

**A MASCULINIST INVESTIGATION OF MALE REPRESENTATIONS IN
SELECTED FEMINIST NOVELS OF CALIXTHE BEYALA**

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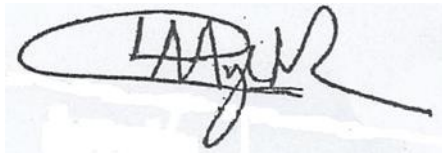
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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this research was carried out by YEKINI Mouhammed Tokunbo under my supervision in the Department of European Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my extraordinary wife Felicity Nnenna Yekini, whose friendship with God has constantly given my family divine favour and victory, and is now greatly responsible for my bagging the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Francophone African Literature. Thank you God; for answering her prayers.

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ABSTRACT

Representations of the male in feminist discourse generally tend towards the negative. Existing studies on male representations have focused on the feminist perspective, with little attention paid to the masculinist viewpoint. This study is, therefore, designed to examine the representations of masculinity in male characters of Calixthe Beyala, with a view to balancing perspectives on male representations.

Robert W. Connell's Masculinity Theory is adopted as the framework, while the interpretive design is employed. Two novels of Calixthe Beyala—*Le Petit prince de Belleville* (Petit) and *Maman a un amant* (Maman)—were purposively selected based on their demonstration of the masculinity types. The novels were subjected to *explication de text*.

Four major masculinity types were identified in the male characters of the selected novels: the hegemonic, the complicit, the subordinate and the marginalised masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity is exhibited by male characters in the community of Belleville, such as Abdou, Monsieur Kaba and the police men: as seen in their domineering, violent and exploitative relationships with women in both *Petit* and *Maman*. Hegemonic masculinity is observed in the ways patriarchal characters like Abdou invested much in ensuring that their male children sustain patriarchy: Abdou's *interdiction des tâches ménagères* (forbids his son from participating in house chores) in *Petit* and *Maman*. Toxic hegemonic masculinity of the male characters towards the female characters in *Petit* and *Maman* leads to unwanted pregnancies and prostitution by Aminata and Esther, divorces for Mathilda and M'am, and death for Soumana in *Petit*. Complicit masculinity is identified as benign towards women. There are men like Kouam, Laforêt and Inspector Antoine whose masculinity is benevolent towards their wives in *Petit* and *Maman*. Kouam overlooks his wife's excesses by allowing her to smoke, drink and go to bars, which is unacceptable for a Muslim wife; while Laforêt supports Caroline's decision to leave him to cater for three children in *Petit* and *Maman*. Subordinate masculinity is found in homosexuals: gays and lesbians like Nkomo and Mathilda are portrayed as persecuted members of the society in *Petit*. The homophobic men of Belleville perceive Nkomo as a whore, who sleeps with his male bosses for promotions in *Petit*. They judge Kouam as unmanly, because his wife left him and became a lesbian in *Petit*. Marginalised masculinity is exhibited in the dynamics of the relationship between the subjugated blacks and the white supremacists, which is depicted in Abdou's powerlessness before his white rival, Monsieur Tichit, who seduces and sleeps with his wife M'am in *Maman*. Marginalised masculinity is perceived in the fear of the black men of Belleville in confronting the white man that eloped with Abdou's wife in *Maman*. Their initial bravado became emasculation before a superior white supremacist masculinity. Marginalised masculinity is shown also in the helplessness of Abdou and other black men in Belleville against the racism of the white policemen in *Maman*.

Calixthe Beyala's deployment of the hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and marginalised masculinities in *Petit* and *Maman*, balances the customary malevolent portrayals of men in feminist novels.

Keywords: Masculinity discourse, Calixthe Beyala's novels, Male characters in feminist narratives

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This research will be a collection of data for a literary study of how men are portrayed in the male characters of two selected fictional novels of Calixthe Beyala; a sub-Saharan female writer with a feminist persuasion. The major elicitation instrument will be critical analysis. The research will apply the Hegemonic Masculinity theory perspectives of R.W. Connell (2005) in explaining the implications of the interpreted data and also attempt to examine issues of patriarchy and gender as related to the sexes, their homes and societies.

In the course of the study, other literatures relating to ongoing gender discuss will be relevant. By identifying the male perspective of gender related problems in feminist literatures, and exposing negative traits in the female characters of the chosen novels, this study will attempt a contribution towards balancing the narratives in the scholarship of gender studies. Through critical analysis, the study will engage feminist male character portrayals, and masculinist female characters' perception in Calixthe Byala's *Le Petit Prince de Belleville and Maman a un Amant*.

1.1 Background to the study

African female writers encourage women to speak out against all forms of patriarchal prejudices and oppression, and to tell their own stories. To this effect, African female writers are enjoined to constantly preoccupy their writings with women's issues in order to create the awareness that "...the African woman is always somebody's slave" (Adebayo, 2015: p. 39-42). In view of this, there is a considerable amount of ongoing male-bashing in sub-Saharan African women fictions. These fictional writings on men as enemies and often portray them as worthless, irresponsible, physically grotesque, wicked husbands and fathers, while women are depicted as victims of multiple physiological and psychological assaults by men. They are portrayed as victims of abandonment, battery, betrayal and rape

by irresponsible men and husbands (Mawuli, 2009: p.48-49). The volume of negative representations of men in women narratives is so much that Lange (2008) opined that in order to recognise ongoing women-driven positive transformations in men, feminists should let up on men's criticism and overlook women's oppression of the past. She recommends feminist do this to avoid forming perpetual negative impressions about men. This research aims at investigating how men are portrayed in feminist writings. It looks at the corroboration of the feminists' claim that men are irresponsible oppressors of women. The outcomes of this research will help in the better understanding of men and masculinity, especially in Africa. It hopes to assist in balancing people's perception of gender and gender relations in the literary works of African women writers. It will provide a viable basis for further research into the relatively new theory of masculinity (Mutunda, 2009: p. 11, Ogunrotimi, 2014: p. 3) and contribute to the foregrounding of masculinity as a practical theoretical framework for researches on gender.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Studies on Calixthe Beyala are often inclusive of other sub-Saharan Francophone women writers such as Mariama Bâ, Philomène Bassek, Aminata Sow Fall and Werewere Liking among others. Such studies lean mostly towards feminism and its variants such as womanism. Moreover, such feminist approach to Beyala's works often leaves little to be desired of men. The pictures of men painted in the author's narratives are derogatory and bleak. Men are seen as unpleasant and callous beings in radical feminist literatures such as Beyala's. Moreover, approach to gender issues in African women's writing is traditionally from the feminist perspective. There is a dearth of balanced positive portrayals of men, in comparison to the negative portrayals in the works of Calixthe Beyala. This study is important in that much work has not been done using Masculinity as a theoretical framework in the analysis of the literary texts of Calixthe Beyala.

This study will focus solely on Beyala and two of her selected novels. It will analyse two of her novels using Hegemonic Masculinity as a theoretical framework. The study will ascertain to which extent these images of men portrayed by the author are corroborated by those in the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity. It will also look at the female characters from

the perspectives of the Hegemonic Masculinity theory. It is hopeful that the outcomes of this research will constitute a contribution to knowledge in gender and literary studies.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are representations of Hegemonic Masculinity in the selected novels of Calixthe Beyala?
2. What are portrayals of variants of masculinity in the selected novels of Calixthe Beyala?
3. Is Calixthe Beyala a masculinist writer or a feminist writer?

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To define masculinity and its variants according to the masculinity theory of R.W. Connell (2005).
2. To reveal the representations of Hegemonic Masculinity in the selected novels of Calixthe Beyala.
3. To determine the portrayals of variants of masculinity in the selected novels of Calixthe Beyala.
4. To distinguish whether Calixthe Beyala is a masculinist writer or a feminist writer.

1.5 Significance of the study

This research will enable researchers to see the works of Beyala from the masculinist perspective, and contribute to the laying of proper and adequate groundwork for further research into gender and literary studies. It will also assist in the perception of women from the stance of the masculinity theory. Masculinist approach to feminist writing is quite a novelty in mainstream academia. To understand the masculinity of a man is to understand the conflicts around him. A better understanding of men would assist in the settlement of conflicts and achievement of peace among the genders in homes and societies at large. A better understanding of how men perceive women also will help in creating harmony in male-female relationships. Understanding masculinity would assist also in the proper navigation of issues on heterosexuality versus homosexuality and identity, in relation to ongoing gender discusses in Africa and beyond.

1.6 Justification of the study

Calixthe Beyala was selected as the feminist author of choice due to her prominence among feminists in Africa. Her qualification by Adesanmi (1996: 203) as "...the undisputable *chef de file* of the...third generation of female writers from Francophone Africa" attest to her being a feminist of importance. Beyala was chosen also because of her consistent engagement of contemporary gender issues, through which this study analyzes the masculinity of the characters in the selected novels. Her novels were selected for this research, because they are replete with representations of gender and of contemporary gender issues. Her novels approach ongoing gender discusses from a realist cum postmodernist position. This allows for comparisons with real life situations; since the study looks at the portrayals of men in relation to contemporary gender realities.

The thematic analysis of her works revealed two novels as adequately containing portrayals of the four masculinity types of R.W. Connell. In addition, only both novels provide data for the study of the trajectory and the complementary environment for the construction of these masculinity types. Both novels were selected deliberately to feature representations of masculinity and femininity among Africans in diaspora. It also includes representations of white supremacist masculinity versus black masculinity. This allowed for a comparative study of male representation in relation to environment. Both selected novels as sequels afford the possibility of studying the formation of the masculinities of the characters, vis-à-vis their emigration from Africa to France. Only both novels, among Beyala's novels, project various masculinity types, at different locations and situations, among diverse characters both white and black. Both selected novels are also rich in the ongoing gender discourses and the male-female characters necessary for the study.

R.W. Connell's theory of masculinity was selected as the theoretical framework of this study because it features all the masculinity types that are visible in the characters of the selected novels of study. Also because the dynamics of constructing the different masculinity types and the underlying factors vis-à-vis gender identity and formation are well developed in R.W. Connell's theory of masculinity. Moreover, less attention has been devoted to scholarship on understanding men and mapping out masculinity, especially in Africa, aside a few important authors such as Morrell (2001). Furthermore, issues on

African masculinity feature in texts only in relation to gender politics, conflicts and issues of inequality against women. The present research attempts to contribute to a better understanding of African masculinity, by working on existing templates for masculinity across continents as documented by foremost authorities on the subject such as R.W. Connell (2005).

1.7 Delimitation of the study

The scope of this study is limited to Calixthe Beyala out of numerous feminist writers in sub-Saharan Africa. The study is also limited to two out of her nineteen published literary works. The selected novels are *Le Petit Prince de Belleville* (***Le Petit Prince***,1992) translated by Marjolijn de Jager as [*Loukoum: The Little Prince of Belleville*, ***Loukoum: The Little*** , 1995], and *Maman a un Amant* (***Maman a un***,1993).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

From the literary ‘prise de conscience’ and activism of feminists in the 1970s, to the spontaneous creation of the 70s men’s movement in response, pressures have mounted on issues of gender. Regardless of efforts to theorise masculinity by psychologists, sociologists and academics in the 1980s, 1990s and more recently in the millennium (Cockburn, 1983, Heward, 1988, Phillips, 1987, Messner and Don, 1990, Whitehead & Barrett, 2001, Alsop et al, 2002, Beynon, 2002, Connell, 2005, Beasley 2012, Anderson & McCormack, 2018), the sheer weight of feminist literary effusion focused on the tyranny of Hegemonic Masculinity, continues to collapse chauvinistic social structures rooted in patriarchy. Feminist exposure of men’s injustice to women has won sympathy and support, not only from women, but from men also. The gamut of radical feminist literature is increasingly problematic to the masculinisation of the next generation. Negative portrayals of men in feminist literature have successfully estranged men to the ideologies of masculinity. Many are currently emasculated because of the inability to function due to feminist antagonism at school, work and home. In this chapter, we look at some of these gender portrayals not only from the African women writers’ perspective, but that of the male writers as well.

2.1 Defining masculinity and its dynamics

There are schools of thoughts who think that masculinity by definition is a social construct, laden with only the denotations and connotations given to represent traits and features in men as identified by individual societies in relation to the global idea. The biological-reductionist perspective of masculinity supports universal masculinity traits that are acceptable in every society: for instance, in every society there are men with penis, testicles and Y-chromosomes. Peculiarities exist in every society that dictate criteria for ascertaining masculinity in that society. Explanation of gender exists in every society, yet not all societies possess the notion of masculinity. In the contemporary employ of the word masculinity,

there is a postulation that a person's conduct emanates from what sort of person one is (i.e. a masculine person would naturally be aggressive, domineering, sport loving and philandering among others). So, a person that behaves differently is not masculine. Masculinity could be seen from the perspective of personal capacity and distinction. This idea is founded on the notion of personality started in early modern Europe amidst the evolvment of colonial empires and capitalist economic relations (Connell, 2005: p. 68). It could be seen also as a function of the dominant qualities and values in a society, as seen by Hofstede (2001) who posits that "Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material-success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life".

Masculinity could be as a result of its opposite intimate relationship with feminism. Modern European/American cultures treat the genders as carriers of opposite personality modes, an idea which birthed the notion of masculinity, and supposing that any culture without this polarized notion of gender would not have the concept of masculinity. In both cultures, women were seen as less to men, having less reasoning ability as early nineteenth-century. The notion of masculinity is several centuries old. Cultural positions have often been undermined when defining masculinity, or portraying a masculine character (Connell, 2005: p. 68). In defining masculinity based on these submissions we would look at several definitions as follow:

Connell (2005) submits that in defining masculinity, essentialists habitually use a trait that defines the essence of the masculine and attribute it to an explanation of the lives of men. Making masculinity synonymous with activity and femininity to passivity is an instance of this. Not one singular feature in men could explain masculinity totally. The flaw in this definition is primarily in the choosing of which trait defines the essence of masculinity, since essentialists seldom concur. How the essence of masculinity is singled out of other existing essence in the male, is the obvious challenge to this definition. Since the choice is often irrational and wilful.

Positivist social science defines masculinity as ‘what men actually are’, as a result of findings based on actuality. This definition informs the masculinity/femininity scales in psychology based on statistics. It informs again the ethnographic debates on masculinity, based on how men’s lives are modelled in particular cultures. This is called pattern masculinity. The problems with this definition is with the essence or core traits that the definition of masculinity hangs on; these are themselves subject of gender arguments and presuppositions. These are standpoints on gender that are already fraught with biases and are under investigation. The second problem with this definition is seen in the work of Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna. In their work they posit that enumerating men and women’s idiosyncrasies demands that both genders be earlier classified as men and women. This according to both researchers is an inevitable social procedure necessary in assigning sensible classification to genders. Drawing up any scale based on gender prior to this is an exercise in futility. Thirdly, defining masculinity based on fact finding about men’s lives and on what men are in reality, is to undermine the fact that some men are called feminine, while some women are called masculine. Some character traits are labelled feminine or masculine notwithstanding which sex exhibit these traits (Connell, 2005: p.69).

Normative definition defines masculinity as ‘What men ought to be’. This is a definition in play during researches on the media. It is a definition obtainable in deliberations on archetypes such as John Wayne, G.I. Joe and Jango among others. The definition accommodates rigid sex role theory that deals with masculinity particularly as a social rule that governs men’s conduct. In “A scale for measuring attitudes about masculinity”, there is a sex role masculinity scale developed by Robert Brannon and Samuel Juni based on the endorsement of a research report carried out in 1984. In the masculinity scale, the following are norms that determines masculinity; avoiding femininity, concealing emotions, being the bread winner, being admired and respected, toughness, being the male machine, violence and adventure. Each norm is anchored to a male noun such as ‘A man always deserves the respect of his wife and children’ among others. Elements on the scale are evaluated on a 7-point Likert Scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Following his work “The male sex role: our culture’s blueprint of manhood and what it’s done for us lately”, Brannon’s discretion of masculinity was in conjunction with the sociologist Deborah David in 1976. In order to ascertain masculinity, they gave four rules:

1. No sissy stuff,
2. be a big wheel
3. be a sturdy oak,
4. give ‘em hell (Connell, 2015, Levine 1998, Brannon 1976, Brannon and Juni 1984, Ronald and William 1995.)

The items on this masculinity scale, juxtaposed with the male characters in Beyala’s works, would be said to be masculine indeed. Characters such as Souleymane Bolobolo in *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l’Africaine* and Abdou Traoré in *Le petit prince de Belleville* among others are exemplars of the masculine traits on Brannon’s masculinity scale.

