her works. This has helped in the readability and comprehension of the texts. We can therefore assert that Okoye’s texts are reader-friendly. Okoye’s compliance with textual cohesion has made it possible for her to produce coherent stories for easy appreciation.

5.5 PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE AND ROLES IN IFEOMA OKOYE’S TEXTS.

5.5.1 Preamble:

Paragraphs form the whole text. A Stylistic consideration of any texts must pay attention to its paragraph development and structure. Paragraphs are regarded as the basic units of organization in writing where groups of related sentences merge to develop ideas. It is therefore, a unit of the text which presents a given amount of information on an issue and organizes and manages information in a way that the message presented or introduced therein, is used for thematic unfolding and the eventual actualization of the author’s purpose in the text. This section of the chapter, therefore examines the type of paragraph structures that are found in Ifeoma Okoye’s texts and their relationships with her feminist concerns. Perhaps, it may throw more light on the concepts of cohesion discussed at the beginning of the chapter. This is because paragraph structures and their roles cannot be ascertained without reference to cohesion. Paragraph structure and cohesion are inseparable.

According to Mary Trimble and Louis Trimble (1979) a paragraph is:

A unit of discourse which presents a selected amount of information on a given topic and which organizes that information rhetorically such that the concepts presented and the relationships established between the concepts are the most functional for the purpose of the writing and for the particular type of reader (372).

In all of Okoye's texts, it is easy to identify her artistic ability to organize paragraphs which contain relevant and appropriate words, phrases, clauses, sentences and cohesive devices that aid the readers flow of thought. Sample paragraphs from Okoye's texts reveal that she structures her paragraph to accommodate sentences and words that aim at the actualization of her feminist message. It could be said that her paragraph structure is stylistically peculiar and significant.

A textual appraisal of Okoye's paragraph structure, shows that her strength in creating credible, realistic and believable stories to pass her feminist message, lies in her stylistic use of ornate descriptions. Thus, she uses this technique to create exciting paragraphs capable of arresting the reader's interest. However, as a conscious writer, the technique of direct and indirect interior monologue is obviously evident in her paragraph arrangement. Okoye uses this technique to reveal or expose the opinion of the author and the characters on an issue or subject matter in the text. The author's use of indirect and direct monologue technique, in her paragraph structure is stylistically significant. While the indirect interior monologue allows the author to present an opinion and verdict on issues in a free and indirect thought either as a commentator,

omniscient narrator, presenter and/or as authorial voice in the paragraph, the direct interior monologue technique contains the free and direct thought of the characters. Utterances and expressions are deliberately structured, designed and assigned characters to accommodate her feminist message in the paragraphs.

We shall therefore examine the following paragraph excerpts from Okoye's texts in line with our discussion above;

5.5.2 Excerpts and Analysis from *The Trial*

Paragraph A.

Rain clouds hung heavily in sky, defying the frantic efforts of the winds to disperse them. Somadi, in her anxiety, had arrived at the primary school more than an hour before the closing time. Standing under an aged horse-chestnut tree near the school entrance, she surveyed the school premises. There was no real gate, just a wide gap in the wire fence that surrounded the premises. Numerous patches of overgrown weeds and heaps of refuse had taken over the playgrounds, sparing only the meandering footpaths that connected the classroom blocks. The blocks, three of them, were shaped like matchboxes. Their walls had leprous patches and their rusty corrugated iron roofs had sagged in a number of places. A few meters from the school, on the left side, stood a mountain of decaying kitchen and human waste, discharging both heat and suffocating stench. (4)

Analysis of Paragraph A.

The paragraph introduces the reader to Somadi's risky mission of recovering her children from her husband's people. She wishes to achieve this by collecting her children from their school and absconding with them. Somadi stands the risk of being accused of kidnapping but was determined to carry through her plan,

although not without anxiety and fear of uncertainty, as captured by the author in this paragraph with the two sentences. (i) *Somadi in her anxiety had arrived at the primary school more than an hour before the closing time.* (ii) *Standing near a chestnut tree, she surveyed the school premises.* Somadi was depicted as having treaded cautiously in carrying out this herculean task. The paragraph's first sentence, *Rain clouds hung heavily in the sky, defying the frantic efforts of the winds to disperse them,* creates the effect of anxiety. The threatening rain fall, predictable by the behaviour of the cloud, heightened Somadi's anxiety, because she knew, her plans would scatter, should the rain fall.

Okoye's paragraph structure and content are peculiar in the sense that she must arrange the words and sentences in the paragraph to reflect her feminist concerns which sometimes portray her as a social critic.

In the paragraph, Okoye has carefully and deliberately selected words and sentences to create a particular picture in the mind of the reader. Her vivid description of the school environment where Somadi's children attend convey a particular information- the neglect and decay in our public primary schools in the country. Thus the author's purpose as a social critic has informed the choice of the descriptive phrases and words in the paragraph. The paragraph describes a typical public primary school premises as having (i) *no gates* (ii) *patches of overgrown weeds* (iii) *heaps of refuse* (which had taken over the children's playground in the school) (iv) *classrooms methaphorically referred to as mactchboxes* due to their sizes, (v) *classroom walls having leprous patches* (obviously as a result of dirt and faded paints over time,) (vi) *patches of*

corrugation sheets (which had sagged in most places) and (vii) *a mountain of human waste* (lying very close to the school and emitting heat and stench).

The paragraph is the author's recreation of the dilapidation and neglect in the public schools. This picture is not alien to the reader. Perhaps, such school is located around the reader. The author's ability to recreate easily, identifiable situation in the paragraph is stylistically significant. It accords with the stylistic norm of a make-believe. The writer considers the reader as part of the society where we have the similar public primary schools. Somadi's survey report is presented as observations. The fact that they are not presented in a reported speech is stylistically significant. No quotation mark and no sign of narration.

Paragraph B.

Disgusted by the squalor, Somadi became more determined to carry out her plan in spite of the risks involved. The primary school was not what she expected. It was not fit for any child. She loved children and believed that no sacrifice was too much for a mother to make for the well being of her children.(4)

Analysis of Paragraph B.

Paragraph B is a shorter one that can only make sense at the instance of paragraph A. Okoye likes to vary her paragraph lengths without disrupting the reader's flow of thought. The phrase '*Disgusted by the squalor*' refers to the disgusting and frustrating state of the primary school where Somadi's children attend. The phrase is stylistically significant for creating an anaphorical reference which serves a cohesive purpose in the text. It is also located at the subjective position as the noun phrase (NP) of that sentence making it conspicuous and emphatic. Emboldened and encouraged by the conviction that her children

deserve better than what she had seen, she became more determined to carry out her mission. Somadi believes that her children are worth any sacrifice. The decay in the primary school, witnessed by Somadi as described in the first paragraph gave us a lead to the desperation of a mother in the subsequent paragraphs that would follow. In line with thematic unity, the B paragraph becomes appropriate and auspicious to link the reader to the title of the story 'Soul Healers' from the very beginning. Also in line with the writers feminist concern, motherhood is portrayed with the technique of indirect interior monologue – revealing the authors opinion on the bond between women and their children – the sacrifice mothers can make for the well-being of their children.

Paragraph C

The alarm clock chimed stridently breaking the silence in the room. It was five in the morning and time for Ebuka to go down to the main house to start her daily chore as a domestic worker. She rose from her narrow bed, doddered to the small table by the window where the clock stood, and pressed down the alarm knob. Then she shuffled back to bed, sat down heavily on it and buried her head in her hands. She had been awake most of the night, thinking about her five-year-old daughter, Amara, and longing to see her. Being an orphan and a widow, she had left Amara with her mother-in-law in the village in order to take up the job of a domestic worker at the Edets in Enugu two years before. She had not seen her daughter again since then. She wanted to take her along with her, but Mrs Edet would not hear it. 'The child will be in your way and your job will suffer,' she had told her. (15)

Analysis of Paragraph C.

This paragraph exhibits yet another evidence of the artistic power of vivid description by Okoye. The paragraph describes how a typical day of a domestic staff starts. In the opening sentence of this paragraph, the alarm clock becomes a nuisance but a necessary evil for Ebuka who must wake up by the breaking noise of this clock to start her house chores, by five in the morning. But the paragraph is not created in this story to tell us how Ebuka worked as usual on this fateful day, rather it is aimed at recreating the great feeling of nostalgia which has caused Ebuka depression and insomnia. In the language of a narrator, the reader can deduce that a mother- Ebuka, is missing her daughter, Amara and her mother-in-law. A good paragraph records events or actions in a sentence which follows an order that is easy to understand. Thus, Ebuka's actions from the time she woke up are chronologically presented in the paragraph. In the paragraph, the author uses these sentences to describe the reactions of restlessness in Ebuka (i) *she shuffled back to bed, sat down heavily on it and buried her head in her hands.* (ii) *She had been awake most of the night, thinking about her five-year-old daughter, Amara and longing to see her mother-in-law.* In that paragraph alone, the pronoun 'She' is used in six places to replace the proper noun 'Ebuka'. This gives the stylistic effect of repetition so the reader does not miss the gist on Ebuka. The paragraph suggests that the story centres on Ebuka.

Paragraph D

Sitting there on the bed and thinking of Amara , Ebuka decided to ask Mrs Edet once again for permission to travel to her village to see Amara. Not entitled to an annual leave or even a day off, she had asked for such permission twice before. (15).

Analysis for Paragraph D

This paragraph follows paragraph 'c' immediately to reveal the outcome of the event in the paragraph that just ended. As usual, Okoye alternates her paragraph lengths in a way that gives the picture of long/short, long/short style. She maintains long paragraphs for exhaustive descriptions and explanations and then brings down the readers tempo in the paragraph that follows which is usually short.

Paragraph D tells us about Ebuka's resolve to ask her Madam Mrs Edet for permission to see her family. Like Somadi, Ebuka's courage to ask Mrs Edet for permission to travel again must have been informed by the desperation to see her daughter. She wouldn't give up, in spite of her past experience of being turned down, by Mrs Edet. Again the writer's feminist concern surfaces – the strong attachment of a mother to her child. The paragraph did not fail to provide a concluding sentence *“Not entitled to an annual leave or even a day off she had asked for such a permission before (15).* This portrays Mrs Edet as not being human and considerate to her fellow woman. The paragraph C and D are linked thematically and sentantically. This is an artistic cohesive device in order to carry the reader to the end.

Paragraph E

Anayo, weak, grief-stricken, and angry left the house through the back door. She was accused of murder and was summoned for questioning by the women's group. Numbering about thirty, the women were waiting for her at the Obi of the oldest man in the kindred, Ozo. (44)

Analysis of Paragraph E.

In this paragraph, the author uses an interior monologue to introduce the reader to the typical village environment with the hustling and bustling noise from farmers who wake up early to go to their farms, to work as much as they could, before the rising of the sun: and the maidens who must hurry to the stream to fetch water quickly and come back to sweep the compound and prepare breakfast for those going to the farm. This is captured in the very first sentence “*The small village was astir with early risers*”. The author’s use of adjectives *weak*, *grief-stricken* and *angry* to qualify Anayo’s state and mood suggests that all is not well. The words create the effect of tension in the reader. It is a strategy to arouse the reader’s consciousness to expect something sinister. The author sustained these expectations by introducing the information that follows – the accusation that Anayo killed her husband and the gathering of *Umu-Okpu* at the Obi.

Paragraph F

Anayo’s integrity, one of the things she valued most, was at stake. She was, therefore, determined to prove to the women that she was innocent. She was determined to win them to her side, for with their support, she reckoned, she would be able to stand up to Ezeji, her brother-in-law, whom she was sure was behind the accusation. But how was she going to deal with these women without incurring their wrath, without turning them into enemies? She was, by nature, always eager to please even at her own detriment. The women’s group, popularly known as *Umu-opku* or ‘Daughters of the Lineage, made up of patrilineal relations of her husband: his aunts, sisters, nieces, and cousins. The group usually

converged in the village whenever a member of the kindred died or major crises threatened the solidarity and well-being of the kindred. (44).

Analysis for Paragraph F

Paragraph f is a longer paragraph acting as the unfolding part of the earlier paragraph. The paragraph has been consciously structured by the author to tell us how Anayo intends to defend the accusation of murdering her husband which the earlier paragraph had announced; to explain to the reader who members of *umu-okpu* are. We notice that these paragraphs are already setting the stage for the trial by ordeal which will soon follow. This is a deliberate stylistic technique in paragraph structuring and development in a discourse for the purposes of creating a lead to the reader. For instance the sentences such as

Anayo's integrity, one of the things she valued most, was at stake. She was therefore determined to prove to the women that she was innocent (44). Create a lead to a possible reaction of the character 'Anayo'. Similarly the sentence “ *The group usually converged in the village whenever a member of the kindred died or major crises threatened the solidarity and well-being of the kindred (44)* gives the impression that the gathering of *umu-okpu* for anyone is usually not a pleasant thing and therefore Anayo is in for a no mean case. The paragraph is structured to introduce the issue of false allegations against the widow in the event of the death of her husband. An issue which the writer addresses as part of her feminist concerns.

Paragraph G

Tope was her husband's cousin. She had a doctorate degree in sociology and lectured at a university in Lagos. Because of Tope's education and eloquent

mini lectures to any small gathering of women on the subject of injustices meted out on them by men, Anayo had expected her to have matched her words with action when the opportunity came. But Tope had watched a fellow woman being humiliated and subjugated, not by men but by fellow women and had remained tongue-tied and manacled. Tope's inaction reminded her of her aunts popular expression: 'Saying is not doing'. (49)

Analysis of Paragraph G

Paragraph seven is structured to expose the hypocritical side of feminism and to highlight the inaction of feminists when there is opportunity for action presents. The paragraph becomes necessary to allude that feminism is a mere academic exercise. The author uses the technique of the omniscient narrator to express her opinion on the fact that women give silent approval to oppression and subjugation of their fellow women. In the paragraph, Tope represents feminism as a toothless bull dog. The paragraph is an example that the issues or ideas which the author wishes to express or portray, inform the structuring of the sentences which her paragraphs contain.

Paragraph H

First, there had been too much opposition from Fred's people when I married him because I was not of the same ethnic group as he. The opposition, I strongly believed, was fuelled and led by Paul. Fortunately for me at that time, I had an ally in Fred, and together we had waged a ferocious war against opposers of inter-ethnic marriage, and had won, though not without injuries, some of which had left permanent scars. Secondly, when Fred died over four months ago, I was subjected to many dehumanizing widowhood rites by the Umada, his

patrilineal female relation. I was forced to sit on a mat on the hard floor throughout the burial ceremony. I was not allowed to take part in the planning for the burial, although I was asked to provide the money needed. I was not allowed to express any opinion about the burial of my own husband. And to crown it all, I had every strand of my long beautiful hair completely cut off as soon as the burial was over. I had submitted myself passively to all these demeaning and subjugating rituals, not only because of the pressure from my husband's people, but also because I was timid and did not know my rights. (67&68).

Analysis of Paragraph H

In Paragraph H, the author chooses to develop the paragraph by enumeration or itemization of points and reasons. This method of paragraph development helps the reader to follow the writer with ease. Enumeration technique is also an easy means of achieving coherence in a paragraph. This paragraph from the story of *From wife to concubine in the Trial* gives the reader a list of the prejudices which Arit suffered from her late husband's family. *First, there had been too much opposition from Fred's people when I married him because I was not of the same ethnic group as he.* Note the coordinating conjunction 'because' which the writer has used to link the two independent clauses in that sentence in order to accommodate an assertion and a reason respectively and simultaneously in one stretch of sentence. The paragraph continues with a major supporting sentence with "*the opposition, I strongly believed, was fuelled by Paul*" (67) and a concluding sentence to the issue of opposition raised in the topic sentence. *'Fortunately for me at that time I had an ally in Fred, and together we waged a ferocious war against opposers of inter-*

ethnic marriage , and had won, though not without injuries, some of which had left permanent scars (67). The use of this compound complex sentence or multiple sentence in this paragraph enables the writer to accommodate details of a battle fought and won. Still recounting her ordeal, a second issue is introduced with “*Secondly*”, as inter-paragraph cohesive device for enumeration and linking of issues to what has been said earlier.

The use of first person ‘*I*’ in eight times is significant.

- ✓ “ *I* was subjected to many dehumanizing widowhood rites by the *umuada*
- ✓ *I* was forced to sit down on a mat on the hard floor throughout the *burial ceremony*
- ✓ “ *I* was not allowed to take part in the planning for the burial , although
- ✓ “ *I* was asked to provide the money needed
- ✓ “ *I* was not allowed to express my opinion about the burial of my *husband*
- ✓ “ *I* had every strand of my long beautiful hair completely cut off as soon as the burial was over
- ✓ *I* had submitted myself passively to all the demeaning and subjugating *rituals*.
- ✓ *I* was timid and did not know my rights. This may be an indication that the writer may be referring to her own personal experiences.

The reminiscences of Arit’s experiences during the death of her husband have culminated into the paragraph development which chronicles the ordeal that widows undergo. This is the message that has informed all the sentences the

author has carefully assembled in the paragraph. Paragraph structure and development must have a message or an idea to discuss. This definitely impacts on the words (diction) phrases, lexical items, clauses and sentence that it accommodates. In this paragraph, Arit represents the writer to express her opinion on the plight of the widows.

Example I

Ogoli arrived at Agu's flat in Achara Layout at eight o'clock. It was Saturday morning and she had taken her two children with her because there was no one to look after them at home. (73)

Ogoli fidgeted in her chair. Was it too early to discuss the issue with him, she wondered. At last she said slowly, 'It's now three years since Chibuzo died.' (73)

Ogoli lowered her head. She had married Chibuzo exactly five months after she finished her secondary school and Chibuzo had died three years later. (73)

Ogoli wondered how wise it would be to give Agu the details. (74)

Ogoli sat up quickly as if a pin had pricked her bottom. (74)

Ogoli did not answer the question. She knew where Agu was heading (75)

Ogoli remained silent. Her toes twitched as they did when she was greatly troubled... (75)

Ogoli walked into the flat, followed Erima into the living room, and collapsed onto the sofa. (77)

Ogoli, tried to smile but ended up with a grimace. (77)

Ogoli said goodbye to her children and left Erima's flat for Gerry's place. (78)

Ogoli wasn't thirsty. All the same she asked for a small bottle of Coke. (79)

Ogoli concealed her annoyance at Nochie's disobedience and rudeness. (80)

Ogoli melted like palm oil under a warm sun as she absorbed the little girl's warmth, love, and trust. (80)

Ogoli was left again to her thoughts. She liked Nena (81)

Ogoli stared in front of her. She loved him and would want to marry him. (81)

Ogoli's heart went out to Nena. The girl needed a mother. (82)

Ogoli said, 'If I marry you, Gerry, I'll lose my children to their uncle, (82)

Ogoli put her head on Gerry's shoulder and closed her eyes. (82)

Analysis of Example I

Example I is a compilation of short paragraphs containing one or two sentences in the story of the *second chance*. With the example 'I', we want to observe that most of the paragraphs in the story of '*Second Chance*' in the *Trail* start with Ogoli. For instance, between pages 73-82, the writer used Ogoli's name nineteen times, to start new paragraphs. Apart from the fact that it suggests that the story centers on Ogoli, it is also possible because the story runs more like a dialogue between Ogoli and Agu her brother-in-law. Each new move or utterance of Ogoli is noted in her name. The writer uses this peculiar strategy and technique of paragraph structure to enumerate and highlight the reaction of a typical widow when the unfriendly riot act of the tradition as it affects the custody of children, is being read. These paragraphs are consciously structured and introduced in the story as highlight to expose the unkind tradition against the widows and the women generally. She has also used the paragraphs to introduce issues sharply and aptly. The writer's inclusion of many short paragraph structures in that story is to make her point succinct, easy to grease and remember. This is stylistically significant.

5.5.3 Excerpts and Analysis from *Men Without Ears*

Paragraph J

¹ A short fat man in a white flowing gown, whom I had come across before at the international airport, fluttered past me. ² He wore a red cap with two feathers stuck in it, and several rows of red coral beads round his wrists and thick neck. ³ On his right hand he carried a large brief-case. ⁴ It was obvious that the weight of his body and his regalia was a great impediment to him as he scudded forward. ⁵ The hand that held the brief-case also lifted his flowing gown to prevent him from tripping, while the hand that gripped the walking-stick and the leather fan tried desperately to stop the feathered cap from joining the wind in its frolic. ⁶ As I watched this comical spectacle, I wondered what had become of my countrymen. ⁷ First, there was the struggle for boarding passes, now the mad rush for seats on the plane. (5)

Analysis of Paragraph J

A very significant observation in the author's paragraph structure and development in *Men Without Ears* is that, apart from her power of articulate description, her appropriate application of cohesive devices to link sentences and issues to achieve coherence and continuity is very significant. This is necessary not only for readability but also for proper interpretation on the part of the reader. In this paragraph, we notice her usual apt and vivid description of objects, persons, events and situation.