The weakness in the normative definition of masculinity is that only a handful of men measure up to the archetypes of John Wayne, Humphrey Bogart and Clint Eastwood in ruggedness and self-sufficiency. It would not be normative if no one meets the norms. Neither can we say that majority of men are not masculine, just because they cannot meet up with the standards of toughness or heroism in films. Another weakness in this definition is that it does not account for masculinity at individual level, since the model of masculinity has made personality extrinsic. Masculinity now becomes what obtains in models that are constructed after examples in the media.

Instead of through the level of individuality, Semiotic definition defines masculinity via a method of dissimilarities of attributes where masculine and feminine positions are compared. In this definition of masculinity according to Connell “Masculinity is, in effect, defined as not femininity” (i.e. once it does not have feminine qualities, then it must be masculine). In making masculinity opposite to femininity, semiotic definition does not employ any sign or word to qualify the position of masculinity; rather it defines femininity in relation to masculinity. There is a phallocratic representation of power in masculinity. The phallus is code for authority, while femininity is defined by absence of power. For instance, masculinity in the male would mean the presence of all the attributes that is lacking in female. This definition is helpful in cultural breakdown of gender. This definition also has its limitations. Its reach is narrow, since it does not cater for manners of speaking about other matters that relates to masculinity such as: the roles of gender in supply and demand-output and use, roles in establishment and in normal surroundings and roles in social and

military strivings. Masculinity can only be formed within the sphere of gender relations. (Connell, 2005: p.71).

It appears the only possible general definition of masculinity according to Connell (2005:43) is “the character of anyone who possessed a penis, a Y chromosome and a certain supply of testosterone”.

2.1.1 Masculinity: past, present and future

The contemporary Gender system came to being in the sixteenth century (Circa 1450 to circa 1650). It was brought about by the development of the modern capitalist economy around the North Atlantic area. Acts associated with the formation of our current culture of masculinity were traced to four significant advancements at this period. Number one advancement was when Renaissance secular culture and protestant reformation ruptured the notions of sexuality and individuality of the medieval Catholicism. This created a cultural transformation that brought clarity not only on women’s sexuality and personality, but that of men also.

The church lost its power and its philosophies and ideologies that have dominated intellectualism gave way to resistance. There was a paradigm shift from monastic life as the ideal to marital heterosexuality. Subsequently, marital heterosexuality and the conjugal household became more revered than the celibate and ascetic life of monks. Heterosexuality became authorised and obligatory culturally. Martin Luther’s defiance of Catholicism that greatly brought about the church demise, also led to individualism. Self-expression and direct relationship with God, created a sense of self authority that laid foundations for the notion of masculinity (Connell, 2005: p. 186). Over time, the notion of masculinity became the focus of philosophers such as René Descartes and Immanuel Kant, who saw masculinity as a personality characterised by rationality and science in antithesis to the commonplace and emotionality. In this definition, patriarchy and the creation of empire was legalized (Seidler, 1989).

The second advancement that created the basis for the modern gender order, and thereby masculinity, was the establishment of empires abroad by countries such as Portugal, Spain, Netherlands, France and England. This was the first wave. The second wave of imperial

creation of empires over lands subsequently was by Russia and United States. Also, Germany, Italy and Japan did create overseas empires. Men were soldiers and sea merchants in the colonies. Women only join them there as wives or servants to the homes dominated by men. Men were predominantly the staff members of the administration of these new empires and a state occupation was developed and furnished these empires based on this. This situation was favourable for the configurations of masculinity.

The third advancement was the marked progress in the economic municipalities of capitalist states such as Belgium, England and Netherlands. Commercial capitalist cities such as Antwerp, London and Amsterdam were especially progressive among others in the generalities of a new manner of day-to-day living. Change in the gender order due to this progress was so unknown that it only became visible in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet this change was seen in the individualism that drove the first industrial revolution and made it possible to gather wealth from trade. Soon enough, a rationality based on evaluation found its way into city way of life. It found its way into the way business is done and where it is done. This went on to establish a form of masculinity and create and legalised jobs tailored after gender. At the same period in these cities, the rise of effeminates and homosexuals were also witnessed. In London, gay activities were recorded among men. Notions of gender from the medical perspective also witnessed a change. An earlier concept of bodies as being hermaphroditic in medicine gave way to the notion of bodies as being dichotomous. This gender variance concept inspired in European culture the ideology that one needs a personal gender identity as a man or a woman and not just a male or female body. By the end of the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft had written her treatise on gender: *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. In this discuss, her main arguments were based on the cultural foundation of women's personality as a gender in the society, as opposed to that of men (Connell, 2005: p.187-189).

The fourth advancement that shaped the modern gender order is civil war. In Europe, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there were both religious and political bloodline wars among clergies and kings. These wars troubled the legality of the gender order. They strengthened patriarchy through the emergence of the powerful European central government. This period knew total monarchy which furnished men with institutional power

than had ever been before. Masculinity became an affair of the state. The creation of the professional armies to fight in these wars, further cemented the honoured and elevated position of men in the society. Right from this period, hegemonic type masculinity could be discerned. Subordinated and marginalised forms of masculinity also existed in relation to it. The upper class hereditary landowners ruled the North Atlantic, among who was George Washington. This class practiced a hegemonic form of masculinity that reflects in its capitalist economic relations. During the time of Walpole and the Pitts in Britain, business as much as politics of the state were tailored along family lines; and these examples were the examples of Hegemonic Masculinity in their ruthless, authoritarian and rational approach to business and military staffing. The culture of the duel practiced among these great and wealthy families is an important way to ascertain masculinity. Once a man or his family's honour is questioned, he is expected to stand up and fight, like a man in an individual-fight that is usually deadly. This is what Connell calls the Masculinity of the Gentry. (Connell, 2005: p. 189-199).

2.1.2 Modern gender order of masculinity

Rotundo (1993:1) declared in his study *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* that every cultural invention possesses a history and likewise manhood. Green and Troup (1999:253) observed that while most study on gender history is seen to be woman-centred, in recent times the subject of masculinity is being given attention as a topic on its own. The focus of gender history research was primarily on masculinity; eventually there was a paradigm shift to that of masculinities (Tosh, 2005, cited in Basdeo, 2015: p. 1). Recent works such as that of Carter (2001) has shown how the notion of manliness has transformed across time since the 80s. Carter in his work *Men and the emergence of polite society, Britain 1660-1800* depicted the manliness of the majority of the 18th century as external; a mixture of exterior politeness and polish. In those days, manliness was a set of behaviour expected of men publicly.

Between the 18th and 19th century, the concept of manliness has morphed from the “exterior” politeness in men to “inner” manly simplicity, as was explored by McCormack (2005:207) in his work *The independent man: citizenship and gender politics in Georgian*

England. In general, contemporary work on gender research history can testify to the fact that one type of masculinity often give way to another.

In this regard, it is more appropriate to speak of masculinities in history and not masculinity. Though there were several ongoing submissions and assertions on the essence and principles of masculinity, but it was the research of Robert W. Connell, the Australian transgender sociologist that was pivotal to the new insight and direction in the study of the concept of masculinity. Her work is instrumental to the possibility of studying the history of masculinities. She gave a fresh breath to the research on masculinity and its history in 1987, when she published the book *Gender and power*. Then she went on to publish the ground-breaking book *Masculinities* in 1995, which is generally seen as the “Bible” of masculinity studies and a precursor to the numerous texts written by notable proponents of the theory of masculinity (Basdeo, 2015: p.2, Mutunda, 2009: p.17).

In her book, Connell acknowledges the changing nature of masculinity over time and spoke of different masculinities rather than one. She recognises what she termed the “Alternative Masculinities” which include subordinated masculinity such as queers (homosexuals and effeminate) that do not appear “masculine” in the traditional patriarchal system of things. She identifies also a prevalent form of masculinity over other varieties which have morphed through time. This is the Hegemonic Masculinity, which is a culturally dominant idealisation of masculinity that has endured over time and prevailed over other forms (Basdeo, 2015: p. 2). This study will employ this prevalent and dominant form of masculinity as literary theory in the analysis of both chosen novels of Beyala.

Meanwhile in the 19th century, the notion of the familial and godly home was highly favoured and sponsored as a result of the political and economic prominence of the middle class in c. 1790 to c. 1850 (Basdeo, 2015). In his work *A man's place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, Tosh (1999) researched into the transforming dominant masculine ideal between 1830 and c. 1880. At this period masculinity had changed from domesticity (familial and godly home life) to service to country. There was a “flight from domesticity” and manliness was associated with service to the empire (Thompson 2005). The notion of manliness in the Victorian era was almost a template for modern western societies, in that masculinity in the Victorian period was much associated

with heterosexuality and the institution of marriage-the home was the core of a man's masculinity and it was through it that a man gains the full status of adulthood and householder. Like Tosh (1999:2) in this assertion, Connell also believe that Hegemonic Masculinity is closely connected to heterosexuality and the marriage institution. According to Samuel Smiles, author of the ever popular 19th century book *Self Help*; "a man's real character... his manliness, is most surely displayed in the home" (Basdeo, 2015: p. 2).

Indeed, marriage and procreation were key elements of one's manhood during the Victorian age of masculinity. Hence, 19th century societies view marriage as necessary to the transition into complete manhood. As with the Victorian age, heterosexual sex was important to masculinity. It was a rite of passage to manhood and according to Tosh (1999:112): "manliness always presumed a liberal endowment of sexual energy... There was a strong tradition at all levels of society that, in young men especially, the libido should be released in full relations with the other sex [not same sex]". Mosse (1996:56) posits that the concepts of manliness at any one time persists as the conventional way by which all other forms of masculinity are assessed and men who were seen as not measuring up to the standards were perceived as unmanly.

As earlier declared, a singular, stable and unchanging form of masculinity does not exist. The notion of Hegemonic Masculinity by Connell has shed clearer light to this declaration and has laid foundation for the work of other gender historians. It is thereby established that masculinity is a changing concept. The overtime existence of heterosexuality alongside homosexuality ensures the engendering of frictions and conflicts between both notions. In the 19th century, the notions of manliness attain cultural hegemony only via the subjugation of other forms of masculinity. Homosexuality in particular is in subordination to heterosexuality and its attendant 'manly' ideals. This coexistent subordination creates a tension that may eventually lead to a conflict in the future of what is regarded as masculinity. As opined by Beynon (2002: 89-93) "If masculinity is subject to change and it exists alongside other forms of masculinity, then surely masculinity to a certain extent is always in crisis. In this wise, it is better for historians on gender research to speak more of the history of masculinities, than just masculinity.

Masculinism started out by concentrating primarily on masculinity and on the position of white heterosexual men in North American and European societies (Blais and Dupuis-Déri, 2012). Just as white feminism in its inception, was not inclusive of the realities of black females in Africa and in Diaspora, masculinism also was not inclusive of the realities of black males in Africa and in Diaspora. The birth, growth and development of the concept of black masculinity and manhood are very recent and ongoing. Though there were pivotal male figures and events witnessing to black masculinity overtime, yet it only begun scripting its essence and relevance to modern societies in the 80s. The documentation of the historical processes of the concept of black masculinity is predominantly from the black masculine experience in North America. From the rise of hip-hop in the 1980's, the million-man march in the mid 1990's and the election of President Barack Obama in the late 2000's, the concept of Black Masculinity has leaped to the forefront of contemporary America and by extension the world. Yet, from inception till date, the concept of black masculinity in American history has been associated with negative stereotypes such as docility and criminality (Adejumo, 2015).

The masculinity referred to here is the global and very general variety. The growing black variety represents mostly the reality of the American male and his struggles into manhood and not necessarily the African male stereotypes represented in the works of Beyala. Moreover, it is the exportation of Euro-American gender order to the colonial world, which brought about literary awareness and consciousness of masculinity in more profound ways. It also created the capitalistic machinery which gave birth to local versions of European and American patriarchy institution (The Cultural Reader, 2011). This new gender order swallowed up the traditional local forms of masculinity which earlier existed such as that of the African male. This is not to say that African males have no masculinity or are not conscious of the privileged position of the male children in the traditionally patriarchal societies of the continent, rather it is to say that local varieties of masculinity have been presently influenced by the more documented western brand.

This research will look at the notion of sex roles in relation to what is masculine and what is not, as represented by Beyala in her male characters in her attempt to quash patriarchal

stereotypes via anti-masculinist depictions in the chosen novels. Feminist activities are alleged to have compromised the erstwhile dominant position of men in the society; especially as women in contemporary society are being observed to turn the table and dominate men in both public domain and private sphere. Consequently, men are presently struggling with an 'identity crisis' and gradually becoming the prey of feminist struggles that is leading to a gradual usurping of patriarchy by matriarchy (Blais and Dupuis-Déri, 2012). Beyala's anti-masculinist portrayals are reflective of these claims and contribute also to the ongoing gender role conflict between feminists and the patriarchal order in societies.

Masculinities come to be at certain times and places, and they are liable perpetually to change. Masculinity by nature is historical. It exists in the annals of man's history. Historians have the history of early modern masculinity fully recorded (Connell, 2005: p. 185). To understand the contemporary model of masculinity, there is need to situate it in the matching contemporary construction of gender order. Masculinity is resident only in circumstances of a gender relations system. This current system has undergone a procedure of almost four hundred years to arrive at. History has shown that masculinity is formed also through colonialism. The domineering enlargement of European and American political and economic empires has helped in the shaping of masculinity worldwide. Archetypes of this imperial domination such as Paul Bunyan of Canada, Davy Crockett of the United States and Lawrence of Arabia of England, have often inspired forms of masculinity in their roles in the imperial expansions of the aforementioned countries. These campaigns that usually end up as wars have helped in associating masculinity to violence; and have passed on to representations of masculinity in print, graphic and audio-visual media. Hollywood has copied its brand of masculinity from this, and via images of examples of violent masculinity has also passed it to global culture (Connell, 2005: p.185).

2.1.3 Transformations in masculinity

The division of gentry's masculinity constitutes the chronicle of European and American masculinity for the last two centuries. Gentry's masculinity, being hegemonic in form, gradually gave way to other contemporary forms of hegemonic masculinities. In time, subordinated and marginalised forms of masculinities appeared. These transformations are

brought about by core determinants such as contention of the gender order by women, the rationality behind gender-centred wealth gathering process in industrial capitalism and the interaction of authority within the empire. The emergence of feminism in the 19th century and its political influence over the populations have brought about changes in the gender politics. This brought about the consideration of women's rights in the universal adult suffrage and associated with the progression of the liberal state and its dependence on the notions of citizenship.

In the same nineteenth-century, fight for women's rights spread to the factories and working-class women opposed their economic reliance on men as the industry grows. Middle-class women also challenged the rights of men via movement. These contentions transformed the terms of sustaining patriarchy, thereby changing the conditions necessary for a masculinity to be regarded as hegemonic. Eventually, the circulation of economic power via industrialisation and progress among bureaucratic governments, led to decrease in both political and economic authority of the gentry. Consequently, some of the variants of gentry's masculinity were transferred to the bourgeois men of the middle class. The army also inhibited gentry's form of masculinity through violence, in the wake of development of organised warfare. Officer corps of the army became symbolic of the gentry codes of masculinity. Among these corps was famously the Prussian officer corps of the 1940s. Instead of private trainings in the way of the gentry as it was earlier, trainings became more professionally done at military institutions (Connell, 2005: p. 191-192).

There was a reorganisation of the armed forces to answer directly to the centre. Prior to this reorganisation, violence, rationality, bureaucracy and advancement in machines of war and mobility became constituents of the state's structure. As a precautionary measure, Prussian system became a model for other powerful states (Las Casas, 1992, Connell, 2005). For Connell, Carl von Clausewitz was the nineteenth-century equivalent of Las Casas in the documentation of early modern masculinity. Clausewitz's work titled *On war* was seen as a foundation for the justification of large scale violence. He was identified as one of the reformers of the new Prussian army, which has inspired fascism in European states. Importantly, fascism became a sheer affirmation of men's domination over women, and set

back progress already made by egalitarian societies. Through uplifting of novel portraits of Hegemonic Masculinity, which encourages illogicality and unfettered violence in soldiers at the war front, fascism reasserted men's superiority over women. Fascism fell during the Second World War, and its ideologies of Hegemonic Masculinity with it.

Educational progress from nineteenth to twentieth century has led to the development of the abilities of organisations and governments. This in turn has created favourable changes in the labour markets and provided more careers and industries. These progressions became instrumental to further division in the Hegemonic Masculinity. Systems based on male superiority became less practicable, those built on skills and technical expertise became continually popular. This became problematic to the interactions of both systems, and therefore created challenges in corporate and state affairs. Both became evidently antipodal and substitutes of masculinity. Coexistence became the only option for both to survive as gendered practices. In the cities, Hegemonic Masculinity became more justified by reason.