In this paragraph, in *Men Without Ears* a certain man is described by Chigo with the adjectives '*Short*' and '*Fat*' to create in the reader the mental picture of a figure whose movement will soon be described with the adverb '*Fluttered*' in

another sentence. The noun phrase “*A short fat man*” in a white flowing gown which forms the subject of sentence 1 is converted to ‘*He*’ in sentence 2. The pronoun ‘*He*’ which replaces the noun phrase “*A short fat man in a white flowing gown*” serves as a lexical cohesive device in the paragraph. Other examples of the same cohesive function of the pronoun ‘*He*’ are found in sentences 3 and 4. In other cases, the pronoun ‘*He*’ is converted to possessive pronouns for grammaticality and cohesion. Eg, sentence 3 “*his right hand*”... sentence 4 ‘*his body*’ and ‘*his regalia*’ to correspond grammatically with ‘*him*’ which is the objective form of ‘*his*’ in the same sentence 4. In sentence 5, ‘*his*’ collocates grammatically with ‘*him*’ in the same sentence 5. The topic sentence is located at the end of the paragraph in sentence 7 – *First there was the struggle for boarding passes, and now the mad rush for seats on the plane* (5)

The paragraph is designed to capture the excess luggage of over-dressing and over-weight which is difficult to manage in a mad place like our airport. Apparently, *the short fat man in a white flowing gown* may be a chief or a traditional ruler because the description of his regalia creates such a picture. The excess luggage on his body alone from the coral beads on his neck and wrists, walking stick and fan, constitute great impediment to his movement as the author describes his movement as ‘*scudding*’ in sentence⁵. The paragraph serves as a comic relief to the readers as well as making mockery of over dressing in our society. This paragraph is stylistically significant for using an interior indirect monolog commentator – Chigo

Paragraph K

¹ An airways official tapped me on the shoulder. ² ‘That’s your plane,’ he informed me. ³ ‘If you stand here laughing you’ll not get a seat on it.’(6)

Analysis of Paragraph k.

This paragraph that follows the former immediately is a very short one. It has only three sentences. This is typical of Okoye in the arrangement of paragraphs in her texts. Long paragraphs are usually preceded by short ones and vice-versa. The short paragraph reinforces the fact that the former introduced humour into the text because the narrator was reported to be carried away with laughter in sentence ³ which says ‘*If you stand here laughing, you’ll not get a seat on it*’ (6). Okoye has the skill and technique for varying her paragraph length to different sizes depending on what she wishes to say.

Paragraph L

The Royal Palace Hotel was a beautiful place. It had a hall specially designed for cocktail parties and buffet dinners. This hall was artistically decorated and fully air-conditioned. No guests had arrived. This was to be expected as it was still very early. We went round the hall while Uloko examined the drinks and snacks to make sure everything was all right. I could see from his countenance that he was pleased with the arrangements. He gave final instructions to the stewards and then he went to stand by the door of the hall to welcome the guests. (21)

Analysis of Paragraph L.

This paragraph creates a mental picture of the Royal Palace Hotel in the mind of the reader. The underlying message is to show that Uloko and his likes do not and cannot go for anything less in a bid to maintain their false life-style.

Therefore, in this paragraph, the author has deliberately portrayed the class of the hotel in order to express the unqualified and unmerited class and taste of Uloko. Okoye's paragraph must have a message for the reader, sometimes explicitly, and at other times, inexplicitly; sometimes as a social critic and at other times, as a feminist. Linguistically speaking, her paragraph structure and development are always informed by this those fact.

5.5.4 Excerpts and Analysis from *Chimere*

Paragraph M

¹Two things, however, disturbed Chimere during this first week. ² First, was Azuka's rudeness to her whenever their path crossed, which was often in spite of her efforts to avoid the secretary as much as possible. ³The second problem Chimere had this time was how to reject the many advances made to her by the young men in the brewery without incurring their enmity and without becoming unpopular. ⁴By the end of this first week, it was common knowledge among these young men that she wanted to be left alone. ⁵ Some of them took it calmly while some told her off and subsequently ignored her. ⁶Oyeka persisted more than any other and in the end was satisfied with just being on speaking terms with her (96).

Analysis of Paragraph M

The author opens this paragraph with a catchy and an anticipatory topic sentence "*Two things, however disturbed Chimere during the first week*". Sentence 1. "*First week*" is a deictic time which refers anaphorically to a time known by the reader already from the previous sentences. The reader is therefore expecting a gist of the two things that disturbed Chimere. The

paragraph must unfold with the issues that bothered Chimere. Thus in sentence 2 *first*, points to Azuka's rudeness to her whenever their path crosses, which was often in spite of her efforts to avoid the secretary as much as possible. Sentence 3, the *second* problem Chimere had this time was how to reject the many advances made to her by the young men in the brewery without incurring their enmity and without becoming unpopular.

The word "*first*" and "*second*" in sentence 2 and 3 respectively are cohesive devices used to enumerate the issues that bothered Chimere. They also refer to her problem anaphorically to create a grammatical and structural link with what had been said earlier. With this arrangement in the paragraph, the author carries the reader along. Sentence 4,5 and 6 are put in place to confirm Chimere's fears as raised in sentences 2 and 3. In sentence 5, '*some*' is used to refer anaphorically to young men in sentence 4. It is significant for its grammatical and inter-paragraph coherence. Sentences 2 and 3 which contain the worries of Chimere are complex sentences, deliberately coined to accommodate theme and rheme. They contain embedded dependent clauses which give further elaboration and or reasons why Chimere was disturbed. In sentence 2 "*... which was often in spite of her efforts to avoid the secretary as much as possible*" while in sentence 3 we have "*...without incurring their enmity and without becoming unpopular*".

Paragraph N

Although she had found some of these young men likable, especially oyeka, Chimere would not let herself get involved with any of them for fear of being rejected in the end. Ezim gave her a long lecture on her standoffish

attitude to the young men but she remained unmoved. She saw every young man as another Jide: Unstable, selfish and callous (96).

Analysis of Paragraph N

This short paragraph follows the long one as noted in Okoye's style. The paragraph is a transitional paragraph which starts with although in sentence 1– a cohesive device used to introduce contrast. It is also an intra-paragraph paragraph cohesive device. Because the cohesive device paragraph will say something on the contrary from the earlier paragraph, the writer needed to create that link from the onset in order not to brake the flow of thought of the reader, hence the use of 'Although'. In sentence 1, "young men" still refers to the young men in the former paragraph in sentence 4. The author introduces Chimere's experience with Jide in this short paragraph in sentence 3 to serve as a reminder to the reader who may now excuse Chimere and exonerate her for the stand she has taken. She is still suffering from the traumatic experience which she had with Jide earlier in the story. The author knows and recognizes that it is just human for Chimere to feel the way she does. This makes the paragraph sound believable and natural.

5.5.5 Excerpts and Analysis from *Behind the Clouds*

Paragraph O

¹Ije Apia arrived at the Blest Clinic at about half-past seven in the morning. ²A middle-aged cleaner who was dusting the panes of a window showed her the clinic's waiting-room. ³Ije walked in quietly. ⁴A handful of patients were already in the room. ⁵Some of them were standing round the clinic's clerk, waiting to be registered. ⁶ Ije joined them and waited for her turn.

⁷When it came, she paid her registration fee to the clerk, obtained a receipt, a hospital card, and a numbered card. In spite of her early arrival she would be the seventeenth patient to see the doctor. (1)

Analysis of Paragraph O.

The opening paragraph of *Behind the Clouds* is a recreation of what obtains in a typical Clinic in our society. The activities in the clinic as described by the author in the paragraph are very familiar to most readers of the novel. Ije Apia is the heroine of the novel therefore introducing her at the beginning of the paragraph is significant. The name is repeated two other times in the paragraph in sentences 3 and 6. There are yet other three possessive pronouns still referring to the same person in sentence 2, 6 and 8 of the paragraph. The implication of this emphasis is that there is a character to watch in this story. Also, associating the character with the hospital from the onset suggests that her health condition will form part of the story as it unfolds. And it eventually did, as the story centers on her barrenness. Apart from the sequential presentation of what transpired in the Clinic, the author employed some cohesive devices to make the sentences in the paragraph stick together. In sentence 2, 'her' refers to Ije Apia mentioned in sentence 1. It creates a link with the first referent. In sentence 5, the phrase 'some of them' refers anaphorically to 'a handful of patients' mentioned in sentence 4. The phrase creates a structural and grammatical cohesion in the paragraph. 'when it came' in sentence 7 refers to Ije's 'turn' which she waited for in sentence 6. While the pronoun 'She' in sentence 7 still refers to Ije. The author also used the commas to account for all the things that Ije did in the clinic when it got to her turn.

Example “...paid her registration fee, ...obtained a receipt, ...a hospital card and a numbered card sentence 7.

The concluding sentence in the paragraph, sentence 8 helps the reader to understand that Ije is still far from finishing with the clinic even though she arrived the clinic at about half-past seven in the morning.

Paragraph P

‘That will mean a long wait,’ Ije said under her breath as she put the registration card, the receipt and the numbered card into her handbag (1).

Analysis of Paragraph P

This short paragraph follows paragraph O immediately, in the text. It is a one sentence paragraph – a complex sentence which the author has used as a supporting paragraph to the issue already introduced. The demonstrative ‘that’ in “that will mean a long wait” refers to the time Ije will have to wait to see the doctor as her number is seventeenth according to sentence 8 in the earlier paragraph O.

Paragraph Q

¹Outside the building, Ije looked at her watch. ²It was a little past twelve noon. ³She decided to do some shopping before going home. ⁴Since she resigned her job as an accountant in an insurance company, she had been doing most of the family’s shopping although she had a reliable steward who would do it for her without cheating her. ⁵She also had a maid, not very clever, but faithful (10).

Analysis of Paragraph Q

The paragraph is the concluding chapter in *Behind the Clouds* one of the texts. It has a link with the opening paragraph. The opening paragraph started by telling the reader when Ije arrived at the Blest Clinic. Sentence 1 paragraph P “*Ije Apia arrived at the Blest Clinic at about half-past seven in the morning*” (1) And now, this author tells us the time Ije left the Clinic in sentence 3 of this concluding paragraph Q –“*Outside the building*”, Ije looked at her watch. It was a little past twelve noon. As the supporting sentences in the opening paragraph enumerated Ije’s activities inside the Clinic, so the supporting sentences in the closing paragraph Q tell us what Ije intends to do on leaving the clinic. In sentence 3 of the paragraph “*She decided to do some shopping before going home*” (10). We notice that the author did the time comparison of “*arrival time 7:30*” and departure time “*a little past 12 noon*” with to and from the clinic to pass the message of over-crowding in our hospitals and clinics. Just to consult a Doctor, Ije had to spend almost four hours plus.

In sentence 1 “*Outside the building*” represents a departure from the Clinic where the word ‘*building*’ represents clinic. It is an adverbial phrase of place or location. The pronoun ‘*She*’ in sentence 3 refers to Ije, serving as a cohesive device to link with the proper noun, Ije, in sentence 2: This is repeated in some other places in the paragraph. For instance; ‘*She*’ appears three times in sentence 4 which is a multi sentence and also once in sentence 5. Possessive pronoun ‘*her*’ has also been used grammatically to refer to Ije. The examples are seen in sentences 1 and 4 in the paragraph. The use of ‘*although*’ in sentence 4 is very significant because it serves a dual purpose. First as a coordinator in the multiple sentence, secondly, as a transitional cohesive device to bring in

the later part of sentence 4, which is on the contrary from talking about Ije to diverting to her steward. (10).

5.5.6 Excerpts and Analysis from *The Power of a Plate of Rice*

Paragraph R

I walked hurriedly to Mr Aziza's office, breathing heavily in steadily rising anger. The January sun was blazing in fury, taking undue advantage of the temporary withdrawal of the seasonal harmattan. As I arrived at the office which was at the end of the administration block, I remembered one of my mother's precepts: 'Do nothing in anger. Wait till your anger melts like thick palm oil placed under the sun. Mother was a philosopher of sorts. Poor woman. She died before I could reward her for all the sacrifices she made on my behalf, foregoing many comforts just so that I could get some education, and for carrying the financial burden of the family during my father's protracted illness and even after his premature death. In deference to mother, I stood by Mr Aziza's door for a few seconds, trying to stifle my anger, but failing woefully. Only an angel or an idiot would remain calm in my situation (91).

Analysis of Paragraph R

This is the opening paragraph of the short story – '*The Power of a Plate of Rice*'. The paragraph has been structured deliberately by the author to arouse tension, suspense, and an anticipation of the action that will follow as the story unfolds. In the paragraph, both the '*I*' and '*Mr . Aziza*' are not known by the reader. The reader will need to go further in the story to discover that '*I*' refers to '*Mrs. Cheta Adu*' while '*Mr. Aziza*' is the principal of the school where Mrs. Adu is a teacher. The '*I*' is a direct interior monologue commentator yet to be

understood. The suspense in the opening paragraph is a stylistic technique to capture and sustain the reader's interest.

In the paragraph, the writer needed all the attention and interest of the reader for the very important message she needed to pass on motherhood. In line with her feminist concerns, she structured the paragraph to pay tribute to mothers who have imparted wisdom and good morals in their children. Mothers who are supportive to the family up-keep. Mothers who are breadwinners. Mothers who make all sorts of sacrifices for the children and the entire family. Sentence 1 of this paragraph is a complex sentence where the author uses its dependent clause "*breathing heavily in steadily rising anger*" (91) for an additional information of rage and tension. The comma in sentence 1 is used to separate the independent clause "*I walked hurriedly to Mr. Aziza's office*" from the dependent clause in the complex sentence. (91). The use of 'I' first person personal pronoun is consistent in the paragraph structure to maintain the suspense. All the 'I' in the opening paragraph refers cataphorically to Mrs. Cheta Adu, whom the reader is yet to meet.

Sentence 3 introduces mother's precepts: "*Do nothing in anger*" with a colon for clarity. While in sentence 5, "*Wait till you anger melts like thick palm oil placed under the sun*" is a metaphor used to elaborate and explain the precept. Sentence 6 uses the simile '*philosopher*' to describe mama. Apparently mama was an embodiment of wisdom. Sentence 7 is a multiple sentence designed to accommodate mama's qualities without a break in transmission. Sentence 9 '*only an angel or an idiot would remain claim in my situation*' concludes the

paragraph with the message of a possible defiling of mama's precepts as the story progresses. The paragraph is well linked to the author's feminist message.

5.5.7 Excerpts and Analysis from *The Pay-Packet*

Paragraph S

¹Iba's heart fell. ²She had just learnt on arrival at the City Primary School where she was teaching, that the June salary which was a week overdue was to be paid that day. ³Surprisingly, she had come to dread pay-days and was a little glad when the payment of June salary was delayed (15).

Analysis of Paragraph S

This short opening paragraph which will be followed by a longer one, considering Okoye's stylistic trade mark on paragraph structure and development, is a sharp introduction to the story of Iba in '*The Pay-Packet*'.

The paragraph starts with a simple sentence 1 "*Iba's heart fell*". (15) But the author quickly introduces a second sentence '*She has just learnt on arrival that the June salary which was a week overdue was to be paid that day*'. (15) To explain why Iba's heart fell. This, unlike what happened in the story of *The Power of a Plate of Rice*, where the reader's suspense had to be sustained for a longer time in the story. Okoye has the artistic ability to vary her techniques and styles of presentation in all her works to avoid monotony.

Sentence 3 continues with the information on why Iba's heart fell. Sentences 2 and 3 of the paragraph are supporting sentences, structured to have a thematic unity with the topic sentence "*Iba's heart fell*" which is the introducing sentence.

In sentence 3, the word 'surprisingly' which is located at the subjective position of the sentence is used to effect a contrast between the two reasons why Iba's

heart fell. It is strange for one to dread pay-days or to rejoice when pay-days are delayed, but surprisingly this is the case with Iba. '*Surprisingly*' creates coherence by contrast in the paragraph. The short paragraph gives a hint to why Iba dreads the pay-days, giving the reader a feeling of anticipation of what her reasons could be from the beginning of the story.

The analyses of all the excerpts reveal Okoye's artistic ingenuity in structuring paragraphs which directly or indirectly betray her feminist concerns and message in her novel. Her application of appropriate cohesive devices aids readability. Okoye is consistent in her paragraph variation, logical and interesting presentation of issues which capture the interest of the reader and the proper handling of inter and intra paragraph unity. Okoye's handling of paragraph structure to create coherent stories and messages is in line with what Right and Hope (2003) observe: Cohesion involves formal linguistic links between sections of a texts... It refers to a way we know a text gels together – continuity of term, course and effect and so on (176). Our analysis in this chapter confirms this.

5.6 PUNCTUATION PATTERNS IN OKOYE'S TEXTS

5.6.1 Preamble

This segment examines how Okoye has used the mechanics of writing under the punctuation marks such as the (i) colon, (ii) the dash, (iii) the semicolon, and (iv) hyphens for stylistic and linguistic effect in her text. These identified types are the punctuation marks which we have observed as part of the author's strategy to ensure the readability and comprehension of her texts. She also uses

punctuation marks to guide against misreading and misinterpretation of her ideas and opinion in her novels.

The Modern Language Association of America (MLA) hand book (2009) states that:

the primary purpose of punctuation is to ensure the clarity and readability of writing. Punctuation clarifies sentence structure separating some words and grouping others. It adds meaning to written words and guides the understanding of readers as they move through sentences. (66).

In another instance, Nnadi (2011) observes that: Punctuations marks are not mere linguistic tapestries; they are indispensable accomplishments in the structuring of English sentences to achieve a desired message (8). Punctuation marks are both stylistically and linguistically significant for the role they play in the art of constructing and arranging of sentences in a written work. We shall therefore identify and enumerate some examples of the punctuation marks that are stylistically and linguistically significant in our texts. The following have been slated for the analysis of punctuation in the texts:

5.6.2 .The Colon (:)

The Colon is a mark of anticipation, directing attention to what follows. It can be used before enumeration. Colon may be used to introduce a list and or elaborate what was just said. In some instance, a colon can also be used to separate two coordinate clauses in a situation where the second clause repeats, explains or simplifies the statement contained in the first clause. We may also locate a colon between an introductory statement and a grammatically complete

quotation especially if the quotation is more than a sentence. Examples of colon as used by Okoye in her texts are as follows:

5.6.2.1 Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds*

1. “She had not lost all hope of having a baby for Dozie: a child that would have something from each of them and therefore bring them even closer”. (62).
2. “Ije chuckled and said lightly: ‘It’s because I don’t have enough food to eat”. (12).
3. “It was at this time, when she was at the nadir of her hopes, that she learned of the ‘miracles’ wrought by one Dr Melie who had opened a clinic in town: ‘The best Clinic’.(2).
4. “As Ije sat there, her mind plunged deep into the past: a past full of failure that still rankled” (1).
5. “Here was what she wanted: a quiet place where she could sit undisturbed by other patients” (1).
6. “Then Ije said aloud: ‘I’ve been to several doctors, I’ve had several kinds of tests, I’ve had different kinds of treatments, but all of them have been in vain” (8).
7. “Ije thought: he must have overworked himself in the office”. (16)
8. “She got her a letter–writer to state her reason for opposing the marriage carefully: highly educated girls were headstrong and disrespectful” (40)
9. “Her face was heavily made up: bright red lips, thin arched eyebrows, rosy cheeks and dull green eyelids– a smooth perfect mask” (74)

10. "Here was what she wanted: a quiet place where she could sit undisturbed by other patients" (1).

5.6.2.2 Excerpts from *Men Without Ears*

11. "Now I took a mental note of his features: a small face with eyes too large for it; a small mouth to match the compact face; and a nose a little on the flat side" (3).

12. "He heard me out without interruption, then said: 'Yes, I heard you shouting at him. Never mind, you'll get used to such things'" (4)

13. "He continued: You see, Chigo, why I say that without money you're nothing" (41).

14. "He seemed to have read my mind for he went on: 'I know that it is not an easy task that I'm setting before you, Chigo but, I want you to try all the same'" (49).

15. "The papers were full of reports of cases of armed robberies: innocent citizens were either waylaid on the highways or robbed at gunpoint in their homes". (54).

16. "He turned to me: 'I hope you're going to get a job in a bank". (55).

17. "I looked at young Millionaire's card and read it to myself: 'Chief Alike Otaka alias Young Millionaire – Exporter/Importer, Manufacturer's Representative, Building and Civil Contractor". (55).

18. "Uloko turned to me: 'I bought some building materials yesterday, Chigo".(66).

19. "Uloko watched her go and then turned to me: 'Yes, I am and I must finish it before November". (66).

20. “Three reporters: one from the local radio station, one from the local newspaper and the other from the local TV Station.” (68).

5.6.2.3 Excerpts from *The Pay-Packet*

21. “She thought how true the statement of one of Ebele’s defenders was: ‘Boys always fight for things that are not theirs.’” (16).
22. “But what was the use: it had not helped matters before as he was much stronger than she was”. (23).
23. “Then she heard herself saying to Bertrand: ‘You’re a gentleman, B. A perfect gentleman.’”(23).
24. “As she remained silent, he went on: ‘I vowed not to tell you what I do with your salary because I wanted to save you some embarrassment’”. (25).
25. “Bertrand continued: ‘Your father secretly made me promise to give him your salary every month for three years in spite of the huge sum he took from me as your bride price.’”(25).

5.6.2.4 Excerpts from *The Trial*

26. “Left alone in the house, she would then tackle the rest of her tasks: washing clothes, going to market if need be, cooking lunch...” (17).
27. “She remembered a piece of advice one of her mother’s friends gave to a mutual friend some years ago: ‘It’s the fear of the unknown future that keeps us glued to a deplorable situation’”. (25).

5.6.2.5 Excerpts from *Chimere*

28. “Her mother was all she had in the world: how could she sacrifice her for the ghost of a father she was not sure she will ever find?” (70).