Simultaneously, in the colonies and frontiers, violence and permissiveness became the order of the day since the conditions were unfavourable and the population was predominantly male, the frontier became normatively masculinised. Subsequently, the men became archetypes of masculinity in novels and eventually in films. Like the frontier men, the hunters also constituted images of manhood. In this respect, Robert Baden-Powell founder of the scouting movement for boys and the president of the United States Theodore Roosevelt are fine examples. Boys were nurtured into specific types of masculinity by the scouting movement. This type of attempt at constructing masculinity in boys was all over the nineteenth-century. In Britain, it was the British elite public school and the church of England Boys' Brigade. In Germany, the German youth movement (later the Hitler youth) and secondary school boys became army cadets and undergo military training across Germany and Australia. These constant attempts at propagating and commanding masculinity by ideologists of patriarchy became a considerable challenge in gender politics.

It is worthy of note that Jeffrey Hantover's study of the Boys scouts of America revealed a phobia for the feminisation of boys. Change in the order of social domestication as a result

of the petitioning of gentry's masculinity, led to the establishment of the domestic domain for women and the economic and political domain for men. On the basis of natural difference between men and women, these domains were sanctioned by nineteenth-century ideologists and feminists. The women's domain is subordinate to the men. Yet they have some level of independence in daily administration of the home and in business. Since boys are often in the care of their mothers at certain age bracket, they are as a result nurtured in this domain (Connell, 2005: p. 193-195).

By the late nineteenth century, homosexuality became a distinct social description. Unlike when it was seen as a man's acceptance of evil way of life, it is now seen from a medical description and was outlawed. From the perspective of Hegemonic Masculinity, pleasure of homosexual kind was jettisoned from what is masculine and associated with women or animals. Heterosexuality became a compulsory aspect of maleness. More liberal business and office models across cities of countries edged out the gentry and changed the provincial populations into industrial and city working classes. This transformation created via the factory method, an acute distinction of work from home. Soon the men became dominant in money matters in the home. As the factory system progressed, new forms of masculinity are produced. These forms of masculinity are constructed around ability to earn more money, technical dexterity, household patriarchy and militant unity among workers.

Before their removal from laborious industry, women were champions of unionism and formed a huge portion of the initial workforce of textile factories. The expulsion of women created the working-class masculinity, and the method of the family wage inspired by the notion of separate domains of the bourgeoisie. Since not all men earned the family wage, those that did constructed a dignified, well-groomed masculinity, while those that did not earn the family wage constructed the unpolished, careless masculinities and became the marginalized ugly classes. Mobility of labour in the use of workforces constituted by these marginalised classes emigration of 'free' settlers to New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Algeria, shipping of African slaves to Brazil, the Caribbean and North America, shipping of coerced Indians to the Caribbean, Africa, Malaya and Fiji, shipping of Chinese labour and English convicts to the United States and Australia respectively. These displacements

have laid foundation for racial hierarchy, which in turn affects the construction of masculinities such as the black masculinity.

From United States to South Africa and France, black masculinity has been plagued by racial profiling seen in severe policing and political racism. Blacks have often been seen in white societies as sexual and social risks. The harsh conditions of living and life styles in the habitations of these displaced men often dictate the actualities of their masculinity. Hence, Penury, hard labour, disorganisation of homes and communities have created complexities in the configuration of the masculinities of these marginalised classes. Masculinity among these groups is based on equality and not on competition. Colonial masters also cultivate portraits of masculinity in their colonies. Better part of Latin America, India and South-East Asia, and parts of Africa were affected by white masculinity. The history of masculinity is not made in a straight line. There is no principal occurrence that reigns supreme over others, neither is there a mere transition from traditional to modern. Instead, the gender systems developed by the European empires are complicated in their interactions and nature. Dominant, subordinated and marginalized masculinities relate perpetually, while transforming the terms of their being and that of each other (Connell, 2005: p. 80-81, 196-198).

2.1.4 The place of the body in masculinity

Debates on the need for transformation in masculinity usually end in regret. There are those who believe that men cannot change. The daily conventional supposition is that genuine masculinity exist, therefore society speaks of ‘real men’, ‘natural men’ and the ‘deep masculine’ men as opposed to men that are bullies and menace to the society. This notion cuts across various schools of thought among which are the men’s movement, psychologists, Christian conservatives, socio-biologists and feminists.

Genuine masculinity is often associated with men’s bodies. The thrusts and actions performed by men’s bodies are thought to be masculine; for instance violence, lust and aggression are seen as originating from men’s bodies. Other beliefs about men’s bodies are that they cannot be used to care for babies or perform a homosexual act which is against

nature. Ideologies and schools of thoughts are hinged on these beliefs. Two contrary notions about the human body have ruled conversations for several contemporary decades. One ideology is that the human body is biologically structured to naturally show gender difference; this being evident in the genetic makeup, hormonal distinction and the reproductive function of the sexes. The other is that the human body is naturally free of societal imagery. The body remains neutral until society stamps its monogram on it (Connell, 2015: p.46). Yet, there are those that believe that a combination of nature (biological influence) and nurture (social influence) results in the gender dissimilarities in conduct.

The inability of religion to defend the notion of gender gave rise to biological attempt at it. Psychological studies of the brain function of the sexes when performing mundane task such as parking a car, are not factually conclusive that the difference in gender makes men's ability to park cars better than women. There exists also a socio-biological idea of men as descendant of a hunting species, stemming from an evolutionary perspective of masculinity. The notion by Lionel Tiger in his work *Men in Groups* (1969) suggests this as the reason for 'male bonding'. In all, these theorists believe that men inherit their propensities from their bodies. Men's genes (according to Connell's assessment of these theorists) contain the "tendencies to aggression, family life, competitiveness, political power, hierarchy, territoriality, promiscuity and forming men's clubs". Socio-biologists such as Edward Wilson submit that the physiological and mental differences in both sexes have been expanded via culture into global male supremacy. Culture has contributed increasingly to men's world domination. Men's hormones are also deemed responsible for their tendency to be aggressive more than women. This is the endocrine theory of masculinity. Hormonal dissimilarity between men and women is pegged as responsible for the masculine behaviour in men and the feminine in women. These chains of socio-biology are not empirically proven, especially in families and in armies' formation. The differences between the sexes as observed by these theorists exist at minimal levels.

Debunking these claims of socio-biologists of men's tendencies inherent in the genes and as a result of cultural influence, Connell proclaims the existence of whole cultures where

rape is absent, where homosexuality is a general practice, where childcare is not predominantly a mother's affair and where men are unassertive; as opposed to the usual ideologies about masculinity and femininity in societies. Social hierarchical order based on sexist ideologies is often faulted and the biology behind the organisation is also often false. According to the biological explanation of masculinity, men's brains are 'hardwired' to construct masculinity. Meanwhile, women's bodies are treated as social emblems at the altar of cultural studies and feminism.

In their books *Adorned in Dreams* and *Beauty Secrets*, Elizabeth Wilson and Wendy Chapkis furthermore exposed how through this body imagery entire lines of dietary, cosmetic, clothing and slimming products among others are being commercially promoted and exploited. Sciences surrounding the body such as the post-structuralism of social theory focus on the human body as objects over which we fuss. There is the sociology of the body which posits that bodies are things that we toil over (e.g. eating, sleeping, cleaning, dieting, exercising etc.). Bryan Turner founder of the sociology of the body suggests that we include 'body practices' as means of understanding gender social labour of individuals or groups workouts in exercise and sports' sociology indicate how gendered bodies sometimes lead to surgery.

In order to produce more gendered body, society provides a range of technological and scientific procedures for creating socially attractive body for the rich. This include cosmetic surgery such as 'face-lifts', breasts and buttocks implants, enhancements, surgical slimming and height alteration among others. Nowadays, T-shirts advertising and promoting the patronage of these surgical procedures commonly carry slogans such as 'I don't care if they are real or not as long as they are big', in support of breasts and buttocks enlargement. In recent times, these surgeries now include the surgical production of masculinity. Penile implants are put in women who desire it (Connell, 2005: p. 50).

In *What a man's Gotta Do* (1986), Anthony Easthope discovers from his studies that men's bodies are often depicted as masculine in certain ways in the portraiture of advertisement, films and news. At a deeper study, Susan Jeffords' *The Remasculinization of America*

(1989) shows how men were portrayed in the post-Vietnamese war periods. She traces how masculinity in America was being reconstructed and glorified in films and literature. This was as a result of the American defeat at the war, which consequently embarrassed society's expectations in men, and made men feel emasculated (Connell, 2005: p. 50).

The semiotics of masculinity especially as related to media is very powerful and effective in the representation of men and in the engineering of young adults towards the formation of particular types of masculinity or masculine traits. The representation of manhood and the rites of passage into manhood are common in the media. Sponsorship of masculine ideologies or indications of what a man should be is encouraged via selected behavioural patterns of male characters in films. John Wayne, G.I. Joe, Jango and He-man are examples of masculinity for any 'John doe' that patronises the cinema, own a DVD machine or cable T.V subscription. Numerous major or cameo roles and appearances in films or T.V series, have often depicted men as brave, aggressive, promiscuous and callous. These representations of masculinity in the visual arts have often created a mercurial effect on the perception of manhood in real life situations.

The body is also used in the performance of sex. There are arguments that cultural and historical factors intervene in the way the body performs sexual acts. Social constructionists like Carole Vance believe that this inference of the two threatens the very existence of sexuality of the genders. The perception of gender as a mere performance or from the functional perspective reduces it as much as the semiotics, cultural or biological perspectives. None of these accounts of gender are complete in themselves as universal explanation. We should take into consideration that some of the natural characteristics of the body is aging, getting sick, being pleased, production and nurturing emotions and offspring's concurrently, male bodies also face challenges such as impotence, aging, occupational risks, terrible hurts, inability to excel in sports and premature death. Nevertheless, in recent media hype of the mass culture, body building, men with 'six-pack' abdomens are portrayed as Adonis having women lusting after their bodies. This masculinisation of the body injects fresh adrenaline into the youth's furore for body exercise. The six-pack emblematic is not that of a good health, but that of a sex-god.

At this juncture, it appears the most logical explanation of masculinity comprises both biological and cultural elements. Inferring from Alice Rossi, a sociologist in the 80s Connell describes masculinity as "...the social elaboration of the biological function of fatherhood" (Connell, 2005: p. 52). Evidently for Connell, biology and sociology are not enough to determine masculinity. Culturally, being male or female is simply visible in the bodies of the genders. If it has a penis; it is male. If it has a vagina; it is female. In addition other male qualities such as the nature of the skin to the touch, muscle tone, particular carriage and manner when in motion, unique sexual potentials, all give interpretation to the cultural notion of masculinity.

Another strong indicator and determinant of masculinity in recent times is sport (Connell, 2005: p. 54). The male obsession with sporting activities has become a mass culture. This obsession is rooted in the societal expectations from the male child. If he likes football, then he is masculine. If she likes dolls, then she is feminine. This is the dichotomous raising of children as masculine and feminine. Parents buy the usual football for the male child and dolls for the female child. The boy grows up thinking football is synonymous to masculinity. All his life he plays it with his peers in school, he watches it with 'his boys' when he becomes working-class. Sometimes, this affects his availability in the home, but it is alright because society expects him to be passionate about sport. The convention is that he must love sport to be masculine.

The place of sport as a determinant of masculinity in contemporary times cannot be undermined. According to Connell (2005:54), "In historically recent times, sport has come to be the leading definer of masculinity in mass culture". Equally, sport icons such as Pele, Mohammed Ali and Michael Jordan has often been seen by society as role models for masculinity for the younger generations. Men pore over biographies of such sport icons, hoping to get a hint of their maleness and thereby improve theirs.

The institutionalising of sport has allowed stratification among men and by preventing women from participation has created an avenue of dominance of men over women. Sport

becomes another terrain for social relations engineered towards gender consciousness. The ability of men to excel by bodily performances in sport has reinforced the assumption that men are superior to women and are therefore privileged to rule. Proponents of patriarchy and masculinity have often used this situation to taunt feminists.

The implication of masculinity via the body's ability to function is that the notion becomes exposed and unsecured when the body refuses or fails to function as usual. When there's lack of performance from the body, masculinity becomes weak and vulnerable. Accidents have been known to cause disability in sportsmen; sometimes sickness slows them down or halts them altogether. Examples abound of such sports icon that could not continue due to similar circumstances. Magic Johnson stopped playing professional basketball, due to his HIV status. Dean Ashton, West Ham United could no longer play professional football due to a broken ankle. Nick Kypreos of the New York Rangers also was forced into retirement by post-concussion syndrome. Kirby Puckett of Minnesota Twins suffered an early retirement due to a broken jaw during his major League basketball career. Three years after retirement from professional boxing, Mohammed Ali was diagnosed with Parkinson Syndrome. This was caused by repeated blows to the head during his long boxing career. Ali could no longer shout "I'm the greatest" with all masculine ardour, as he is wont to do (Connell, 2005: p. 55, Lee, 2017, Microsoft Encarta Premium, 2009), and the list of these injured sportsmen goes on.

These career ending injuries introduces realities into the lives of these men that borders sometimes on emasculation. Thomas Gerschick and Adam Miller studied men trying to deal with such circumstances, and found out three possible reactions to the situation. The first reaction is for the sufferer to intensify attempts at facing the challenges of the hegemonic standards. These include triumphing over the disability by proving their sexual potency with their mates. The second is to alter the meaning and designation of masculinity, to accommodate the situation and reality of the sufferer. At the same time seeking subject matter relevant to independence and control as men. Thirdly, is to discard hegemonic masculinity and the pressures its standards generate. Its stereotypical notions of masculinity via physical performances (of the body which is now damaged) should be flawed and faults should be found in the hegemonic masculinity's standards. Furthermore, a converse stance

should be taken against sexism, especially now that failure in their brand of masculinity (through bodily performance) has brought them in the neighbourhood of the weaker vessels; women. So, they can identify with women by being contrary to sexism.

In essence working-class men's greatest resource is their body. Their ability to function bodily is their major economic means. Factors affecting the bodily performance of labourers in factories range from fatigue to injury. These factors often threaten men's income or their employment, thereby threatening their sense of masculinity. In recent times, skilled labour among middle-class men has transformed the notion of labour from 'men and machines' to which is synonymous to physical arduous labour on the factory floor. Masculinity nowadays is not essentially displayed in hard quasi-unskilled labour. It is displayed in the information age in the domain of the mind, the intellect and the ability to perform technically competitive jobs in the modern world of computers. Men's masculinity though not necessarily measured by bodily performance per se, yet cannot be divorced from the economic assets it constitutes.

Truly, one cannot ignore the importance of the body in the formation of masculinity. Bodily masculinity is implicated in the social process and can also be a political thing. There are various types of men's bodies, some majestic and some bent. Yet, they are all bodies nevertheless, and are subject to social interpretations and symbolisations. Bodies are given to change with time. The young become old, the beautiful becomes wrinkled, the strong becomes weak, and the large becomes small. Each body represents an individual account, and bears the imprints of the life lived. Popular culture among modern women is the desirability of scarred male body. A scarred body means the man is tough, adventurous and triumphant over life's vicissitude. Women find such bodies attractive, even sexy. The semiotics of this association of the body with such significations forms part of its essence in masculinity via mainstream social codification. Despite the ladies demand of a male body with story to tell, the body can only take so much. This could be seen in the illustrations of Connell about youngsters who partied constantly, take drugs heavily, drank uncontrollably and had sex sprees. Their bodies gave out eventually. As adults they had formed destructive habits due to heavy drug dependence and a life of drunkenness. Their bodies became

uncooperative with the social life they adopted. When they were young, their body could handle all those alcohol, sex and drugs. But, when they got older, their bodies simply could not continue and therefore refused to participate in such social life. At this point, such adults realise something drastic needs to be done if their bodies were to survive the onslaughts. Over-stressed bodies reach their limit and shut down.

Athletes in competitive sports often develop their bodies in the guise of being masculine and successful. Sometimes, these men live with damaged bodies and severe agony, and often die prematurely. The use of the body in social matters such as sport, labour and sex is quite considerable. The material nature of the body and the toll of its usage cannot be ignored. When this is ignored, the body becomes recalcitrant. Sometimes the body disorganizes social order, as in the case of homosexuality breaching the notion of hegemonic masculinity.

The same way bodies become unruly by passing the foundational limits set for them, as in the case of 'transvestite' and 'transsexual'. Contemporary gender arrangements recognise heterosexuality as normal and within the boundaries of modern gender order, while transvestites and transsexuals are seen as aberrations. In their defence, Queer Theory has risen to laud this rupture in traditional gender classification and has treated it as a major victory over conventional ideology about gender.

The body has been absent from social theory discourse for an elongated period, unlike in feminist discourse where it features significantly. Difference in bodies of genders is one of the key focuses of feminist discourse. According to Turner (1984), society has treated the body simply as object of emblematic usage and function and not that of actor. The body as observed in his work '*The body and society*,' has simply disappeared from theoretical discourse. The body needs to be exercised, activated in social procedures. The body needs to be participator in the processes of societal activities. The body needs to be stakeholder in the social agencies via its power to engender and form paths of social behaviour.

Social interaction leads to bodily discovery. There is a shared enjoyment in the sociability arising from bodies functioning together (e.g. jogging). Most people discover the capacity of their body to give pleasure or pain via social interactions in sex, sport and labour. Hegemonic masculinity in the department of sexual identity treats heterosexuality as normal and homosexuality and other oppressed sexuality as absurd. Yet, via bodily sexual arousal, many have realized their homosexual identities and tendencies. The body plays a vital role in social processes. According to Connell (2005:64-65);

Through body-reflexive practices, bodies are addressed by social process and drawn into history, without ceasing to be bodies. They do not turn into symbols, signs or positions in discourse. Their materiality (including material capacities to engender, to give birth, to give milk, to menstruate, to open, to penetrate, to ejaculate) is not erased, it continues to matter.

2.1.5 Compulsory heterosexuality for men

Connell presents heterosexuality as an important aspect of forming masculinity and the masculine self-image in boys. Her test subjects discovered sex at ages eleven, thirteen and fifteen. She illustrates the rituals with which the boys narrate the experience in their interviews. One of the boys had his first sex with an older woman, at age seventeen. There is a gender conformity in the raising of boys in heterosexual families that is aimed at making them masculine. This conformity informs practices such as teaching boys to wear trousers instead of skirts and teaching them to play football. The mother teaches the girl and the father teaches the boy. Children grow up identifying differences in the genders. Among their peers outside the home, they learn about gender difference from discussions about sexual intercourse. At school, they learn through gender separation motions that usually characterise school life. Later, when they begin to work, they imbibe society's lessons on masculinity.

All dominant patterns of masculinity do possess a hegemony that influences other masculinities. Connell talks of a gender negotiation that disallows rigidity in family systems. Through these family relationships there are other possibilities that allow for various configurations of gender. Boys identify gender difference based on their relationship with their mothers or sisters. This is in contrast with what obtains with their father. This is an

illustration of a usual patriarchal family, where various forms of feelings and formation of gender abound. Withdrawal of love from the boys by the father often is replaced by development of affection with the mother or sister. Eventually, this also is rejected.

Connell's (2005:147) observation about this identification with gender is summarised in the following statement "On a wider stage, the insistently masculinised public culture-in peer groups, schools, workplaces, sporting organisations, and media-sustains conventional definitions of gender. But its very insistence cues young people to use gender as an issue for resistance to adults and established authority". Also, Connell shows in her research into the lives of young adolescents how the boys engage in casual sex and occasionally get the girls pregnant. As part of their masculine display, the boys often run out on the pregnant girls. They often leave them for other girls elsewhere, who they in turn leave for yet others. These young adults eventually form the habit of running out on women in adult life. They find it difficult to commit to a woman, talk less a woman and a child. There are among them that keep the women around because of their babies. These are patterns contested by feminists and condemned as irresponsible and callous of men.

This behaviour of men to women is categorised as 'being a bastard' and feminists frown at it. Connell judges women's reasons of tolerating such behaviour from these young men as not just for sexual fascination and enjoyment, but because the women have no choice. Writing on these perspectives, two writers Gayle Rubin and Adrienne Rich wrote *The traffic in women: notes on the "political economy" of sex* and *Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence in 1975 and 1980* respectively. The books are insight into the cultural and social tensions around women's obligation to make themselves available for men's sexual pleasure, regardless the conditions. Connell calls this situation 'compulsory heterosexuality'.

There is a heterosexuality conditioning for the male body right from childhood and through adolescence to adulthood. Sex means a man and a woman, and not otherwise. The body is disciplined to accept this as part of masculinity. So homosexuality becomes more than just a sexual misdemeanour in this regard. Most adolescent and adult men feel more masculine

themselves when they go monitoring male sexuality in their communities. They often go on the homophobic rampage to justify their masculinity in the community.

Connell traces heterosexuality in boys to the conventional boy-girl relationship, which is encouraged by parents and peers in the teenage years. The rites of losing their virginity are a big deal among boys between the age of 16 and 17. Ironically, this pressure to grow up as heterosexuals sometimes causes boys to opt for homosexuality as a form of breaking away from the norms of society. Just as the pressure to distinguish the gender of children among mothers, often lead to a rejection of sex differentiation and a divorce of boys from their mother.

Connell (2005: 146-147) observes that over-investment in the differences of the gender in nurturing often contribute to the post-oedipal separation of boys from their mothers. Thereafter, a bonding begins with their father. In the same way, compulsory heterosexuality often triggers a rebellion that makes the boys prefer other boys, rather than girls. Sometimes, initiation into sexual acts could be as early as age seven in schools, in the neighbourhood or in the playgrounds. Sometimes, initiation into sex from childhood could be with an older person. This sometimes results in emotional trauma for the child

2.1.6 Men as rational beings

Munroe (2001: 145) opined that “God made the woman primarily as an “emotional feeler”, while He made the man chiefly as a “logical thinker”. This view supports one of the popular notions of patriarchy that men are rational beings, while women are emotional beings. This reasoning legalises patriarchy and it is an integral part of it. Connell traces the source of this supposition to European philosophy. This is the same idea as the instrumental/expressive division allotted to men and women respectively in the sex role theory. Of the two sexes, the male is dominant and so is reason. Disciplines around reason such as science and technology have been deemed the domain of rationality, the domain of men. Connell sees it as an error to entirely associate men’s combative disposition with Hegemonic masculinity.

The link between masculinity and rationality has been identified as important point of change by Michael Winter and Ellen Robert. In this wise, since men are the captains of industry, the more capitalism progresses; the more rationality rules over everything including culture. In the new scheme of things, since men through rationality govern the technical processes that turn labour into output, men also legally govern women. Hence, the dominion of men over women is not only legalised by religion or by coercion. Consequently, boys are nurtured into assuming leading positions in economic affairs, thereby constructing their masculinity to rule over business affairs and culture. From the perspectives of Winter and Robert, reason dominates the sphere of professions globally and it is linked to the formation of gender in the society.

As rationality is traditionally used in structuring cultures of societal institutions and professional careers, the pressure surrounding the need to be promoted up the hierarchical ladder often show in the display of hegemonic masculinity's principles of authority and domination. Men that believe in egalitarian of the sexes, often find jobs structured around rationality and hierarchy difficult. Intelligence is a key factor for promotion and success in a society that is structured around rationality. Occupations such as the armed forces and careers that are technical or in engineering or use of technologies are implicated. Matters of equal job opportunity for women ruptured the hegemonic unity among heterosexual men in workplaces. Women now work in places that were formerly exclusive preserve of heterosexual men.

2.1.7 The role of the male across contemporary societies

Late nineteenth-century records the first notable attempt at studying masculinity based on the notion of a male sex role. This dates back to the debates on sex difference and a period when women were repressed via the belief that they were mentally different and inferior to men. Women were left out of University education, because their mind was believed to be too delicate for the stress of academic work. University education in women was believed to be bad for the mental wellbeing of women as wives and mothers (Connell, 2005: p.21). However, research spanning over a hundred years has proven that there are little or less differences in the mental abilities of men and women. This is not commensurate to, nor

justifies the situation of unequal incomes, unequal duties in child care and availability of social power to women.

The concept of 'social role' in gender developed in the mid-century, eventually evolved into the more popular jargon of 'sex role'. The notion of sex role is quite popular despite its being newly coined. The application of the notion of role to gender, according to Connell can be in the sense that "the roles are seen as specific to definite situations" or that "being a man or a woman means enacting a *general* set of expectations which are attached to one's sex-the 'sex role'. The sex roles which are either male or female roles are believed to be products of social learning and not natural, but consequent of 'socialisation'. This is so in any culture. The sex roles are usually linked to sex differences and have been instrumental since the 1940s in the suppression and limitation of women. The notion of masculinity as internalised male sex role is dependent on agencies of socialisation such as family, school, and mass media among others. This notion permits social change, because it is subject to social procedures. In the 1950s, one of such possible social changes in masculinity was illustrated in "The new burdens of masculinity" a paper written by Hacker (1957) where men were expected not only to be tough but also dexterous in their interpersonal skills.

The notion of conflict within masculinity stemming from uncontrollable social anticipations, instead of suppression was even entertained under this role theory of the 1950s. According to Connell, the success of the internalised sex was seen in its contributions "to social stability, mental health and the performance of necessary social functions", until feminism upset it in the 1970s. Yet the notion of sex roles prospered with the bloom of literary feminism.

Nevertheless, female sex role was perceived as oppressive and role internalisation was seen as a ploy to suppress girls and women. Eventually, studies into sex role became politically lucrative. Roles could now be changed by affecting anticipated results in the classrooms, by lifting up new standards or models among others. It became a tool for ascertaining problems and proffering solutions that leads to reforms in the roles of gender in the society, from the United States to Australia, even by the United Nations. This gradual change socially and

internationally profited women much. Bit by bit, the outcry of women among the western intellectuals had an effect on the men. Eventually, in the United States the men's liberation movement came up in the mid-1970s. Men's awareness in other countries was raised by Authors like Warren Farrell and Jack Nichols that the male sex role, like the female sex role, was oppressive and ought to be transformed or jettisoned.

There was an outpouring of publications against the traditional sex role of the male gender and subsequently, the notion of 'men's studies' arose in tandem with that of 'women's studies'. Among these influential publications were chiefly the works of Farrell *The liberated man* (1974) and that of Nichols *Men's liberation* (1975). Attempts at modifying traditional male sex role or simply replacing them with modern male sex role were observed extensively in the works of the American psychologist Joseph Pleck. This greatly generated writings in the 70s that point men towards modern male sex role. By means of therapy, awareness groups, political debates, role allotment in the home or via self-help, men were encouraged to break away from the burdens of traditional male sex role and its pressures on men.

This great paradigm shift from the traditional to modern male sex role began with women's liberation and it therefore maintained its sympathy towards feminism at the onset. Roles are ascertained by societal anticipations and norms, while sex roles are defined by anticipations linked to the biological standing either as male or female (Connell, 2015: p.25). Men's oppression by the expectations of the male sex role was brought into consciousness (and is still being brought to awareness by feminists like Adichie, 2014). Oppression of black men and homosexual men was also associated with the hierarchy of power among men. Somewhere in this awareness the desire to silence feminism was born and the sympathy for feminism waned. Women were seen as culpable as men for the problems of the world. The oppression of men was also seen as equal to that of women by writers like Warren Farrell in his books *The Liberated Man* (1974) and *The Myth of Male Power* (1993), Herb Goldberg in *The Inner Male* (1988) and Robert Bly in *Iron John* (1990) among others who rose up to write in defence of men's masculinity. Hence, the denial of the existence of a hierarchical power structure or oppression that is not mutually exclusive between the sexes. With the

demands of traditional male sex role minimized, the modern man appears freer from the social role responsibilities and burdens thrust on him. The societal expectation of men to be 'sturdy oaks' all the time, were reviewed in these men liberation movements. The outcome of this review was the reawakening of men to their inner maleness, and the discarding of the 70s perception of masculinity as negative. The review helped in curbing the growing sense of emasculation felt by men in male-female relationships, since the feminist campaign of the 70s (Connell, 2005: p. 206-211). Men became not just instrumental according to the theory of Parsons and Robert (1956), but also expressive according to Hacker (1957). Understanding the male and female sex roles is essential to this masculinist investigation into the feminist works of Beyala. The author herself illustrates these sex roles in the lives of her characters, as means of exposing the subjugation and relegation of women. Sometimes she employs these illustrations to highlight a stereotyping in the definition and identity of women.

The restrictive pressure the role system puts on the self is tormenting and weighs down both the male and the female. For the men, obscene standards raised in sports performance, fatherhood and success among peers constitute an oppressive nuisance to the Freedom of men. It would be in tandem to say that as men were looking for ventilations and leaving the chocked role system and its high demands, they provided openings for women. Women rose to the occasion of stepping into the traditional male sex role they were erstwhile excluded from. Unlike the silent, stoic and emotionless men, the newly improved men could communicate their feelings, hurts and fears to the society without a feeling of shame, disgust or inferiority. Men could now be open about their frustrations and pressures with the male sex roles. They could now be in touch with their repressed feminine side without self or societal condemnations. Men discovered that they could be this way and still be regarded as masculine by society.

Women on the other hand are quickly filling positions of power, authority and leadership that 'liberated men' leave vacant. Careers that were otherwise synonymous to male occupation now witness the advent of enfranchised women. Years of oppression have set a hunger in women that threatens to overthrow male dominance at work and at home. The

rise of the 'two-pay-cheque' family puts many women in the driver's seat of the home. Many women became breadwinners in the face of the healthy competition and a more tolerant society of the 70s. Amidst all these, feminism and the enterprise of women against male domination and oppression prospered freely.

The image of the man as one that performs functions in the home, the image of the responsible, obligated and duty burdened husband and father, who serves the purpose assigned to him by society, which in turn ascertain his masculinity, is challenged by Joseph Pleck. In his 1981 re-examination of the male role in the book *The myth of masculinity*, Pleck emphasises the impact of these societal expectations in form of role on the personality of the man. His criticisms were mostly on the equation of norm to self. He asserted that conformity to sex role norms does not necessarily lead to psychological balance in men. Pleck concluded that sex role theory itself is a type of gender politics. From his perspective sex role based on societal norms impedes social transformation; rather he suggests that sex role determination for the sexes be flexible and dictated by the psychological composition of the individual, rather than by norms. He reasoned that since role norms are prone to change, individual roles should be determined by internal factors and not external ones. This, in Pleck's opinion, would make the sex roles more stable and in balance with the self.

In essence, if a man feels like cooking or doing the dishes, he should feel no restriction within or without in performing these chores and if a woman likewise feels like taking her son on a fishing trip, she should feel no restriction without or within in performing such activity. They both should be free to perform activities or functions that are otherwise termed unsuitable for their sex. Connell sees the sex role approach to masculinity as inadequate, reactive in nature, non-generative of the politics of masculinity and altogether gentle approach to the science of masculinity.

2.1.8 Masculine protest

Alfred Adler was a nonconformist socialist doctor, who used to partner with Sigmund Freud. They parted ways in 1911 and since then he had published papers emanating from his theory of masculinity. He posits that the feminine aspect of gender is undervalued

culturally and is also linked to frailty. He argues that masculinity is formed as a result of compromise with femininity; thereby there is a constant stress in the formed gender identity. He sees aggression and continual struggle to conquer as over-compensation of the masculine side in men; this he called 'masculine protest'. Primarily the masculine protest is inherent in the psychology of women, due to their social subordination. Women become excessively assertive and sometimes aggressive. In men, this phenomenon could become a real societal threat (Connell, 2005: p. 10-17)

Sometimes youths chose their gender as a form of protest by becoming over-masculine in their personality and exhibiting unruly and anti-social behaviours such as smoking, brawling and defiance of institutional authority. On the other hand, boys' resistance to the conventions and authority of state, community and household, could be in form of engaging in activities that are entirely unmanly. They could alter their appearance to become feminine or choose vocations that are regarded as feminine (e.g. nursing). So for Connell "...the construction of masculinity occurs through relationships that are far from monolithic" (Connell, 2005: p. 147).

Connell (2005) identifies the yearning in the adolescents for a father. Several wish they have a father to tell them what is right or wrong and to correct them sternly when they go wrong. Also he identifies the willingness in several of them to stay at home and care for the babies, while their wives go to work and win the bread. As long as their wives get better salaried employment, the men were willing to stay at home and nurse the children. Connell sees this as a negation of Hegemonic Masculinity. He discovers this reality in his studies of under unemployed or unemployed youths (Connell, 2005: p. 109-112).

Adler dubbed this display of masculinity (via violence, recklessness, homophobic aggression and gang membership) as the 'masculine protest'. He sees it as a response to the feeling of powerlessness from childhood, an assertion of the gendered position of power and a tension filled overstatement of masculine bonding. Protest masculinity goes beyond the ritual of the common place male role. It is in complementarity with regard and consideration for women, equality among the genders, love of kids and participation in

domestic activities that are otherwise seen as feminine (e.g. childcare). Yet, the stereotyped conventional masculine traits are found with the same men (Connell, 2005: p. 16, 111-118).