29. "Mrs Ato shook her head sadly and continued: 'When I left the primary school, I went to live with an aunt in Lagos who shortly after, found me a job at the Ministry of Education'" (72).
30. "A mosquito buzzed in front of Mrs Ato and, shoving it off, she continued: When I discovered I was pregnant, I ran to Enuma because he was responsible". (73).
31. "She paused, then went on: 'Oh, Chimere, why have I condescended to tell "you my sad story?"' (73).
32. "As she did to Azuka lifted up her face and addressed her: 'Look here, woman, why are you wasting your time?"' (77).
33. "She was not surprised, therefore, when she heard him say: 'I'm sorry, M.D. There is no vacancy anywhere. Every position has been filled". (79).
34. "She saw every young man as another Jide: Unstable, selfish and callous".(96).
35. "So this is Umeze, my home town, 'Chimere said to herself, and to the driver she said: 'I'll tell you where to stop". (106).
36. "Further down the page, she saw something similar: a man had written a letter asking a friend with whom he had lost contact during the civil war, to write to him.". (120).
37. "As she remained silent, he added: 'Why not give me a try". (128).
38. "They arrived back at the brewery after four o'clock. When Chimere walked into her office, Ezim teased her: 'I bet he brought those things for you". (129).

5.6.2.6 Analysis of Excerpts on Colon

From the examples we have identified from the texts we discover that Okoye has used the different punctuation marks for different purposes; for example, she uses the colon stylistically to separate two coordinate clauses in situations where the second clause repeats, explains or simplifies the statement contained in the first clause in some of the identified cases in the texts such as sentences; 1, 4, 8, 10, 12, 19, 21, 22, 32, 34, 120 and 38. In other cases, she used the colon to create anticipation eg. Sentences 13, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, and 36. She also used the colon for listing of issues, ideas and items in sentences 11, 20, 26, and other examples were used for an additional formation and elaboration, for instance, sentences 3, 9, 11, 14, 15, 28, 34. Sometimes, the functions of the colon overlap in the texts. Colon may perform a dual function in a sentence. For instance, sentences 3, 4, 11, and 20 contain colons that have multiple uses.

5.6.3 The Semicolon (;)

The Semicolon is a mark of separation. It is almost as definite as a period. It is stylistically significant when used in double sentences to separate coordinate clauses when the conjunction is used or omitted. Also when a coordinate clause is long, the semicolon can be used. Semicolons separate parallel statements forming a series grouped as one sentence.

5.6.3.1 Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds*

39. “She had told Ije bluntly that Dozie had nothing to offer her; that Dozie was after her because she was working and could give him financial support”.(5).

40. "She had had her appendix out; had had many D & Cs; had also had an operation for fibroids" (8).
41. "Dozie and Ije remained awake but silent; the silence between them was saying eloquently what they were afraid to say, while the currents of love and understanding which used to pass between them seemed to have come to a standstill". (65).
42. "She looks like a calculating woman; a woman who makes sure she gets what she wants; who knows on which side her bread is buttered". (85).
43. "Just to see her reaction; to know what goes on in that big head of hers".(102).

5.6.3.2 Excerpts from Men Without Ears

44. "All through my journey from Tanzania to Lagos, I had blamed myself for postponing going home for good until it was too late; and for losing the opportunities I had had to repay father for all he had done for me". (1).
45. "I did not know what to do; whom to complain to, or where to look for him". (3).
46. "Now I took a mental note of his features: a small face with eyes too large for it; a small mouth to match the compact face; and a nose a little on the flat side" (3).
47. "The food was good; the drinks were plentiful and assorted" (24).
48. "During the contest for the chieftaincy he knew which strings to pull; the right people to bribe or intimidate or even blackmail" (41).
49. "Another thing that made me sad was the large number of reported cases of embezzlement of government funds by highly-placed officials; also the

fraud among bank officials who either cashed large sums of money by forging cheques or caused thousands of other people's money to be transferred abroad for themselves". (54).

50. "The heavy curtains were of a lurid yellow; the upholstered arm-chairs, a dirty green; and the carpet, scarlet". (60).

51. "By twelve noon the reporters had not arrived; not even one of them". (70).

52. "I felt sorry for whoever would sit behind her at the party; the unfortunate person would certainly not see a thing in front of him". (83).

53. "I spent my time therefore, in watching the other guests eat; an interesting pastime for me". (87).

54. "I wanted to rebuke him for donating borrowed money; for joining his friends in engaging in such senseless waste; for engaging in the extravagant expenditure and display of the vain". (89).

5.6.3.3 Excerpts from *The Pay-Packet*

55. "The headmistress was not in the office; the small room could only accommodate half of the forty teachers in the school" (18).

56. "Outsiders who know him would never believe that he was capable of lifting a finger against his wife; in fact, in his office he was seen as a perfect gentleman— civilized, suave, courteous and kind". (21).

57. "She wanted to tell a lie; to tell him that she had not received it; that the H.M. was still ill and could not come to school". (22).

5.6.3.4 Analysis of Excerpts on Semicolon.

The author uses the semicolon to separate double sentences in the absence of a conjunction or sometimes even when conjunction is present. For example, sentences 39, 40, 44, and 55. Semicolons have been used also in some instances between items in a series which contain commas. The examples are sentences 42, 45, 46, 50, 54, and 57. The semicolon was also used in cases where the coordinate clauses are long and multiple in one sentence. For instance, sentences 41, 44, 47, 49, and 56. She uses semicolon to create a pause before and additional information is given in sentences 41, 43, 48, 50, 51, 52, 55, and 56.

5.6.4 The Dash (–)

The Dash is used to mark a parenthesis, or an abrupt change of thought. It is also used before repeated words. It can also be inserted before the demonstrative pronouns: these, those, such and when they are used at the beginning of the main statement to sum up a number of items previously mentioned. Dashes maybe used to set off a parenthetical element that contains a comma or else they may be misread if commas are used to set them off instead. They introduce words that sum up preceding series. And sometimes, comma may be used in place of the colon to introduce a list or an elaboration of what was just said.

5.6.4.1 Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds*

58. “The waiting room of the clinic was clean– quite unlike the waiting rooms of the other private clinics she had visited” (1).

59. She remembered vividly all the doctors who had treated her– the texts, the minor operations and the major one that had almost killed her” (1).

60. “I’ve grown very fat– fat beyond recognition”. (3).

61. “Maybe I will have one more to please him– another girl perhaps– and then I’ll put a final stop...” (25).
62. “She’s dangerously beautiful– fair, plump, with a good crop of hair”. (26)
63. “I went through the same routine– a barrage of questions, prescriptions of tests, and then of course a fat bill”. (30)
64. “I can’t resort to what some women do– buy jewelry, laces and such things on credit” (32).
65. “She could feel her temper rising– the familiar pressure in the chest and the choking feeling in the throat– but she controlled herself and allowed mama to go on and vent her spleen”. (42).
66. Do you know that sometimes God works his miracles through people – especially through people like us? (55)
67. “The beginning was an uphill task– what with its disappointments and uncertainties”. (63)
68. “They were overcome with sleep– the balm of troubled minds”. (66).
69. “Dr Melie noticed that she wore no make-up – hers was a natural unadulterated prettiness” (7).

5.6.4.2 Excerpts from *Men Without Ears*

70. “His driver had already deposited my luggage in the bedroom – a comfortable-looking room with his own bath and toilet”. (16).
71. “Anny must have felt badly about it to mention it to only a few hours after we had met – at a time when we were still strangers so to speak”. (17).
72. “I stayed there for a few minutes looking around and listening to music – my forte”. (19).

73. “The Stewards served him some whisky – golden waters indeed”. (22).
74. “One of the boys could understand English – better than I”. (157).
75. “It told the story of nine eminent men of money – the world’s most successful financiers – and how each of them met this death”. (152).
76. “I returned to Nigeria, and asked his advice on how to get along – how to find peace in a country where money-bags were held above men of character and where means was the measure of virtue”. (153).
77. “I hope you work in a bank so that you’ll help me with –em– you know what I mean!’ He laughed loudly”. (22).
78. “On the other hand, those in national dress made of expensive lace and brocade had epithets for names – chief among them being ‘Young Millionaire’, Money Maker, ‘Ichie Gold’, and ‘Swiss Bank” (23).
79. “He was pleased with them – two shirts and a hat” (34).
80. “I was seeing a part of him that was entirely unknown to me – his total disregard of and lack of sympathy for Father’s mental agony” (59).
81. “We argued a little longer and then he began to read Easy way to Riches – he had bought a copy for himself – while I resumed watching the late-night film on television”.(64).
82. “Soon she reappeared with a favourite dish of mine and a great delicacy in my village – tapioca and ngu with smoked fish”. (75).

5.6.4.3 Excerpts from The Pay-Packet

83. “The blissful pay-days were gone – gone forever, she thought, unless she summoned up courage to do something about the cause of her problem”.(15).

84. ‘And I dislike them all – they’re all horrible!’ (16).
85. “As Iba watched her colleagues – they were all females – she wondered how many of them handed over their salaries to their husbands to spend as they liked” (19).
86. “Outsiders who knew him would never believe that he was capable of lifting a finger against his wife; in fact, in his office he was seen as a perfect gentleman – civilized, suave, courteous and kind”. (21).
87. “She wanted to tell Maka everything – that Bertrand was not the fine gentleman everybody thought him to be”. (24).
88. “If you’re right, it will explain, but not excuse your brutality to me for which you may have to pay another bride price – this time, to me – to restore the *status quo ante bellum*.”(25).

5.6.4.4 Excerpts from *The Trial*

89. “She felt bad that her carefully chosen outfit – a nondescript black skirt, a navy blue sleeveless blouse, and a pair of black sandals – had not made her inconspicuous after all”.(5).
90. “She had sent clothes too – dresses, shorts, shirts, pants – but her children had walked about in rags”. (11).
91. “She could not understand why Mr and Mrs Edet fought each other since they had everything to make them happy – good jobs, money, and three sweet children”. (16).
92. “And then there were the bills – water bills, electricity bills, sanitation bills”. (81).