Connell (2005) noticed that most adolescents are not close to their fathers and are often not in communication with them. They are rather closer to their mother, since their fathers are mostly drunks, lay-about or unemployed. Even those with jobs are often negligent and irresponsible for their families and actions (Connell, 2005: p.109-110). Connell explains Adler's protest masculinity as a marginalised masculinity that generally modifies features of Hegemonic Masculinity in the society and rebuild them under the circumstances of economic destitution. Youths usually claim a stylized masculinity that is different to others like the complicit masculinities that discourage stark show of authority, while approving the rights of the male gender over the female. He notes also that some of these adolescents try to reject the masculine identity and consciousness. Yet they benefit from being male in a hegemonic society. They do not commit to sustaining patriarchy and withdraw from skirmishes, emotionality and the stress of keeping friends. They practice 'Cross-dressing' and other customs of transvestites and transgender, but are unwilling to commit to the procedure of sex change (Connell, 2005: p. 112-116).

Many of the youths used in Connell's study have formed their gender under dispossession due to class, without cultural or economic resources. This has led to class oriented authority and the construction of collective masculinity (we against them kind of masculine mentality), that is contrary to the mainstream and the state. Some in constructing the masculinity became homophobic and misogynist at the same time. Speaking about some of these young adults, Connell (2005: 115) declares that:

But though they want the benefits of male supremacy... do not care to pay the full price. They opt out of the physical confrontations, the emotional labour, and the maintenance of peer life. They look down with contempt on the naively masculine... People... we do the dirty work of sexual politics for them.

From the quotation, we can deduce that not all men are caught out for the violence and domination associated with the Hegemonic Masculinity. Some are in outright rejection of

these themes of masculinity, though they benefit from the collective subjugation of women by men in the society. These men even detest other men that are hegemonic prototypes, though they themselves are men. All these men believe in the propriety of patriarchy.

Complicit masculinities habitudes, being marginalised masculinity are unlikely to provoke opposition, nor create transformation due to their lack of commitment to patriarchal ideas. Connell also observes that protest masculinity is engendered in a powerless class circumstance, in which lack of economic and cultural strength perpetually contradicts the authority otherwise furnished by Hegemonic Masculinity. Consequent to the life occasioned by this protest masculinity, youths examined by Connell largely hope to pass on their life style to their offspring (which they hope are boys). Their lifestyle of violence, aggression, drug and alcohol use, appear masculine and in order enough to them to bequeath their children. Protest masculinity thrives and functions on the collectivity that is constructed around a male solidarity among working-class men. When masculine authority is not build on money, the result is usually the notion of universal equality and hatred for women. Regardless the rough and rugged lives working-class youths live; there is a hint of support for domestic gender equality in their love and care for children and performance of domestic chores (Connell, 2005: p. 109-117).

Adler's 'masculine protest' explains how women who are rebellious against stereotyped conventional female sex roles excel and outmatch men in traditional male sex roles. Women-like-men ideologies are more prevalent in the contemporary society of unemployed or underemployed men. Women take positions of leadership and dominance that Hegemonic Masculinity has erstwhile reserved exclusively for men. The reigns of corporate affairs and state matters are now being held by women (Connell, 2005: p.114-117).

2.1.9 The actual state of masculinity

The deepest transformation occurring worldwide in the area of gender order is the exportation of the American and European brand to their colonies. Economic globalisation based on capitalist system joins global markets to local labour; the resultant effect is the induction of western patriarchal establishments at local level. Hence, day-to-day practice is

transformed notion and portrayal of gender inclusive. This is visible in the developing world's mass media. Illusions constantly clash with realities to produce changes in the gender order. Sexual identity and preference become debated issues in the social mainstream of the colonised world. Western aversion for homosexuality and Christian missionary work at a time annihilated certain gender configurations as far as China and Polynesian Hawaii.

Western impact on local gender system in the colonies has become a threat to the originality of their gender order. Western culture ignitions have become threatening tools to the survival of indigenous gender systems. European/American gender orders are increasingly becoming a worldwide gender order, and are simultaneously set up as established trade systems. Example is seen in the Eastern Stalinist Europe's collapse under Western influence. Nevertheless, the gender system is not the same world-wide. Though western states promised equality of the sexes in their gender ideologies, yet the practice was not regular. The gender order worldwide is different. From women factory workers in Malaysia and Mexico to commercial sex workers in Manila and Bangkok, women conditions are not the same. Equally for men, the rise of the male salary earners in late nineteenth-century Japan created an economically dominant male middle-class and a certain type of masculinity that is peculiar to a worldwide capitalist economy. It is worthy of note that western assertion of gender ideologies over indigenous gender order is not always successful. Neither does it go always without opposition.

Regions of the Islamic world have often resisted the western gender system. Political autonomy in these regions has often been marked by a corresponding reaffirmation of men's patriarchal power and rights over women. This is evident in religious practices that undermine the rights and freedom of women. The gender politics in these regions equally checks women's public participations. Yet, it is not a uniformed practice in the gender order in all Muslim nations (Connell, 2005: p. 199-200). Clusters of men in the capital cities of nations are predominantly those that profits from the advantages and privileges of the present system of the world. This is seen in the massive growth in men's wealth and authority over global and individual affairs. This has directly transformed the work and play

applications of the bodies of men. Equally, services rendered by men in certain industries maintain masculinity; such are services in the area of mass communication, sport and transportation.

The riches and scientific innovations of capital cities maintain masculinity in the armed forces and its culture of violence. These changes that help in maintaining male power and dominance, have also caused a dissonance in worldwide gender relations. This dissonance is mainly in form of feminists' contests and protests against men's domination in the gender order. These have directly undermined the legality of patriarchy and the configuration of masculinity. Feminist debates are ongoing in the developed and developing countries, on the resultant effects of colonialism and racism on the women folk. Feminist influenced reconstructions of masculinity have jeopardized the position and the power of Hegemonic Masculinity in the present gender order worldwide. Concurrent blows from feminist and homosexual movements have rocked the conventionality of heterosexuality. These challenges to masculinity and patriarchy have birthed opportunities for novelties in the gender relations that are unprecedented. Among these novelties is the acceptance and regularisation of homosexuality as a substitute form of masculinity in the gender system. Heterosexuality no longer dominates exclusively.

Thought process and creative thinking on secularity and gender are no longer the sole preserve of masculinity. Feminist thoughts and inspirations are gradually influencing both the performing and the creative arts. Visionary and futuristic possibilities of these thoughts are evident in contemporary media productions. Unfortunately, the cluster of men in the capital cities of the wealthy countries, are unwilling to relinquish power by approving egalitarian socio-political and economic ideals. Therefore, they maintain the existing state of affairs. This brings the male gender and the issue of masculinity into question, thereby igniting the contemporary rise in the concerns of masculinity.

Traditionally, history has often been written from the perspective of men (Connell, 2005: p.27-28). After pointing this out, feminists called for the rewriting of history from women's perspective, and this should be inclusive of the history of women's experiences as

documented in the 70s. Towards the end of the 1970s, the writing of 'men's history' in face-off with that of the women also commenced, aside the existing general one. The new men's history was being written to cater for the lacuna in the existing general history; which is the notion of masculinity. This covered a wide and unspecific scope of cultural norms ascribed to manhood. This new men's history in order to account for the place of masculinity across generations, employed the sex role approach. The norms for manhood vary from one institution to another. In the educational environment, surveys such as that of Christine Heward in *Making a Man of Him*, carried out on boys in an English private school, uses the institution's manner of discipline, dressing, academic performance and team games to form decent masculinities in collaboration with the gender and class techniques from individual families of the boys.

Michael Grossberg's research into the practice of law in the nineteenth-century United States revealed how the confines of the occupation were monitored against women. The structure within the profession maintained a specific type of masculinity, until the admission of women into the law practice of the United States. The labour market follows likewise; masculinity is associated with being a breadwinner. The link between masculinity and being a breadwinner was made in the mid nineteenth-century in Britain. The attempt to generally balance social forces gave birth to the idea of the 'Breadwinner's wage' (Connell, 2015: p. 28-29). Studies like those of Secombe (1986) make it evident that masculinity's definitions are profoundly ensnared in the annals of institutions and of economic fabric. Masculinity as a notion exist outside personal ideology or identity, it involves a global and established social relations. At this juncture, 'the family' comes into play and the marriage institution with its constituent child-nurturing, employment, sexual relations and the apportionment of duties in the home provides a cocktail of dynamic situations that in turn acts upon masculinity, even femininity. Tensions are consequent of the changing pressures from the aforementioned constituents of marriage. Another aspect of the history of masculinity hangs on the quest of the global expansion of European power.

The European power adopted a system in colonies that favoured male work force via agrarian settlements that link masculinity to marriage and a more stable social order. Since

men earn the wages, their families look up to them for the performance of the role that society sees as masculine. The eventual mobilisation of the male natives into the British imperial armies and the pomp and pageantry surrounding the ceremonies of departure and arrival testified to a violent masculinity built around conflicts and wars. This is similar to the conscription of African men into the Armée d’Afrique or French Foreign Legion in francophone Africa, during World War I and II. The image of the man as the mythological warrior; therefore masculine is evident in this practice, Phillips (1987) in his study of colonial and twentieth century New Zealand give clean illustrations of these claims.

Subsequently Sport was introduced as a form of balance between violent masculinity and social control. Football and its rituals were a form of historical masculinity test. Observing on the forces acting on the construction of masculinities, Connell (2015:30) asserts that “The gender pattern was not a mechanical effect of these forces; it was nurtured as a strategic response to a given situation: in this case, these particular types of masculinity were elicited via political struggles in institutions, agencies, governments and social strivings.”

The cultural diversities in the colonised cultures also reflect their different meanings of masculinity and femininity. Ethnographic studies have shown that these cultures are great repositories of information about gender, otherwise inaccessible to the theories of feminism, psychoanalysis and sex role. Works such as Margaret Mead’s *Sex and temperament in three primitive societies* testified to the research on the anthropology of gender. The 1970s second-wave feminism sponsored new research in this domain. Women attempted to chronicle women’s lives and men also saw the need for research on masculinity afterwards. Works such as *The poetics of manhood* by Michael Herzfeld (1985) paints the cultural picture of manhood. Also Latin America’s notion of masculinity in the ‘machismo’ debate contributes to the ideology on the whole, masculinity, cross-culturally appears to emphasise supremacy over women, contest between men, exhibition of violence, rapacious sexuality and inequality.

Instances of research into masculinity and the attainment of manhood have depicted homosexuality practice by whole societies such as those of Papua New Guinea and other Melanesian societies. The research of Herdt (1981) in *Guardians of the Flutes* depicts masculinity as warfare and aggression in these societies. Gilmore (1990) also in his work *Manhood in the making* presents anthropological findings that masculinity in various cultures is about the attainment of manhood, which evidently is difficult to attain. To him it takes tremendous efforts in the masculine domain, which is often characterized by rites of passage similar to those of Africans, as seen in Alex Haley's *Roots* (1974). In conclusion, the whole notion of manhood is to encourage industry in men. This is not to say that there are no non-violent and submissive masculinity. There are in Tahiti and Malaysia. The search for a common denomination that is stable, uniform and constant in the masculinity across these cultures have proven impossible. For every standard of manhood in one culture, there is sure to be a converse elsewhere. Regardless the theoretical framework of the research, the conclusion is that masculinity is not uniform; neither are the rites of entry into manhood.

Sociology in more recent times witnesses new researches into masculinity that breaks from the sex role structure. Studies have shown the need for different theoretical diction from the tradition. these studies borders on salient subject matter – such as how masculinity is formed in day-to-day activities, the role of economic and institutional networks, the importance of dissimilarities amidst masculinities and the converse and changing character of gender. One of the important subject matter in recent sociological research on gender is that gender is formed by interaction, and not before the time, social interaction. Though such researches feature common understandings about masculinity, yet they go further to ascertain how these common understandings come about. As an example, the formation of masculinity in sport is institutionalised. As boys engage in competitive sport, they also enter into masculinity via a stratified competitive order (Connell, 2005, Messner 1992, Klein, 1993).

The same process is observed commonly in workplaces, financial situation and hierarchical structure feature profoundly in the construction of masculinity. In this wise, the more tasking the arduous labour on the physique, the more manly the man feels. This is a way of displaying masculinity according to Donaldson (1991) in *Time of Our Lives*. This hard

physical work for wages is due to financial difficulties and submission to a dominant authority. The action of class in the construction of masculinities has created the difference in the formation of masculinity in working class men. The formation of masculinity in the labourer on the factory floor is quite different from the making of masculinity in his boss in the plush office above him (Collinson, Knights and Collinson, 1990).

The formation of masculinities of particular class has been in Europe and in the United States since the 70s. Authors such as the Collinsons in their work *Managing to Discriminate*, Tolson (1977) in *The limits of masculinity* and Messerschmidt (1993) in *Masculinities and crime* witness the use of class in the formation of masculinities across the divide. Ethnic specific construction of masculinity among blacks also falls under this category. In his work *Black masculinity*, Staples (1982) traces links between racism and colonialism in order to expose the social circumstances of the black man.

Difference in class and race scenarios is not the only notable example of difference in masculinities. Institutional milieu also assists in the formation of different masculinities. In England for instance, contradistinctive masculinity evolve among boys of working class secondary schools. Willis (1977) in his book *Learning to Labour* studied these boys and divided them into two categories; The 'Lads' and the 'Ear' oles'. The lads expressed negative attitudes to school work. They were racist and sexist in their attitudes. In order to fit into the adult world, they smoked and drank and ended up doing manual work on the factory floor. The Ear'oles' were conformists to school expectations and were the opposite of the lads. They valued mental work and ended up in the air-conditioned office above the lads. Two different types of masculinity are developed among the boys. Oppositional masculinity is formed among the boys despite the same institutional setting provided. Other school studies such as those in Australia and elsewhere confirmed Willis' observations in the development of different masculinities among boys in school settings. These aforementioned observations on different masculinities, psychoanalytic research on characters and notions of emancipation for homosexuals brought about the ideology of Hegemonic Masculinity.

Another important step in the understanding of masculinity is to know the links between the various types of masculinity. It is important to know how they connect in alliance, dominance and subordination to one another. These relations among the masculinities are determined by acts of exclusion, inclusion, intimidation and exploitation, among other acts that construct the relationships between these various types of masculinities. The political influence on masculinity is responsible for the presence of Hegemonic Masculinity in the competitive sport of schools. Boys that excel in sport are regarded as masculine, which puts pressure on boys that abhor sporting activities. In the efforts of evolving a common theory of masculinity despite its varieties and differences, social construction of masculinities is generally accepted by researchers as a relevant method procedure.

Politicking masculinity's formation and its dynamism is visible in the work of Cynthia Cockburn. She studies the attempts of collective construction of masculinity to review the working class structures to accept women. Patriarchal types of relations at work are done away with, such as the control by the elderly and the submission of the younger generations. In her work *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change*, Cockburn (1983) observes that the manhood rituals among the London print shops were being minimized in order to allow for women co-workers. This ideological revision of masculinity is converse to Jeff Hearn's work on social structure. In *The Gender of oppression*, he sketches the patriarchal structure as a reflection of the Marxist breakdown of men as appropriating and exploiting of women's labour and human value. Victor Seidler's approach to the formation of masculinity emphasises emotional control and sexuality rejection as evident in the construction of masculinity.

Seidler tries to establish the place of masculinity in large-scale social models and procedures. Aside the understanding of masculinity from the perspectives of clinicians and academics, there exist other ways of understanding masculinities. The sociological and political perspectives also exist. Knowledge about masculinity is also contained in information gathered from programmes, arguments and debates from social striving on gender matters. Understanding of masculinity from the political perspective involve a more active and proactive method. Political knowledge about masculinity does not only concern

itself with the problems and solutions, it borders on the consequences also. Information and understanding about masculinity has come out of perpetual arguments of the Men's Liberation Movement, conservative parties and fundamental churches.

The most compelling analyses of masculinity come from two opposing movements; Gay Liberation and Women's Liberation. The word 'homophobia' was formed in the 70s to express the denial and ill-treatment of gay men by heterosexual men. This led to their agitations for equal and civil rights, security and societal acceptance (Connell, 2005: p. 39). Homophobia is usually linked to the dominant types of masculinity. Interestingly, gay writers such as Mario Mieli in his work *Homosexuality and Liberation* expose a strange allure of heterosexual men with homosexuality. Gay men have often seen homophobia in heterosexual men as hidden cravings for homosexuality that could be satisfied given the right time and place. This is evident in the prevalence of homosexuality in all-male institutions like the army and prisons. There is a hostility of 'straight men' against gay men that extends beyond behaviour. There are social anti-gay machinations that deprive gays of certain jobs, defame them in media, incarcerate and sometimes murder them. Gay movements rally to fight these oppressive acts against their existence. Consequently, masculinity is defined by how much distance there is between men and homosexuality. Gay liberation in this situation, identified with the fight against women's oppression.