5.6.4.5 Excerpts from *chimere*

93. “He could be boastful and sometimes untruthful, but he had a lot of charm about him—fluent, graceful manners, especially when he was out to please, and was he passionate!” (2)
94. “She was now beginning to see Jide for what he really was – a conceited mean fellow for all his good looks and charm, so shallow and unreliable under that smooth façade” (14).
95. “She wished she was half as lucky as Lola who seemed to have everything – well-to-do parents, affectionate brothers and sisters (she was the last child in the family) and a doting fiancé, a house officer at University Teaching Hospital, Benin”. (18).
96. “She held her head up and as she came close to him she gave him a defiant glance. She smiled to herself when she noticed Jide’s surprised—even withering – countenance”. (34).
97. “She saw Weluche as another Jide – selfish, insurance and callous”. (45).
98. “I can at least see his people – his old parents or his uncles perhaps – they can tell me where to find him” (102).
99. “Something in you makes me trust you – something I can’t quite explain”.(151).
100. “Do you know how far Umeze is from Onitsha. Papa? ‘Em – let us see – well, I can’t tell you how many miles – or what do you call the new measurement ...kilo something – it is from Onitsha to Umeze”. (97)

5.6.4.6 Analysis of Excerpts on Dash

For the Dash, the author uses them for an abrupt change of thought in examples such as, in sentences 65, 68, 69, 71, 74, 77, 81, 85, 88, 89, 90, 93, and 94. She uses it sometimes, instead of colon, to introduce a list or an elaboration of what was just said, for example, sentences 59, 60, 62, 63, 70, 78, 79, 80, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 95, 97. To mark a parenthesis 58, 64, 73, 75, 82, 85. She uses the dashes before demonstrative pronouns example sentences 87 and 88.

5.6.5 Hyphen (-)

Hyphens function as signals. Hyphens are used to connect two or more words used as a single expression called compound words. According to the Modern Language Association of America (MLA), Hand Book for writers of research papers (2009), hyphens may also be used in the following cases:

- i. In a compound adjective beginning with adverbs when the adjective precedes a noun, such as better, lower, best, heal, well etc.
- ii. In a compound adjective ending with the present participle or the past participle (eg Inspire) of a verb when the adjective precedes a noun.
- iii. In a compound adjective formed by a number and a noun when the adjective precedes a noun eg. early-thirteenth century map.
- iv. In compound adjectives before nouns to avoid misinterpretation eg. Portuguese-language student. (The hyphen makes it clear that the term refers to a student who is studying Portuguese and not to a student who is Portuguese). (MLA, 2009:73).

5.6.5.1 Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds*

101. “A *middle-aged* cleaner who was dusting the panes of a window showed her the clinic’s *waiting-room*”. (1).

102. "In spite of her resolution to be stoical about her misfortune, she could not help being *wet-eyed* whenever she wanted to talk about it". (6).
103. "He saw a *well-built* woman, dark, with a good crop of *jet-black* hair which she had combed back and held with a *hair-ring*". (7).
104. "She was about nineteen, *fair-complexioned* and plump". (13).
105. "A girl who would be a *carbon-copy* of you". (14).
106. "Soon James was back with a bottle of ice-cold water and a glass". (20).
107. "The *faith-healer's* church was an unfinished building in a densely populated part of the town". (51).
108. "The first new convert to walk up to the altar was a *sick-looking* man" (52).
109. "As soon as I saw her small *deep-set* eyes, I felt sorry for you". (84).
110. "For weeks he slept on the settee in the *sitting-room* because he dreaded sharing a bed with either Ije or Virginia". (85).
111. "Ugo Ushie's house had become her *bolt-hole*, a place where she would go to have some solace whenever the situation in her own house became unbearable". (86).
112. "The roads were full of *pot-holes* and the jolts she received in the car made her ache in every limb". (67).
113. "She drove away amidst their '*Bye-byes*'. (87).
114. "When those as *flat-bellied* as men stay at home all day!". (91).
115. 'Welcome, Mama,' she said *light-heartedly* in spite of the weight on her mind".(91).

116. “She walked into the *consulting-room*, closing the door gently behind her”.(103).

5.6.5.2 Excerpts from *Men Without Ears*

117. “From there I watched with utter disgust as ‘ladies’ and ‘gentlemen’ struggled for a place in the queue in front of the *checking-in* counter.”.
(2).

118. “The lounge was filled with noise, like *weaver-birds* on top of a palm tree”.(5).

119. “It was a new white *Mercedes-Benz*, a prestigious and *well-maintained* car with a radio aerial that towered into the sky”. (12)

120. “Even a police officer in a police vehicle left his lane to join the *traffic-rule* breakers instead of helping to clear the congestion or at least setting a good example by keeping to his lane”. (15).

121. “By *half-past* eight the hall was full to the brim with people and buzzing with voices”.(24).

122. “Their salaries are *chicken-feed* compared with what they get from patients in order to give them special attention in government hospitals”.
(29).

123. “It’s not *lunch-time* yet”. (33).

124. “When the meal was over, Father brought out two bottles of beer, a *half-full* bottle of whisky, and a bottle of red wine”. (35).

125. “He picked them up, placed them on the *side-table* beside his chair, and waddled up the stairs”. (58).

126. “Everything in it was *giant-sized*, but the colour combination was repulsive”. (60).
127. “If you depend on only one means of income you’ll be a *laughing-stock* because you cannot afford to live like others around you”. (74).
128. “We look at his *life-style*, his properties”. (81).
129. “I discovered too that *god-fatherism* and *palm-greasing* were better credentials than sound professional qualifications and experience”. (90).
130. ‘I’ll leave you now’, I said, looking at my wrist-watch”. (97).
131. “I vacillated between abandoning Uloko to his self-inflicted predicament and going to his rescue as he had suggested even if it meant mortgaging my conscience. (100).
132. “I warn you, we don’t want any *self-righteousness* in this company”. (103).
133. He took the *bottle-opener* from me, opened the bottle, and poured himself a glass”. (108).
134. “On the Monday following the independence anniversary celebrations, I left Enugu for Lagos to attend a meeting of chief accountants of *government-owned* companies and *para-statals*”. (129).
135. “He wore a long *well-tailored* robe made of the same exquisite lace materials that bedecked the executive bed”. (144).

5.6.5.3 Excerpts from *The Pay-Packet*

136. “But these days *pay-days* had become a great terror to her, something that she longed for and dreaded at the same time”. (15).
137. “To Iba, Ezuma’s husband was a model *life-partner*”. (16).

138. "He had a large flat in an area of the town inhabited by *middle-class* families". (17).
139. "...the pocket money she received from him was barely enough for her, what with the rising cost of *make-up*, clothes and jewellery as well as the little things she liked to spend her money on". (18).
140. "Theirs was a comfortable *three-bedroom* flat on the top floor of a *two-story* block". (20).
141. "Left alone in the *sitting-room*, Iba began to think over her planned course of action".(21).
142. "Then he added good-naturedly, 'If I didn't know B as a fine gentleman I'd have thought he'd just given you a god beating. (24).

5.6.5.4 Excerpts from *The Trial*

143. "Ebuka looked at her *blood-smearred* fingers and shivered". (19).
144. "...he wore a pair of brown trousers that had been crudely transformed into a *knee-length* pair of sorts". (27).
145. "She was an old woman of *seventy-five* and lived alone". (30).
146. "Why are you throwing my things away?" a young female beggar asked the *middle-aged* beggar in a conciliatory". (35).
147. "Ebele looked at her *ankle-length* flared skirt with stains all over it...". (41).
148. "I must be at the trial to make sure your *brother-in-law* Ezeji doesn't take advantage of the situation,' Mama Ebo said and left the room". (51).
149. "Bassey was a prominent man in the country, *self-educated*, but well read, neat and methodical". (71).

150. “His people spoke a different language from her people and she had read somewhere that *inter-ethnic* marriages were full of problems”. (76).
151. “...they had persuaded him to find himself a brand new wife as they put it, and not a *second-hand* one”. (79).
152. “*Three-and a half-year-old* Nena brought some sunshine with her as she entered the room”. (80).
153. “Their new in-laws would come with kegs of palm wine for them to drink.”(88).

5.6.5.5 Excerpts from *The Power of a Plate of Rice*

154. “He raised his *coconut-shaped* head, closed the file he was reading, removed his *plastic-framed* spectacles and peered at me”. (91).
155. ‘I’ll be back,’ a *thin-lipped, hair-fringed* mouth said and disappeared”.(92).
156. “January, as every low and *medium-salaried* worker in my country knows from experience, was the longest month of the year”. (93).
157. “When I arrived home after five in the evening, my *mother-in-law* was walking up and down in front of my *two-year-old* son, Rapulu, tied on her back, and *four-year-old* Dulue trailing behind her”. (95).
158. “I gave him a teaspoonful of the *bitter-sweet* medicine and began to sponge him again”.(96).

5.6.5.6 Excerpts from *Chimere*

159. “You look smashing too,’ Chimere said looking admiringly at Jide who was dressed in a pair of *well-cut* and expensive *light-grey* trousers and a jacket of a deeper grey”. (3).

160. “When Jide came to the front of the house, he rang the bell which brought a *timid-looking* teenage girl to the door”. (7).
161. “They walked into the large *three-winged* refectory where many students were already sitting down waiting for food”. (21).
162. “With a *fast-beating* heart, Chimere opened the envelope which she had been holding in her hand for the past three minutes”. (25).
163. “You wouldn’t have believed me, would you, if I’d told you that the great and *much-sought-after* and *heart-jolting* Jide was not a boyfriend for you?”.(29).
164. “The young man with the *multi-coloured* umbrella spread it and stepped near her”. (35).
165. “A flash of lighting *zig-zagged* across the sky followed by a peal of thunder”. (36).
166. “Weluche’s voice, with its cosy, *well-contented* quality, rang out again”.(45).
167. “The kitchen, a detached *wall-less* structure, was at the back of the house”.(56).
168. “She looked fragile and worn out and as thin as a broom-stick”. (57).
169. “Inside, the brewery was a *bee-hive* of activities”. (64)
170. “She had come to depend very much on Weluche, so young but so level-headed and so wise and sympathetic”. (174).

5.6.5.7 Analysis of the Excerpts on Hyphen

In case of hyphens, they are significant as signals but more importantly when they connect two or more words to form simple words or expressions eg.

101 “*waiting-room*”, 105 “*carbon-copy*”, 107 “*faith-healers*”, 110 “*mother-tongue*”, 111 “*mother-in-law*”, 112 “*pot-holes*”, 117 “*checking-in counter*”, 118 “*weave-birds*”, 123 “*lunch-time*”, 128 “*life-style*”, 136 “*pay-days*”, 139 “*make-up*”, 141 “*sitting-room*”, 144 “*knee-length*”, 151 “*second-hand*”, 158 “*bitter-sweet*”, 159 “*light-grey*”, 172 “*lip-stick*” 178 “*station-wagon*”.

Other examples that are linguistically and grammatically significant are found in the use of hyphen in a compound adjectives beginning with adverbs when the adjective precedes the noun eg. Sentences 103 “*well-built*”, 135 “*well-tailored*”, 159 “*well-act*”, 166 “*well-contented*”. The more frequent use of hyphen for linguistic purposes is noted in the following sentence where the hyphen is used in a compound adjective ending with the present participle such as in 108 “*sick-looking*”, 129 “*palm-greasing*”, 160 “*fine-looking*”, 162 “*fast-beating*”, 163 “*heart-jolting*”, 170 “*laxy-looking*” and the use of hyphen with the participle of a verb when the adjective precedes a noun in sentences 101 “*middle-aged*”, 102 “*wet-eyed*”, 104 “*fair-complexioned*”, 114 “*flat-bellied*”, 115 “*light-heartedly*”, 134 “*government-owned*”, 143 “*blood-smearred*”, 154 “*plastic-framed*”, 155 “*thin-lipped*”, 156 “*medium-salaries*”. The hyphen has also been used in a compound adjective formed by a number and a noun when the adjective precedes a noun in the texts. In instances such as 152 “*three-and a half year old*”, 157 “*two-year old son*” and “*four-year old dulue*”.