Sex-roles exist in homosexual relationships. The effeminate or feminine one is the femme, while the masculine one is the butch. This wise, the borderline between heterosexual and gay men is indistinct. Ironically, gay men also witness to homosexual cravings among poster boys for masculinity in sport, correctional centres and in the army. This knowledge has made gay men and gay movements bolder in their approach to the fight for civil rights. Nowadays, they crash gender programmes and display affection publicly among themselves. Queer Nation, a contemporary gay movement is a champion of such bold assaults on western societies. Though the similarity of oppression is shared among gay men, feminist and black power movement of the United States, yet Feminists emphasise their struggle more against the organisational dominance of men over women. This gender domination was widely called patriarchy in the 70s. Heterosexual men seems more like

sovereign Lords to feminists, rather than scapegoats of feminist emancipation schemes. The principal grouse of feminists against the structural status of men according to Connell are listed as;

1. Men's control of government, corporations and media.
2. Men's better jobs, incomes and command of wealth.
3. Men's control of the means of violence
4. Men's control of the entrenched ideologies that pushed women into the home and dismissed their claims for equality.

The mentioned are in summary the areas of the feminist disagreement with the order of things; this order of things termed patriarchy. Patriarchy has been a closer home experience for women since the time of Early Women's Liberation writing. There is an individual and personal touch to patriarchy for women which have its root in the home. The home has often been fingered as the station of women's victimisation. Feminist theorists and activities have often cited women's gratuitous work in the home and child care arrangement as unjust to the woman. In this wise, activist individuals and groups such as Selma James and the Power of Women Collective solicited for Wages for Housework done by women. Numerous feminists bargain with men on possible methods of sharing duties and caring for children in the home. Later, there was a change in the attention feminists gave to men as beneficiaries of women's gratuitous labour in the home, to that of men's belligerence towards women. Other fights of western feminism targeted at men include campaigns against domestic violence, rape, and pornography. There was a general belief among feminist movements from the 80s that men were generally sexually violent and perverse. There are distinct and converse opinions among feminists on the possible transformation of straight men. Feminists ponder on compromising with men on better relationships with women, albeit divorce or force may be necessary to transform misogynist men. The financial benefit of being the dominant gender makes men appear apathetic towards the amelioration of women's lot. In her work *The Hearts of Men*, Ehrenreich (1983) depicts this reluctance for reformation as the escape of men from responsibility, which has plagued the United States since the 40s. Feminists perceived Men's Liberation as men's ploy to exploit feminism, while holding on to their benefits as male (Connell, 2005: p. 40-41).

This situation in Connell's own words is a 'modernisation of patriarchy', and not an assault on patriarchy. The trending personalities of men as the 'new father', the 'new sensitive man' and various personalities of men with more benign and tender masculinity are doubtful to feminists. This 'new man' image is suspect to feminists. Nevertheless, numerous other feminists accept this newness in men as positive indications of improvement among men and women relations. These developments have also been materials for feminist writers such as Phyllis Chesler and Lynne Segal, who wrote *About Men* and *Slow Motion* respectively. Chesler looked at the emotional connections between men and women, while Segal looked at the political advantages of conflicts among men to feminism. She concluded that progress in the amelioration of women's lot, is dependent on the psychology of men and their situational financial goals. This in turn determines men's availability for permanent parenting of youngsters. At this juncture, feminists and sociologists perceived masculinity as not just political, but also institutional.

The political dimension of masculinity reflects on the discrimination of women in endeavours that are socially tagged masculine. Its institutionalisation reflects on the cult-like exclusion of women from power and positions of Authority. In summary, both gay and feminist theories agree that conventional masculinity is basically connected to power, structured for male supremacy and opposes any transformation that threatens men's sovereignty. In its bare state, masculinity can be tantamount to the manifestation of authority. However, the anti-feminist opposition of the men's movement contests this claim by feminists. Masculinity is often treated as the enemy by feminists in gender politics. Whereas, the structure of gender as an institution itself creates tensions and pressures that often brings masculinity into the negative light. As much as masculinity is portrayed by some in positivist terms, yet the reality of homophobia for gay men and women's suffering from misogynists are experiences that could not be swept under the carpet. Feminists too in their debates points out the place of cravings and intentions in the creation of masculinity. For feminists, men want and cause masculinity to be constructed, albeit against the peace of mind of women. Personality and social relations are essential aspects of masculinity that interacts together in matters surrounding masculinity. There is evidently no generalisation about any form of masculinity or its construction in societies. The male anatomy and

physiology is the only denominator that cuts across the notion of masculinity, and that is unchanging despite cultural difference in societies.

Men's bodies remain the same physically, regardless in what culture or society they are found. As much as this is logical, it is yet a controversial science of men. Because how do we explain the psychoanalysis of femininity in men and masculinity in women, if every action of every man is instant masculinity materials. Biological make ups are not enough to interpret the sociological processes involved in the construction of masculinity. Anatomy and physiology of male bodies are not enough to understand or define masculinity. Connell (2005:43) posits that "Masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition". In spite of the dynamic forms that delimit masculinity from femininity in various societies and regardless of historical times, yet both concepts are interactions of both gender that produces reliable information and understanding for scientific knowledge. In Connell's definition "masculinities are configurations of practice structured by gender relations. They are inherently historical; and their making and remaking is a political process affecting the balance of interests in society and the direction of social change". Our knowledge of masculinity is innately political inequality. This research work would treat also the politicizing of gender in the favour or disfavour of the sexes in the works of Calixthe Beyala.

2.2. Feminism and the literary trajectory of African women writers

The word feminism is a Latin derivation from 'Femina'. Charles Fourier was the first to use the word in 1837 (Yekini, 2008: p. 1). Tyson (1999) in Yekini (2008:1) explains that "Feminist critique examines the ways that literature and other cultural productions reinforce or undermine the psychological oppression of women at the economic political and social levels." (Translation mine). In principles, feminism is an advocacy for the position of women in the society, during the 60s and towards the end of the 19th century. It preaches as doctrine the equality of the sexes, and condemns the domination and oppression of women. Historically, feminism can be traced back to earlier literary works such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792. Also, works such as Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* in 1869, Olive Shreiner's *Women and Labour* in 1911 and

Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* in 1929, all these are landmarks for the foundation of the feminist ideology (Yekini, 2008: p.1).

From these periods to contemporary times, feminist literary occupation has grown into well-grounded movements and theories. These are responsible for the reshaping of patriarchal norms in societies, and correcting biases that lead to the subjugation of women world over. In general, feminist literary criticism educates the public that deep notions of feminism, other than the general idea, exist. Neophytes into the principles of feminism believes that one cannot be feminist if one loves men, do the laundry, raise children in a home or wear brassiere. This wise, the general ideas about feminism are negative ones most times, so most women from this perspective see themselves as anti-feminists (Yekini, 2008: p. 6). This misconception of a large part of the populace leads to the question of what feminism really is. Ogunrotimi (2014:4) states four definitions of feminism, which attempt to catch the essentials of feminism despite the unwieldy nature of its essence across time and space. He states the definition of French (185:442) as "A serious, coherent and universal philosophy that offers an alternative to patriarchal thinking and structures". He quoted Blackburn (2005:132) as defining feminism to be "The approach to social life, philosophy and ethics that commits itself to correcting biases leading to the subordination of women or the disparagement of women's particular experience and of the voices women bring to discussion". Ogunrotimi stated the definition of Keohame et al (1982:57) as "Attempts to win for women full rights and powers both in the context of class and in the dominant political system". Finally, he quoted Boxer (1982:228) as defining feminism to be 'A vision of a world free not only from sexism, but also from racism, class-bias, ageism, heterosexual bias from all the ideologies and institutions that have consciously or unconsciously oppressed some for the advantage of others.'

In synthesis, the four definitions essentially see feminism as an endeavour to halt patriarchal inequalities and injustices against women, via women's empowerment and emancipation from all subjugation or oppressive actions of men. The definitions see patriarchal structures (such as masculinity) as instrumental to perpetrating men in power, while denying women their rights. In the definitions, feminism seeks to topple all ideologies and institutions that

superimpose men over women, to the detriment of women's wellbeing. One of the normative modes of institutionalising patriarchy is through social roles, that eventually transform into gender roles, and subsequently traditional sex roles.

Traditional sex roles are problematic stereotypes that plague male-female relationships. The patriarchal system guides the distribution of sex roles in the society. This has led to the perception of men as rational, strong, protective and decisive, while women are seen as emotional, weak, nurturing and docile. These roles lend to the inequalities between the sexes, and restrict women from favourable positions and construction of strong personalities in the society. These sex roles destine women to failure, while the men are nurtured as Lords of their destinies and their societies. The patriarchal principles that support sex roles are strict and unyielding. Women who challenge or undermine these principles are seen as bad, while those that submit to the principles are seen as good. Women are perceived solely in relation to patriarchal rules. Feminism stands to correct the erroneous and oppressive notions of patriarchy that oppress and subjugate women (Yekini, 2008: p. 12). The journey of women's literary rise, successful confrontations and victories against patriarchal inequalities; was arduous and slow. The following subheadings examine this journey towards self-discovery and emancipation from patriarchal holds.

2.2.1 The Great Dearth: Women writing nothing

As with masculinity, the theorisation of feminism also involves debates as to what or what does not constitute valid knowledge about the meaning, history and the politics of feminism. Writings about feminism have been influential over disciplines such as history, science, and literature among others. Feminist studies over decades have influenced the intelligentsia and has challenged written history. Feminist criticism has shaped thoughts about culture, language, morality and knowledge in general. As argued by the biologists on masculine traits and masculinity, also there are those who believe in the essentialism of feminism such that women are innately feminine, regardless of their designation whether biological or philosophical. As opposed to biologism, culturalists believe feminism to be defined by cultural assignations to women. Feminist struggles though seemingly impactful on the state, yet are being stifled in economic, political and academic institutions. Feminists are resistant

to these stifling via numerous writings and conferences on matters, conditions and framework of the feminist discourse (De Lauretis, 1986). Coming out of the great silence, women have expressed much in writing. According to De Lauretis (1986) “We have written books about our writing and the suppression of our writing; we have written about silence and madness, marginality and invisibility, negativity and difference. But we have also written of femininity and feminine writing, of identities, differences and commonalities...”

On this note, Sylvester Mutunda (2009) in his dissertation reviewed literature on the rise of women’s writing, especially in Francophone-Africa. He declared African Francophone women writers as virtually absent in the literary world, this he did via the affirmation of Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Arlette Chemain-Degrange. Mutunda traces the birth of African Francophone women writing to as far as 1958 and the literary effusion to 1970s. He traced the reason for the lateness of African women writers to the colonial era, when girls were excluded from schooling, and were groomed mostly as wives and mothers. As a result, African women were deprived the educational development needed to rival the men intellectually. Maryse Condé (1979) affirmed this in Mutunda (2009:45). “Comme dans un premier temps, [L’] école [européenne] était réservée aux garçons, elle a introduit plus qu’un fosse entre “lettrés” et “illettrées,” une division radicale entre les deux sexes” [Because, from the beginning, the [European] school was reserved for boys, it introduced more than a gap between literate men and illiterate women—a radical division between the sexes] (Mutunda’s translation).

Not only were the boys educationally privileged over the girls by the colonial masters, traditions and customs equally prevented the girls from going to school, even when the opportunity eventually presented itself. Again, girls were saddled with domestic duties, while boys were left to pursue western education. Social role assignation also contributes to the lack of education of the girl child. Society assigns the boys the role of breadwinners and models them after this responsibility, while the girls are assigned the role of wives-caretakers of the family and were groomed accordingly into this position. Consequently, girls’ social, economic, political and educational developments were hampered for many years. Mutunda pinpointed also unavailability of jobs for women and fear of women’s

rebellion against patriarchy as other reasons why the girl-child was deprived education in the colonial period.

Adebayo (2015: 37-39) summarises the impediments that led to women's late literary development in Africa as "Unequal access to education between men and women, excessive domestic responsibility, societal expectation, as well as the lukewarm attitude of publishing houses to female-authored texts..." She sees women's surmounting of patriarchal restrictions and limitations as "Tearing the veil of invisibility" that enshrouds their lives and renders them unable to speak out or write. Via her literary analysis of the works of several women writers, Adebayo traces the lives of women as domestic slaves and oppressed victims of unsuccessful marriages across Africa and in Diaspora. Recognising how women have suffered from their silence, loss of identity and vision, Adebayo exhorts women to break out of the patriarchal strongholds that hold them captive. Thiam (1986) also encourages African women to break the silence by narrating their negative patriarchal experiences and avoiding men doing this for them.

2.2.2 The inadequate portrayals: men writing women

Male writers writing about women appear to be in two groups: those that contemplate women's condition and indict patriarchy and those that treat women as the 'other' or 'second sex' and generally vindicate patriarchy. While the former sees the woman as subject and sympathises with the estate of the woman, who by virtue of her unfortunate socio-economic and political position across history suffers. The latter objectifies her person which relegated by tradition and culture, disappear into patriarchy-induced oblivion. As much as one would see the former group as benign and collaborating with women, yet subsequently, it was regarded by women as inadequate in their search of a female voice. Male writers who lend their voice and pen to the feminist cause of women's emancipation and empowerment are generally seen by hegemonic men as feminist and complicit. These male writers are seen as exemplars of Complicit Masculinity, as will be seen later in the next chapter of this research. Among such male authors that write about women are popularly Sembène Ousmane, Ayi Kwei Armah and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. These authors have contributed narratives towards awareness creation about the subjugation and victimisation of women in Africa. Popularly

among their works, to mention a few, are *Les bouts de bois de Dieu* [translated as *God's Bits of Wood*], *Two Thousand Seasons* and *Weep Not Child* respectively.

Mutunda presents the image of African womanhood as suggested in nationalist pre-independence African literature as that of motherhood and as a paragon of beauty. He found an example of this in Leopold Sedar Senghor's "Black Woman" where the African woman is depicted in natural terms as the metaphorical mother of Africa. Her pre-colonial freshness and identity is hinted at in the poem. He found another illustration in Camara Laye's poem "To My mother", found in his novel *The African child*. Laye's reference to nurture as a principal attribute of the African motherhood captures the traditional importance of the African woman. Mutunda links the author's nostalgia for home to the positive values that are representative of African womanhood "Patience, resignation and self-denial", are according to Mutunda key qualities of the African woman. But, for certain feminist critics and women writers, the over-bloated image of the African woman as 'Mother Africa' is far flung from African women's reality. Mutunda cites D'Almeida, Stratton and Herzberger-Fofana as some of these critics. African women writers reject this over-romanticised leitmotif of the African motherhood of the male writers and prefer rather a much more realistic and correct portrayal of African women and their encounters in African male-dominated society (Mutunda, 2009: p. 46-51).

Mutunda traces the portrayal of African womanhood to the novels of male authors. Womanhood for Laye as earlier mentioned in his poem is maternal, for Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala* it is bride price and its surrounding issues of patriarchal domination and oppression of the subjugated woman. African male writers as Mutunda observed, portrayed women in their traditional sex roles and only in relation to men. Women are hardly main characters, but in secondary roles that relegate them to the background of the narratives. Nevertheless, exception is seen in the works of Sembène Ousmane, Ahmadou Kourouma, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Ayi Kwei Armah.

For Mutunda, Sembènièniè women are radical and young like Penda in *Les bouts de bois de Dieu* [*God's Bits of Woods*] (1962) who led the women's struggle all the way to Dakar

before getting shot. The same qualities are seen in Rama in *Xala* (1976). He qualifies Rama as ‘emancipated and revolutionary, defies custom and tradition’. She is frank in her rejection of polygamy, being educated and enlightened about women’s oppression by patriarchy. Another female character in Sembène’s *L’Harmattan* is Tioumbé. She rebels against social traditions as obtained in the family system. Like Alkali’s M’ama who discards the marriage institution and forsakes her family, Tioumbé also does not see the importance of the family life. In recent times, perhaps as a sign of emancipation from ‘conjugal bondage’ and patriarchal limitations, there is a growing trend of women rejecting matrimony for a career life.

Ogamba (2013:130) describes Sembène’s women as those that goad their men on, when they think of giving up the struggle. In *Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu*, the women were portrayed as supportive of their husbands in the strike action against the French government. The women had become the breadwinners in the home following the hardship in the society. Seeing that their husbands were about giving up in their protest against this hardship, the women themselves joined the strike and eventually led it to the capital city. They were portrayed as not only brave but also as team players at home and in the community. There is a complementarist representation of women in the novel that suggests a womanist approach by the author. Ogamba identifies a successful attempt at portraying the female characters as not only assertive, but also confident and influential agents of transformation in the society. Ogamba puts it this way “The women who are usually docile, and only restricted to their home chores as expected by the culture and patriarchal laws, take up leadership in the home and eventually lead the strike, thus the reversal of roles in the text.” (Ogamba, 2013: p. 130).

Old women, usually grandmothers are often portrayed as the voice of traditions and the voice of patriarchy. These women, like their counterpart old men such as Fama in Kourouma’s *Les Soleils des Indépendances* [*The Suns of Independence*] (1981) live in the past. Trapped in the past, they are unable to adapt to the changes in their societies. Sembène uses Old Niakoro as this voice of patriarchal reasoning and education. She would want the young women to be submissive to the old ways and not meddle with the affairs of men. She

does not see the need for women to join in the planning of the strike talk less embark on one. For Old Niakoro, a woman's place is in the confines of the home. This is seen also in Soumana's mother, grandmother and all village women (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 33). The voice of this category of women is inimical to the emancipation of women globally. For these old women, a woman belongs to the kitchen, the bedroom and other rooms in the household.

This illustration is evidence of Sembène's way of depicting gender discrimination. Ramatoulaye is a female character with masculine traits. She is a strong and fearless warrior who defeats policemen sent to arrest her. She is audacious enough to slap a male character she considers a traitor to their cause. She walks out on the police chief and refuses to apologise for her misdemeanours, choosing rather to be roasted over a slow fire and be buried alive, than to apologise. Sembène's reversal of the gender roles as assigned by society is seen in the women stepping into the position of breadwinner and leaders of strike action. This change in the times was evident in both sexes. The protesting women were not afraid to confront the French armed forces. In this Sembène opposes the stereotype image of the woman as subservient, passive, weak, supportive accompaniments of men. In *Les Bouts de Bois de Dieu*, women's economic dependence on the men ceased, and power came with their financial independence. Sembène's socialist tendency is seen in these women's inclusion in the labour and production process in the society as opposed to the colonial capitalist exploitation.

Usually, women were not included in the decision making process and leadership of patriarchal societies. Sembène's role reversal is an outright subversion of societal conventions of the colonial society of Senegal in the 1940s. By extension, the author prescribes a solution to similar ailing patriarchal African societies, via his wilful and courageous female characters such as Ramatoulaye. Sembène's art is a direct enactment of feminist objectives and ideals. The rehabilitation of Penda from a local prostitute to a women's leader whose resolve largely contributes to the strike's success, is Sembène's way of telling the society never to look down on any woman, regardless her personality or estate. Penda's personality change is remarkable and insightful into the author's feminist

intentions. Sembène campaigns for a greater destiny for the African woman via the voices of his young, radical and intelligent female characters.

Kourouma boasts of female protagonists similar in traits to those of Sembène. Salimata in *Les Soleils des indépendances* also attempts to transform her life by leaving the mediocrity of the village for the great expectations of the city. She left the shackles of patriarchy for the freedom in the city. This character has survived rape, an arranged marriage and widowhood. Despite family pressures, she resisted an attempt to marry her off to her dead husband's brother. She stayed faithful to the man of her choice after marriage, despite her husband's impotency. She abandons the marriage when her husband takes another wife and the home became burdensome (Mutunda, 2009: p. 52-60).

One of the accusations of feminists against patriarchy is the suppression and disregard for women's accomplishment and their labelling by Phallogocentric societies. In the words of Sadek (2014: 170):

It is quite obvious that African women have often been subjected to negative stereotypes and their contributions have been neglected or even omitted.

Ngugi's move from objectifying women to treating women as subjects in his writings has been seen as a classic literary move of a modern African male author. In his perception of the Kenyan society, Ngugi sees the same patriarchal conventions of other African societies that overshadow, misuse and maltreat the woman. In these societies, the male is seen as superior to the female. Ubrurhe (1999) describes this relationship between men and women as "male super ordination and female subordination"

Sadek submits that in his portrayals of women, several of Ngugi's novels were approached from the womanist perspective. This is indicative of a complementarist, male-accommodating and harmonious representations of the relationships between men and women. Unlike *Wizard of the Crow*, which Sadek specifically categorised as extreme feminism bordering on Western radical feminism. Adebayo (2015: 1) submits that feminist struggles for socio-political and economic equality in Europe and America "...from the days

of the suffragettes to the widely, unpopular bra-burning Women's Lib. of the 60s has not done much to endear feminism to the African society where it is often preferable to settle male-female problems in compromising terms". African women are devoted to the family system and are tolerant of their men. Nonetheless, they avoid being abused by men and take precautionary measures against this and any form of male bias; hence, the coming of the African feminism in order to protect this way of life.

In *Weep Not, Child*, Ngugi idolises motherhood and Education. In this work, he portrays women as leaders and saviours in certain situations. It is a story of polygamy, where women were objectified and humiliated. Ngotho loved women for their body types. He preferred the fat, fleshy, greasy and sweaty big women to the skinny, no-flesh women like Mr. Howland's wife, Memsahib. Ngotho married one of his wives out of pity for her, because in his thinking no man would have her. With this patriarchal mentality, Ngotho did not only rationalise his polygamy, he also ridicules his second wife Nyokabi, who is the caring pacifist in the home. She focuses on her children's education and treats the genders equally. Njeri is the first wife. She is portrayed as courageous and bright (Sadek, 2014, Gradesaver, 2017). Regardless of his wives' submission to cultural conventions, Ngotho is still unpleasant towards them. They slave away to keep him happy, yet he does not respond to them. Wife-beating is customary in Ngotho's community, so he beats his wife sometimes. Ngugi's women are silent and excluded from serious dialogues such as those on politics that eventually impact on them.

Nicholls (2000) aptly traced the exclusion of women from political discuss as part of the reason for their exclusion in history: "This gender-political strategy situates women outside of history, denying them sites of articulation and occasions for political community". Sadek blames women for being complacent about their exclusion from what they regarded as 'men's talk', knowing little that it is also their exclusion from history. In the same vein women are sidetracked by their "women's talk", which evidently is not considered in decision-making of men. Women's counsel is ignored; hence women's belief that men would never pay attention to their warnings until it is too late. Ngotho declares his

unwillingness to receive instructions from women. Like Sefi Atta, Ngugi uses education as a source of women's empowerment and subsequent liberation from male subjection.

Ngugi's women respond favourably to the prospect of education and see it as an avenue of escape from oppression (Sadek, 2014: p. 6). In instructing their boy-child differently, Ngugi's women use education as a means of dealing a deathblow directly to the ideology and practice of patriarchy in the next generation. In *Weep Not, Child* the author represents women as cultivators and supporting pillars of morality of the society. They are agents of change and innovation in the manner of nurturing their children as enlightened and sociable beings. Knowledge as commonly said is light. Women give their children the enlightenment to survive patriarchy and any form of challenge they may face.

On this note of raising children differently, Adichie (2014) submits that:

We must raise our daughters differently. We must also raise our sons differently. We do a great disservice to boys in how we raise them. We stifle the humanity of boys. We define masculinity in a *very* narrow way. Masculinity is a hard, small cage, and we put boys inside this cage...But if we start raising children differently, then in fifty years, in a hundred years, boys will no longer have the pressure of proving their masculinity by material means.

Girls are raised in antithesis to boys. In the same text Adichie paints a disturbing picture of the patriarchal nurturing of the girl-child in the following description:

...we do a much greater disservice to girls, because we raise them to cater to the fragile egos of males. We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller. We say to girls: You can have ambition, but not too much. You should aim to be successful but not too successful, otherwise you will threaten the man. If you are the breadwinner in your relationship with a man, pretend that you are not, especially in public, otherwise you will emasculate him.

For Adichie; boys could be raised without the burden of having to prove their masculinities in ways that hampers their wholesomeness. Girls also could be raised in ways that makes society accept them as important and equal to the male child. She perceives that only through these types of nurturing can we create a new world that is void of gender restrictions

and patriarchal limitations. Only through these can there be happier and freer beings, regardless their sex. Chapter five of this research explores the prospect of raising children differently from the default patriarchal mode used across cultures and across history.

Men in Ngugi's world are contrary, dark and murderous, while women are full of radiance and promise (Sadek, 2014: p. 175). This representation of men is stereotypical of feminist writings, and this is a major problem in the portrayal of male exemplars of masculinity in the society at large. This is the same stereotype that Lange (2008) warned feminists about. The problem with male or female stereotype stories in the opinion of Adichie (2009) is that "The single story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story" (Lee, 2011). Hence, radical feminists' male stereotyping is a single story about men that will be investigated in this study.

Evans (1987) in Sadek (2014) describes Ngugi's women as "resistance heroines and the strongest symbols of cultural identity, community and continuity". Sadek exposes Ngugi's *A grain of wheat* as a novel representative of the resistant and courageous attributes of women, especially in the face of hardship caused by political upheaval. In this novel, women are resourceful, sacrificial and militant. Such was the case of Wambui the main female character, who acts as a spy and a collaborator with the male forest fighters during the Mau Mau period in Kenya. She is one of the women who gather information, arms and food supplies for the fighters branded terrorists by the government. They used their womanhood as a weapon and many joined the struggle and became freedom fighters. Wambui was a secret agent per excellence who ferry secrets to the fighters in the forest without fear or detection. This novel is in honour of the African women who stood by the men in the difficult days; women who daily fight unseen battles of the mind in their quest for total emancipation and equality. In the words of Sadek (2014) "Ngugi portrays strong women with highly sensitive minds and exceptional intellectual abilities that often result in sound judgement". Male author's portrayal of women is usually in solidarity with women's causes or as sympathisers with their estate.

In the story of Ngugi's *Devil on the cross*, the main female character experienced the full onslaught of patriarchy in successive barrages of maltreatments from negligent male characters. As a working-class woman in Kenya, Wariinga got sacked for refusing to get sexually involved with her boss. Consequently, she could not pay her rent and was kicked out of her accommodation. The old man Ngorika took advantage of her situation and deflowered her. After discovering she is pregnant, he discarded her. Her problems are witness to the symbolism of Wariinga's name which means 'woman in chain'. Her accumulated woes made her suicidal and she made attempts on her life twice. Her uncle traded her beauty to Old Ngorika to his own selfish ends.

This is the picture of the psychologically traumatised and sexually exploited women that Ngugi paints. In order to be accepted by patriarchy, women must submit to the cultural expectations of the society and serve the purpose of immoral men. What qualifies a woman for any job is her ability to use her body to woo the men in the offices, and make a gift of her body to them (Sadek, 2014: p. 10). As always with feminist literature, the downtrodden women get some form of training, education or empowerment as means of coming out of their bondage and rupturing the chains of societal conventions. Wariinga gets a degree from the higher institution and subsequently became the voice of the working-class women. In this character Ngugi challenges the colonial and neo-colonial anomalies against women. Through Wariinga he starts to question the fate of the working-class women. In the end she kills the old man that abused her, not as much as an act of vengeance, but as a service to the women of the community, who might also fall victim to Old Ngorika.

In Wariinga's story and experiences, there is a transformation from a timid and suicidal young girl into a full-grown liberated woman. There is also resistance to the system and the order of things that limit women. Wariinga symbolises the 'new woman' who is not afraid to stand up for herself and others in the society. This new woman is self-reliant, bold and transformed (Sadek, 2014: p. 11-12).

In *Wizard of the Crow* Ngugi's voice against social malaise becomes more ardent. Wife-beating and women's impoverishment became Ngugi's muse. More than ever before, in this

novel, Ngugi represents women as a militant cluster. The novel depicts the difficult life of the African woman consequent of the dominant forces of patriarchy. Women in this novel are enslaved in relationship with dictatorial, immoral and powerful men in high places. Rachael and Vinjina are both submissive and obedient women, who became trapped in their own marriages. Both women are seen as lesser than commodities to their spouses. Rachael was locked up faraway by her husband for confronting him with his infidelities, Vinjina was been beaten often by her husband, despite her industrious and careful manner. Nyawira is Ngugi's campaign instrument against women's manipulation and subjugation. Nyawira rebelled against her father's control, divorced a gold digging husband, led a movement of women protesters and challenged the male powers that be.

As observed in Alkali and Ezeigbo, feminist preoccupations have gone beyond complaints about the situation of women in matrimony. It has gone well into the socio-political milieu (Egya, 2013: p. 215, 220). This is likewise seen in Ngugi's reinvention of the image of women and the interrogation of women's position in Africa. Through Nyawira, he raises the consciousness of women to create a common front and engender leadership among them in order to fight the suppression of women. Ngugi's writing about women, unlike those of Achebe, foregrounds women and bring them to the head of affairs. Ngugi's women rise above patriarchal restrictions and oppression. His women range from the liberal feminist to the more radical socialist and Marxist feminists as seen in the *Wizard of the Crow*. So, Nyawira educates the members of the women's revolutionary movement and introduced them to the notion of sisterhood. Ngugi's dealing overtly with the issue of sexual intercourse was also another way of representing women as ready to tackle issues which are otherwise seen as taboo. In truth, male feminist authors' solidarity with the feminist cause is reflective of the male characters that usually assist the female characters in the struggle for their emancipation. Such is Kamiti, Nyawira's lover who was incarcerated for the women's cause. These men are among the few who are not regarded as oppressive by feminists, and who are the darlings of womanists. Such men are those whose masculinity is complicit and sympathetic towards women's estate, unlike in Hegemonic Masculinity as will be seen in chapter three of this study.

Mention was earlier made of two categories of male writers who write about women. So far, the ongoing has been about the first category. From this juncture, focus will be on the second category. Achebe is accused of being a principal among authors that support patriarchy and misrepresents women. Unlike Mutunda who traced women's underdevelopment and exclusion from post-colonial politics to the educational deprivation of the girl-child during the colonial era, Ogwude (2013) in her essay "Achebe and the woman Question" cited Stratton (1994) as tracing women's exclusion from 'post-colonial politics and public affairs' to Achebe's portrayal of the Igbo society in his novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958).

Just as the coming of the Europeans undermined the authority and leadership of women among the Akan in Ghana, the portrayal of the Igbo society as being totally ran by men also informed the undermining of Igbo women after the colonial era. Adimora-Ezeigbo blames Achebe's portrayal of women as subservient and silent "second sex" for the neglect of women's involvement in history. This is hugely why she lends her pen to the 'herstory' project among Igbo female writers. Ezeigbo felt the need to neutralise and undo the negative effect of Achebe's writing about the Igbo society and women in particular (Ezeaku 2010:5-6). It is daunting that Okafor in Ogwude, in his qualification of women in Achebe's works reduced them to 'echoes and voices'. Women in Achebe's works are faceless phantoms that 'unquestionably acquiesce to the status quo' (Ogwude, 2013: p. 119).

While Ezeigbo sees Achebe from a repentant anti-feminist viewpoint, Ogwude argues that Achebe has never been anti-feminist, he has rather been historically objective and correct in his depiction of the Igbo society of yore. She argues that Achebe's representation of women's reality is not the same as his justifying it. Ogwude does not believe that Achebe through his work sanctions whatever inimical patriarchal treatment meted out to women, rather Achebe portrays the Igbo society of those days as he sees it. Though Ezeigbo speaks of Achebe's conversion from the status quo which is supporting patriarchy, and cites Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* as testament of this change in ideology and perspective, yet Ogwude pronounced Ezeigbo's deduction as flawed and Achebe's position as indefensible.

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Ogwude shows examples of Achebe's feminist sympathies and depictions. She sees these in Ekwefi's defiance of conventions and marrying Okonkwo, in Okonkwo's love for Ekwefi despite her impudence, in Achebe's portrayal of a priestess as equal in status to a male masked ancestral spirit and her being higher than the male members of her society. In candour, Ogwude discredited Ezeigbo's anti-feminist claims about Achebe's writings. This she did in the same breath she had debunked Okafor's accusation of Achebe's works as sexist. Like De Beauvoir, Ogwude believes that regardless of the aspirations and independence of women; marriage and motherhood is still women's job and important aspects of their destinies in the society (Ogwude, 2013: p. 122-123).

In *No longer at Ease*, Ogwude discovers an antithetical comparison between the male and the female portraiture. While Isaac Okonkwo is still contemplating, Hannah Okonkwo his wife has already taken action. While Obi is painted as contemptible, Clara his girlfriend is portrayed as decent. Thus, Achebe's improvement of the woman's image than that of the man becomes indicative of his position on the woman question. Women are now portrayed in better light than men.

Achebe's portrayal of women in modern roles as opposed to traditional ones is not convincing enough for Ogwude as to be qualified as progressive; after all there are feminists without grouse against traditional roles. The female characters similarly and more than ever in the *Anthills of the Savannah* are more concerned with the socio-political affairs of their society. Though they are different in status and background, yet they are representative of the collective strength necessary for women to fully come into their own in patriarchal societies.