Okoye used the hyphen to create and introduce some compound words which are stylistically significant in the text for the vivid description they offer and the mental image they create in the readers’ psych. Some of them gave comic relief which can relax the reader.

These words are located in sentences;

108... "*sick-looking* man" (52), 114... "*as flat-bellied* as men" (91), 122... "*are chicken-feed* compared" (29), 127... "*I discovered too that god-fatherism and palm-greasing*" (90), 131... "*Uloko to his self-inflicted*" (100), 132... "*we don't want any self-righteousness*" (103), 154... "*coconut-shaped head*" (91), 161... "*three-winged*" (21), 163... "*you wouldn't... sought-after and heart-jolting*, 169... "*inside, the brewery was a bee-lime of activities*, 177... "*she had... level-headed*" (174)

Following the examples and analysis, Okoye no doubt has made an effective use of the punctuation marks for linguistic, semantic and stylistic purposes.

5.7 SENTENCE PATTERNS IN OKOYE'S TEXTS

5.7.1 Preamble

This section examines sentence patterns in Okoye's texts to determine their stylistic significance as employed by the author.

A sentence is defined as a group of words that expresses a complete thought. The sentence is made up of lexical and structural words or in another sense, content and functional words. A syntactical arrangement of a sentence may include components such as the phrases and clause and how they are linked to one another by coordinators and subordinators. Sentences make up paragraphs which in-turn build-up the entire texts.

In prose writings we notice a lot of violations of rules guiding sentence constructions. Although, they may be necessary for certain effects and for some stylistic peculiarities because a deviation from a norm on its own is a style.

Okoye's sentences are simple and unambiguously used all through her stories. We noted earlier that Okoye is not a fan of proverbs and other neologisms that can create special effect. Her scanty patronage of figurative language may be the reason Okoye's sentences are not strikingly and overtly stylistic.

However, the simplicity of her sentence pattern is a style of her own. Her audience is not lost at any point of her stories. Perhaps, she would not want her message to be missed. This same issue has apparently made Okoye to break the norm of character-code concordance which we have observed and noted in chapter four of this work. Okoye did not assign pidgin English or grammatically incorrect sentences to people who are supposedly illiterate in her texts. Except in for James *Behind the Clouds* who uses pidgin as we noted in our analysis in chapter four. Apparently, the views which Okoye expresses on feminism are such that need, simple language use to make herself clear. Some writers deploy all sorts of techniques like proverbs, idioms, humour, slangs and even technical words in their work to impress the reader. But in most cases, the reader misses the point – the message. This may result to sacrificing the message of a discourse to entertainment. Okoye is a conscious writer, who is also conscious of her language for purpose delivery. She therefore uses uncomplicated sentences to tell her story. Okoye presented her stories using the common types of sentence patterns which we recognize as simple compound, complex, and multiple sentences.

Sentence patterns in English can take various forms. They may be analyzed either as construction types or functional types. Functional sentences

are used in communication and prose writing to perform functions such as asking questions making a positive statement, giving a command, requesting, defining, classifying, introducing, supporting and concluding. While we group sentence patterns according to construction by classifying them under:

(i) Simple (ii) Compound (iii) Complex (iv) Multiple sentence/ Compound Complex.

5.7.2 Excerpts from *The Trial*

1. Placing her hand on her forehead, she reviewed her strategy. (Complex Sentence).4.
2. The taxi driver was still waiting. (Simple Sentence).5.
3. She had travelled from Lagos on the night bus and had arrived in owerri at five in the morning. (Compound Sentence).6.
4. The women selling these items had arrived with their wares shortly before the bell rang. (Complex Sentence).7.
5. Ada glanced quickly behind her shoulder and pulled KC nearer to her. (Compound Sentence).8.
6. He always beat us. (Simple Sentence).9.
7. She quickly lifted him up and put him on her left shoulder while at the same time keeping an eye on Ada to make sure she would not scamper off again. (Multiple Sentence).9.
8. ‘What are you talking about?’. (Question).10.
9. The taxi driver pulled up at the side of the road and, leaving the engine running, he turned and looked distrustfully at Somadi. (Multiple Sentence).11.

10. 'I'm sorry, Madam. (Apology).18.
11. He had a large appetite and nasty habits. (Compound Sentence).28.
12. 'Please let me stay here for today,'(Request).36.
13. 'Stop that nonsense' (Command).36.
14. 'Get out!' (Command).36.
15. 'Madam, please listen to her. (Request).39.
16. 'I can't leave my children behind if I remarry'. (Complex Sentence) P.75.
17. 'What do you mean?' (Question).82.

5.7.3 Excerpts from *Behind the Clouds*

18. All I ask of you is to forgive me. (Apology).118.
19. My husband nags me day and night because of my obesity. (Complex Sentence).4.
20. She stopped briefly at Kingsway Stores in Okpara Avenue, paid for two crates of drinks that a friend had reserved for her, and drove home. (Multiple Sentence).12.
21. Ije stirred the soup again, put on the lid, then went to the kitchen sink and washed her hands. (Multiple Sentence).13.
22. Dozie loved children and Ije knew he did. (Compound Sentence).15.
23. Patience beamed with smiles. (Simple Sentence).22.
24. As the vendor walked away, Ije began to scan the newspapers while she waited for her turn to see the doctor. (Multiple Sentence).3.
25. When he told me about it, I advised him to resign. (Complex Sentence).24.
26. Dozie was crestfallen. (Simple Sentence).42.

27. She would wait for Dozie to leave for the office, and then she would go out and take a taxi. (Compound Sentence).80.

5.7.4 Excerpts from *The Pay- Packet*

28. As a single person, she was used to dealing with problems and had more often than not succeeded in solving them, but the problems she was now having with her pay-packet had defied any peaceful solution, at any rate one that was acceptable to her (Multiple Sentence).15.

29. Iba rushed to the scene, almost tripping over a red satchel carelessly dumped on the floor near her table (Complex Sentence).16.

30. Although he wasn't rich, he never asked Ezuma to hand over her salary to him (Complex Sentence).16.

31. She had earlier rejected many suitors for one flimsy reason or another, but had found herself attracted to Bertrand and accepted his proposal of marriage without thinking twice (Multiple Sentence).17.

32. My husband makes me sign the voucher while he spends the money as he likes (Compound Sentence).19.

33. I often buy presents for members of the family and contribute to the food, but that is of my own volition.(Multiple Sentence).17.

34. He had a good pension. (Simple sentence).21.

35. Please sit down. (Command).23.

36. I know it will hurt you to know the truth, but at least it will make you understand me better. (Compound Sentence).25.

5.7.5 Excerpts from *The Power of a Plate of Rice*

37. What do you want? (Question).92.

38. His voice was on the defensive and the look on his ridged face was intimidating. (Compound Sentence).92.
39. I took a deep breath. (Simple Sentence).92.
40. My children cannot survive till the end of February without my salary. (Complex Sentence).94.
41. Times are hard. (Simple Sentence).94.
42. He yelled and kicked, but I ignored him. (Compound Sentence).96.
43. ‘Get out of my house, I say, get out!’ (Command).99.
44. He scribbled a note, threw it at me and I grabbed it. (Multiple Sentence).99.

5.7.6 Excerpts from Chimere

45. Turning away from the scene, chimere glanced again at her watch. (Complex Sentence).1.
46. Jide got into the car and opened the other door for Chimere. (Compound Sentence).3.
47. Jide stood up. (Simple Sentence).8.
48. She no longer restrained the tears, but allowed them to flow, though no sound came out of her. (Multiple Sentence).16.
49. ‘Why are you trailing me?’ (Question).49.
50. After considerable hesitation, Chimere tapped her mother on the right shoulder to wake her up. (Complex Sentence).57.
51. ‘I have a right to know who my father is and I demand that right now. (Compound Sentence).61.
52. Do you know him well? (Question).66.

53. Uche smiled. (Simple Sentence).92.

54. The second problem was her fear that her father might not be in the village, since July and August were not the months when workers in townships visited their home villages. (Compound Sentence).102.

55. The lunch was good. (Simple Sentence).143.

56. Read the letter. (Command).172.

5.7.7 Excerpts from Men Without Ears

57. ‘Get out of my sight before I call the police!’ (Command).2.

58. He looked at me steadily, and realizing I was not prepared to talk to him anymore he shuffled away. (Compound sentence).2.

59. Chigo!’ he shouted, (Exclamation).10

60. ‘How was the journey?’(Question).10.

61. I shook my head (simple sentence).20.

62. I’m indeed sorry, (apology).25.

63. ‘Well, if you ask me, I’d suggest we modernize the family house instead of building a new one. (Complex sentence).36.

64. I bid her goodnight and walked back home. (Compound sentence).46.

65. At the first opportunity of being alone with Father, he asked me who had sent the building materials. (Complex sentence).71.

66. ‘How then do you know how much money a person has? (Question).81.

67. My salary is enough for me.’ (Simple sentence).110.

5.7.8 Analysis of the Excerpts of Sentence Patterns.

We have identified the examples of the above listed sentences from all the texts.

A simple sentence contains a subject and verb. It may also contain an object complement and or adverbials. A simple sentence may be regarded as an independent clause if it occurs in a compound sentence. They are not usually good choices of a sentence pattern for any writer except in cases where an issue needs to be conspicuous or emphasized. Story telling requires a continuous writing which involves longish sentences. We spotted a few simple sentences in Okoye texts at examples 2, 5, 25, 34, 39, 41, 47, 53, 55, 61 and 67.

Complex sentences can be identified in a great number in a typical work of narrative. This is because it usually gives information in one part of it and explains, gives reason or conditions, elaborates and contrasts with the other part. The complex sentence contains one independent clause and one dependent clause. They have been used in the text to elaborate facts, give additional information or reason, contrast views and even give conditions. Examples are given in sentences 1, 11, 17, 19, 26, 29, 30, 40, 45, 50, 63, 65.

Many related issues are tied together in the compound sentences which we identify in Okoye's texts. Compound sentences contain two independent clauses linked together by coordinating conjunctions. Sometimes, colon or semicolon may be used in the absence of a coordinating conjunction. The author made extensive use of the compound sentences to join two grammatically equal ranking structures in all the texts. Compound sentence is significant for the balance of thought and completeness of issue. We have examples such as 3, 16, 22, 27, 32, 36, 38, 42, 46, 51, 54, 58 and 64.

The author construct and manage numerous multiple sentences/ compound complex sentences in the texts for the purpose of accommodating

more facts, details and information at one stretch. This is because multiple sentences have the capacity to accommodate at least two main clauses and or other sentence fragments. Narrative discourse must necessarily use multiple sentence to avoid presenting disjointed stories which will cause frequent breaks in transmission. For this reason, we have so many examples of multiple sentences in all the texts for example, sentences 8, 20, 21, 24, 28, 31, 33, 37, 44, 48. We notice other patterns of the sentence construction for specific functions in the texts, where their uses are inevitable. Those sentences are for example imperatives which function as command, for example, in sentences 14, 15, 35, 43, 57 and 56 or as interrogatives for asking questions in example 7, 12, 49, 52, 60 and 66. Also we have patterns or structures that are used to ask for apology of sentences 9, 18 and 62 or for making a request as in sentence 10, 13 or to render an apology, for example, sentence 9 and 62.

From the analysis we have made, our final verdict is that Okoye's use of the sentence is stylistically significant for its simplicity. Simplicity is an effective style even in the work of art. Okoye writes in simple but good language.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

6.1 SUMMARY

In this thesis, the researcher set out to draw attention to a feminist stylistic approach which is non-radical and non-confrontational. Ifeoma Okoye's texts were found most suitable for this study as the linguistic and stylistic analysis of her texts revealed that she embraces a non-rebellious approach to feminism. Okoye advocates complementarity feminism which endorses a symbiotic relationship between the two sexes. The thesis analysed the language and style of the writer as seen in her texts listed below:

(i). *Men Without Ears* (ii) *Behind the Clouds* (iii). *Chimere* (iv). *The Trial and other stories* (v). *The Pay Packet* (Short story) (vi). *The Power of a Plate of Rice* (Short story). The study of these texts has enabled the researcher to delineate in this thesis, Okoye's feminist concerns and sensitivity. It is observed that Okoye, apart from being an objective feminist, is also a social critic. Okoye's major concern in her texts is to draw attention to the fact that feminism as a movement will require a deal with the men in order to achieve its objective. Men and women are guilty of subjugation and oppression, she believes. She thinks that the radical approach to feminism is counter-productive in the African context. Our linguistic analysis of the diction, authorial voice, utterances and codes which she deliberately assigned to her characters revealed how effectively Okoye has deployed these mechanisms in her texts for purpose delivery. In order to determine Okoye's feminist concerns through the study of her language and style,

we had to integrate the three concepts of style, language and feminism in our analysis.

The thesis started with a background to the study which delivered an extensive discussion on what informed feminist literary tradition. It advanced reasons such as marginalization, subjugation, the negative image of the woman in works of art especially those authored by men, oppression, discrimination, sexism and some cultural and traditional practices against women in the patriarchal societies as the major issues that triggered off feminism and the attendant feminist discourse.

The work discussed the concept of style spanning from the historical point of view to definitions, theoretical perspectives and the concerns of stylistics. This was deemed necessary since Enkvist advised that a student of style must necessarily be exposed to the long history of style and stylistics (1967:83). This enables the student to understand the basic fact that the concept stemmed from three ancient sources of rhetorics, poetics and dialectic and has since metamorphosed into the present day study of stylistics. We also provided several definitions of style without prescribing any as the best, rather we agreed with other linguists on the indeterminacy of the concept. The basic concerns of stylistics were highlighted as a guide to the practical application of the concept in textual analysis. These according to Toolan include; Descriptive skills, Technique/the craft of writing and linguistic examination of texts.

The thesis further discussed the different theories of style with the intention of demystifying the concept and to present a manageable approach to it. We believe that our arguments and submissions here would make the subject

clearer and more attractive to the students of style. Rather than depend on unlimited definitions for the understanding of the concept, we adopted Azuike's categorization and discussion of style under:

- Style as a deviation from a norm;
- Style as an individual
- Style as content and form
- Style as a choice
- Style as product of context
- Style as good writing

Considered next in the thesis was the concept of feminism. Feminism was defined and its history and spread were traced. Feminism is a movement which holds the belief that women are oppressed and marginalized in patriarchal societies and as such, it seeks to liberate women from such practices. The thesis upholds that this movement is connected with the literary style we have today as feminist stylistics. We equally studied and discussed the text model of feminists to show that their stylistic approach in the works of art popularly exploits the themes of gender bias, discrimination, oppression, marginalization, widowhood, and barrenness. We noted the benefits of feminist stylistics as a revolutionary literary style, which addressed the issue of sexism in language and redirected the societies attention to some cultural and traditional practices that have underdeveloped the women in Africa. It has also made and is still making effort to recreate the image of the woman in literature where the portrayal of women in most male-authored works, had been from the perspectives of prostitutes, dependants, economically unproductive second class citizens. The thesis then

presented the synopsis of each of the texts followed by their analysis under foregrounding, linguo-literary examination, cohesion in the texts, paragraph structure, punctuation and sentence pattern to determine their significance towards the actualisation of the author's purpose.

We observed that each of the texts has a message for the reader outside entertainment. *Chimere* deals with the quest for self-identity and actualization of the woman in the contemporary world. The heroine, Chimere searches for her father to solve the problem of the social stigma of being considered an illegitimate child. In this context, it is a woman's search for self-identity, assertion and actualization. The text also touches on the issues of teenage pregnancy and its debilitating effects, prejudice against men, women antagonism against fellow women among others. In *Men Without Ears*, Okoye displays her capacity as a social critic as she addresses a decadent Nigerian society where corruption is the order of the day. Agencies such as the Police, the Judiciary, Banks, and Immigration are indicted. She does not spare greedy men and women in the society who are involved in all manner of criminal activities in order to make money. In *Behind the Clouds* the agony of an average African childless woman is recreated with her heroine, Ije. Okoye equally reveals the nasty side of covering male infertility for which the woman takes all the blame. *Woman against woman* is also a major issue that featured in the text through Ije's mother-in-law and Virginia. In *The Trial*, all the stories centre on widowhood, although with a hint on other social problems such as early marriage, gender bias, child widowhood, domestic violence, as well as women against women. And in her two short stories, *The Power of a Plate of Rice* and *The Pay Packet*, she stresses

that frustration can push the woman to resist injustice and also notes the need for women to possess economic power. Both stories recommend that women should use their initiatives in their dealings with the men so as to achieve the desired goal. All her works prescribe a partnership with the men.

The issues raised in her texts are often not explicitly and directly stated. They have been unravelled by our analysis which started with foregrounding, followed by a linguo-literary analysis, an analysis of textual cohesion, paragraph structure and its significance, sentence and punctuation patterns. These are the devices that Okoye deployed in her texts to reveal her feminist concerns.

Foregrounding was identified as a major and most prominent strategy which Okoye exploited in her works. Evidence and examples of the foregrounding strategies such as repetition, parallelism and alliteration were established in her works. The foregrounding technique discusses repetition, alliteration, parallelism and scheme of balance as stylistic mechanisms which Okoye has deployed in her work for the dissemination of her feminist message.

Similarly, our linguo-literary analysis of Okoye's texts also revealed the author's effective handling of some stylistic devices for purpose delivery and effect. We noted that Okoye deployed some linguo-literary elements and techniques such as authorial voice, diction, assignment of appropriate character codes for the unfolding of plot and presenting her message. Through the linguistic considerations of selected utterances from her texts, it is certain that Ifeoma Okoye is a non-confrontational feminist who advocates complementarity between the two genders.

We however, deemed it necessary as well, to consider the role of cohesion and the cohesive devices which the author used in her work to link thoughts, and opinions. We therefore, identified and analysed textual cohesive mechanisms, such as lexical cohesion, grammatical cohesion, lexico-grammatical cohesion as her means of creating text meaning and expressing continuity and consistency in her works. Our analysis reveals how the author uses cohesive techniques to create text meaning and express continuity and consistency from one portion of a text to another. Sample excerpts were taken from all the author's texts to demonstrate her effective application of the cohesive mechanisms. There is also an analysis of the author's sentence patterns and punctuation mechanisms to reveal the writer's artistic ingenuity in the texts. It is obvious from our analysis that Okoye writes in simple language. This is her style. The simplicity of her language in all the texts, is an effective technique which enables the reader to capture her intention and purpose even at first reading. We do hope that students of style and teachers will find this thesis a good reference material which will inspire further research and analysis.

6.2 CONCLUSION

The study has been able to integrate and manage discussions from the three major concepts of style, language and feminism which are the focus of our study. In the course of our analysis we have been able to identify the inter-play and inter-dependence between the concepts. Feminist stylistics can be said to have carved out for itself a peculiar style suitable for protest and revolution. It is characterized by a peculiar language aimed at exposing issues such as marginalization, subordination, subjugation and gender bias. Feminist writers are

conscious of their use of language as a means of purpose delivery. Our analysis of Okoye's texts confirms a conscious attempt in her use of language to deliver a feminist message of complementarity between the two genders.

Ifeoma Okoye's artistic skill has enabled her to appropriate language and stylistic mechanisms to create stories and messages that synchronize with her peculiar feminist persuasion. Her deployment of foregrounding, diction, effective narrative techniques with authorial voice and the assignment of appropriate codes facilitate the projection of her purpose. Okoye's works arouse and sensitize women towards self-assertion and actualization. Our linguo-literary examination of her works establishes Okoye as a crusader of complementarity feminism which is workable in the African context.

The thesis identified that an effective management of language and style is the secret behind the aesthetics of feminist works. Feminist stylistics as a revolutionary discourse has helped in recreating the image of the woman in the literary world. It has also drawn the society's attention to social injustice against women. The analysis of Okoye's works in this thesis has no doubt revealed an alternative and interesting perspective on the issue of feminism which can be branded as "complementarity feminism".

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis recommends the following:

- (i) Further feminist stylistics study on other feminist writers is recommended. It provides an opportunity to navigate the literary and linguistic theories which should be of interest to both language and literature students and other researchers interested in gender issues.

- (ii) The work of art should not be judged from the surface value. The thesis recommends that any piece of literary work must be subjected to an examination of the linguistic and stylistic elements and mechanism for a proper understanding of the intended message.

6.4 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

- (i) The thesis demystified the difficult concepts of style through a well structured analysis of an author's literary texts. This is beneficial to a student of style.
- (ii) An alternative opinion on the issue of feminism is revealed through the analysis of Ifeoma Okoye's texts; that of complementarity feminism.
- (iii) We have been able to establish that the style of the texts creates the message.
- (iv) The thesis addresses a universal audience that oppression is not gender specific.
- (v) The thesis is a good example of the management of the concepts of style language and feminism in one stretch of discussion. This should be of interest to students of language and literature.
- (vi) The work is the first full length Ph.D on Ifeoma Okoye to the best of our knowledge. This thesis therefore provides a material for further research as it is a forerunner.

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