2.2.3 The great enlightenment: women writing women

The essence of women writing about other women is to correct the often false representations of women across history by male historians and writers. With the exception of few male authors, who are sympathetic to the female conditions, majority neither represent the voice nor the experience of women. Through literature, women writers have

attempted to and continue to redefine women. This redefinition of women different from that of patriarchy has informed the project of rewriting history into the ‘herstory’. For instance, some historians believe that the story of Efunsetan Aniwura Iyalode of Ibadan was negatively distorted by patriarchy to dull her resplendence. She was easily the most powerful woman in the Yoruba kingdom of her time, and according to Banji Akintoye in Adewale Adeoye (2016) she is probably “the richest person in the whole of the Yoruba interior in about the late 1870s.”

These female authors document in their writings, women who have braved the most oppressive military regimes and prospered in the fields that were exclusively the domains of men. Unlike those portrayed as helpless and hopeless subjugated victims in men’s literature, these new women are assertive, independent and resistant to patriarchal ideologies. These are the women that were the backbones of successful men across history. Women that were responsible for the great strides men have made in the annals of the world. Women whose heroic and great deeds have been subtly hidden, obscured or struck out of historical records altogether are women who now seek to set the records straight by rewriting history into ‘herstory’. The feminist ideology has been the greatest harnessing of female resources into the principal goal of fighting for women’s liberation and gender equality. The ideology represents women’s interests and concerns in the world of Hegemonic Masculinity which is issuant of patriarchy. Ezeaku (2010:3) submits that despite the writings of African male writers about women’s interests and concerns; it is refreshingly enlightening to hear about women’s experience from women themselves.

Ezeaku in this vein, while using Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo’s writings as point of contact, states that women writers often interrogate oppressive cultures of patriarchy, while using resistant female characters in their works to combat such cultures. Through her powerful female characters Adimora-Ezeigbo presents the suppressed history of African women of Igbo extraction. Her representations of the female conditions in traditional societies touches the readers and exposes patriarchy’s cover-ups of female presence in Igbo ancestry. She contributes to the ‘herstory’ via her revealing strong female characters in her trilogy *The Last of the Strong Ones*, *House of Symbols* and *Children of the Eagle*.

Women are generally assertive among the Igbos, regardless whether the social organisations or gender systems in the communities are patrilineal or matrilineal. The power relations between male and female among Igbos cut across class, group, affiliation, community and family lineage (Okafor, 2008). In her essay, Okafor illustrates women's power in Igbo communities via her exposition of their contributions to the male dominated cult of Igbo mask performance. The mask cults are dominated by men who organise, control and produce the masquerades, women are seldom and admitted into the male cults. Yet, Okafor identified vital roles women play in the mask performance. She speaks of Igbo women's valuation by Igbo men as being superior to that of European men for their women. This is due to the role of women as mothers, who ensure the continuity and advancement of the society. She emphasises the role of the woman as the cord that binds and unites.

Okafor reveals the challenges and discouragements gotten from patriarchal males, who think the cult of mask performance among Igbos is an exclusive preserve of men, hence she has no cultural jurisdiction researching into it. Nevertheless, her determination to write the 'herstory' suppressed by patriarchy eventually bore fruit. Several of the masks in the masquerade cults ended up originating from stories linked to women. In one of the cases, the woman who was precursor to the cult was killed to hide the source of the mask cult which later was made exclusive to men. Such diabolical behaviour of men against women informs feminists' reference to men as oppressive, and feminist writings like that of Beyala are replete with illustrations.

Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones* showcases women who are assertive, strong, full of life and determined; regardless their location in history, especially in the colonial period. Her character Ejimnaka is indomitable and courageous. Who despite her kind-hearted nature, resists and defies her husband's high-handedness. Like Beyala's Ateba, she is metaphorically speaking 'a lioness, a thundering tigress'. She epitomises the last of a race of strong, brave, intelligent, determined and resistant women. Her alphabetic status does nothing against her allure, greatness and prudence. She is revered as 'the wise one' (Ezeaku 2010: p. 7). Women like Chiene and Onyekozuru, two of the four main characters,

brave the wrath of patriarchy by calling the bluff of their male partners. They constituted themselves as authorities in their community. These women's radicalism borders on misandry; hence they interrogate the necessity of men in marriages and in homes. These women live lives without husbands and children, and are yet content and satisfied.

Adimora-Ezeigbo's bias for the female discourse disallows a male main character in her works, and by extension excludes heroes and male exemplars of dominance from the society. Her faultless female characters are glorified in her narratives, as seen in her sequel *House of Symbols*. Ezeaku observes Adimora-Ezeigbo's presentation of Eagle woman, otherwise known as Ezenwanyi as a woman who rejected her betrothal since the age of eight, to a man whose existence she could care less about. She portrayed Eaglewoman as rebellious and unconquerable by the conventions of patriarchy, and presents the betrothal as child abuse. In all these, Adimora-Ezeigbo's persuasion is womanist; therefore complementarist. This is seen in the sometimes healthy and symbiotic relationship between her female and male characters. As concerning this womanist complementarist disposition, Ezeaku (2010:9) submits: "The ideal woman, as the author sees it, should be fully realised and empowered in all respects... and yet be prepared to harmoniously and willingly live with her man, who is socially ascribed as *primus inter pares*".

African women writers and scholars of Igbo extraction, hardly ever fail to depict the spiritual aspect of female power and strength. The spiritual superiority of women to men is commonly touted in narratives, such as those of Adimora-Ezeigbo. Indeed, the roles of women in African spirituality are as vital as inexhaustible. Women's propensity for the divine is very high. Diviners, marabouts, seers, soothsayers and the supernatural have higher patronage in women, who are generally believed to be more spiritually attuned than men. African traditional religion has its fair share of goddesses and priestesses documented in women's writings. Beyala's Aïssatou also sought recourse with the soothsayer in her adversity (*Comment Cuisiner*, p. 45). In Ezeigbo's *House of Symbols*, there are such women. The symbolism of women as eagles in her trilogy which ends with *Child of the Eagle* is evident in the female characters' traits. In Ezeaku's description, the women are happy, proud, Ambitious, determined, swift and confrontational of patriarchal limitations. These

traits are incarnate in Amara and Nnenna as the principal characters of the novel. These female characters traverse restricted borders on authority, sexuality and procreation. Ezeigbo redefines the female in patriarchy as independent and intelligent counterpart, but complementary beings to men. She sets herself and her work as a balance to the historicity of the Igbos, and as a literary chronicle of the feats of women in Igbo ancestry, thereby contributing to the rewriting of history with women in focus.

The portraiture of the image of the 'New woman' preoccupies Egya's (2013) essay. His study selection of the works of feminists, specifically Zaynab Alkali, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Sefi Atta, is an attempt to explore and expose various agencies employed by feminists in checking or countering patriarchal traditions that are detrimental to the growth and progress of the female child in the society. By telling their own stories, and drawing from their cultural context these authors fight for the girl-child, rewrite history to include the female perspective and challenge traditional sex roles as assigned by patriarchal societies. Having seen Ezeaku's study on some of Adimora-Ezeigbo's attempts at rewriting the 'male-authored Igbo world view' as Egya puts it, we now consider from another ethnic and regional background, efforts made by feminists in writing women's stories from women's perspectives.

Egya's study of feminist rupture of patriarchal norms and creation of awareness on the conditions of women situates Zaynab Alkali smack in the middle of feminist persuasion, though the author denies being a feminist. Egya identifies in Li, Faku and Awa, the three main characters of Alkali's *The Stillborn*, an unwillingness to confront patriarchal limitations squarely and break its restraints. Egya sees this shying away of some African women writers from the appellation of feminist, and refusal to identify with western feminist ideology, as responsible for the need to create variants of feminism. He acknowledges that the need for theorisation of these variants of feminism and the process has become problematic in itself, and has been criticized by renowned feminists like Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie. Egya nevertheless identifies trends in the lives of Alkali's female characters that are indicative of several feminist preoccupations. Gender roles reversal was seen in the way Li was transformed into the new woman, who eventually rose above the drudgery of a failed

marriage and became the breadwinner of her household. Women becoming free from the ennui and slavery of marriage and becoming economically empowered are two major preoccupations of feminism of the radical kind (Egya, 2013: p. 215, Adebayo, 2015: p. 45-49).

In her interview by Sanusi (2010), Aduke Adebayo identifies three categories of African women as thus: 'the unenlightened city dweller, the comfortable but unenlightened, the comfortable and enlightened.' Alkali's character Li is implicated in the third category. Li, from Adebayo's perspective qualifies as a woman who has made great progress, since she has gone back to school to get enlightened and became economically empowered as a result of that. Adebayo reiterates the need for women to speak out through their writings, the need to come out of obscurity and quiet sufferings. She declares the African woman as worthwhile, hardworking, strong and triumphant over trials. Nevertheless, she recognised the need to educate and orientate them towards their liberation. Li is a good model of Adebayo's portrait of the progressive woman. She abandoned the prospects of becoming another wife to Alhaji Bature and went to school instead.

Egya continues to trace Alkali's portraiture of women to a bolder and much needed quasi-radical critical point of northern Nigeria. This time he focuses on Alkali's female character M'ama in *The Descendants* who was rebellious against the high-handed, destiny-truncating, haughty, polygamist of a husband called Aliyu. He attempts to jeopardize M'ama's future by trading her desire to study medicine for that of Teacher-Education. Her enlightenment in the higher institution birthed a contrary spirit in her. She went into adultery, neglected her family and kept a pregnancy outside wedlock. Egya interprets these actions as vengeful against the patriarchal society at the same time fulfilling for a woman long under bondage.

Alkali's extremism is evident in the way Mama abandoned the notion of marriage and embraced controversial freedom from customary limitations of the society. Seytu also is another female character representative of women's triumph over socio-cultural obstacles against the woman. Through her grandmother Magira Milli, Seytu found support to get educated and forget her harrowing matrimonial experience of an early marriage. A sufferer

of vesico-vaginal fistula (VVF), forsaken by her husband, her grandmother gave her hope to live and she eventually overcame her dark experiences as a bride of thirteen years. Eventually, she became a medical prodigy like no other in her society. These women in Egya viewpoint were damaged, until they found help through other women and education. They rose above patriarchy imposed vicissitude and made something admirable of themselves. The succour that comes to suffering women via their female allies is evident in the lives of these female characters and their fellow women in the struggle for total freedom from male oppression.

2.2.4 The table turns: women writing men

The following statement of Adebayo in Sanusi (2010) on male ignorance about the female experience and estate is aptly introductive of the subject matter at this juncture of the research. It is that “Most African men need re-education and re-orientation as far as the treatment of their women is concerned”.

African women writers write about men not as much as to re-educate them as to pull them down from their high pedestal. They write about men to show them how bad they have been to women. In their portrayals of men’s insensitivity and sometimes wickedness towards women, African women writers use male characters that are physically and psychologically grotesque. These male characters are often represented as unattractive, unintelligent, depraved, psychotic, abusive, oppressive, anti-social, hypocritical, unfeeling, over-privileged, irresponsibly absent, selfish and affection. Radical feminist writers in principle do not set out in their writings to eulogize men, nor do they have as objective,’ the laundering of men’s image. Habitually, feminists seek to deflate the supposedly over-bloated male ego and sense of dominance (Adesanmi 2015: p. 203-204). Evidently, there is a feminist strategy of humiliating men through grotesque and hilarious male characters such as Aji Ramta in Alkali’s *The Descendants*. It is seen in Ababio in Armah’s *The Healers*. He paints the picture of the ridicule of Ababio a male character, in the presence of women (Egya, 2013: p. 217, Opara, 1991: p. 122).

In Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow*, this humiliation of men is seen in the way Tajirika was disgraced and beaten for abusing and beating his wife Vinjina. The dispensing of this judgment by a woman's court is symbolic of women coming together to exert justice upon oppressive and exploitative men. Women coming together to overturn a social system that is unfair to them, is a major project in the *Wizard of the Crow*. Finally, the Ruler of Aburiria, Rachael's husband, was also caricatured in his demanding that women should be circumcised and must walk a few steps behind their men at all times (Sadek, 2014: p. 14-16). Sadek (2014) makes the representation of men as oppressors categorical in this statement: "Ngugi reflects the image of some African males as heartless colonisers who show no mercy even to their dearest ones". Moreover, Sadek discovers Ngugi's representation of men as patriarchy-licensed-wife-beaters as a humiliation. He describes men as always attempting to control women and to silence them.

Numerous issues of gender from the woman's perspective have been discussed and documented in the writings and criticisms of feminist authors and critics (Aduke, 2015: p. 4). Many of these documented discuss and writings have portrayed men as drunkards, rapists, exploiters, predators and monsters. Thus the feminist version of the story between the man and his female lover (i.e. the husband and his wife, the male boss and his female subordinate, the cleric and his female worshipper; patriarchy and the woman) is quite a popular one that has been effectively told by renowned feminist theorists and authors. These portrayals are weapons in the arsenal of women's adversarial position against men. These feminists include Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Alice Walker, Chikwenye Ogunyemi, Catherine Acholonu, Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie, Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Toni Morrison, Mariama Bâ among so many others of whom is Calixthe Beyala. In this study, Beyala's works will serve as literary thermometer in ascertaining the temperature of the ongoing male-bashing fever among African women writers (Yekini, 2008: p. 6-10, Aduke, 2015: p. 1-6). These mentioned have done excellently well in protecting the lot of women, and ensuring better existence for women via continual promotion, propagation and documentation of women's experiences under male domination worldwide.

Most research into the works of Beyala looks at it from the feminist perspective, from the ‘women are the victims’ perspective. Few studies look at the novels of Beyala from the masculine perspective. Among these is the doctoral thesis of Mutunda (2009) titled “Through a Female Lens: Aspects of Masculinity in Francophone African women’s writing”. In which he looked at two of the works of Beyala among those of five other sub-Saharan African women writers. Mutunda claimed that the lack of exploration of masculinity in African women’s writing motivated his study.

In his study, Mutunda (2009: 10-11) observed that interest has increased in research bordering on men’s behaviour in relation to women, since the 70s when women dominated the gender debate, issuing from the feminist debate boom. Yet, according to him “... the field is still narrow”. Mutunda traced in his research the history of Francophone African women writing on culture and religion in relation to women in the society. He spoke of R.W Connell’s masculinities and not just masculinity as a concept. He studied the more dominant Hegemonic Masculinity and looked at the “soft man” as an exemplary version of alternative masculinities. He concluded by observing that African female writers represent their male characters mostly in a negative light. Though they sometimes show what is noble and admirable in them.

In his essay “Self-destructive Feminism in Calixthe Beyala’s *Les Honneurs Perdus*”, Ukoyen (2002) presented Beyala’s feminist ethos as “sex-soaked” to quote Adebayo (2015:8). Ukoyen exposed the erotic feminism in Beyala’s works as a guise of equality of the sexes. Studies such as this on sexual representation are relevant to the investigation of sexuality as related to the representation of men in the selected novels of this study.

Similarly, in his paper “Do me I do you: man no go vex: exploring the other side of feminism in West African fiction”, Ayeleru (2013) observed that the shoe is on the other foot for the men-folk. According to him women are proving to be smarter and more vicious, oppressive and increasingly violent against men in matrimony and by extension the society. Citing instances of Oumou’s maltreatment of her husband a veterinary doctor and high-ranking civil-servant in Isaïe Biton Koulibaly’s *Ah! Les Femmes...*, Ayeleru exposes how the

woman subverted the man's role of husband and head of the family due to her empowerment and heightened position in the society. The days of inequality and injustice against women are almost over.

Extremism is observed in the way women treat the men in their lives, especially their husbands. In the guise of feminism, women are rebelling against traditional sex roles as defined by patriarchy and becoming terrorists to their husbands. This rebellion is manifest in their arrogance, brazen adultery and callousness towards the welfare of their spouses and their homes. Ayeleru, citing an incident of adultery by the third wife of the veterinary doctor, declares that it "...succinctly depicts the highest level of oppression of men by women in a supposedly patriarchal society of West Africa." The table has turned against the traditional patriarchal society that supports oppression and injustice towards women. Women are the new predators and men are fast becoming their prey.

Likewise, in his analyses of Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, Ayeleru highlights the growing deception and cunning of women towards unsuspecting male victims. In this, he affirms the new dimension of radical feminism in West African fiction as an aspect of women's struggle for emancipation from the oppression of patriarchy. Women's diction and actions are growing more audacious against men, brazen immorality and irresponsibility to their matrimonial home is a way of saying to men, according to Ayeleru "if you do me, I will do you, man no go vex". The statement "...we have a husband who believes he is more than all women and most men" (*The Secret Lives...* 86-87) depicts a basic tenet of the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity as propounded by Connell. This tenet bespeaks a tendency in certain males to see themselves as all-important 'He who must be obeyed'. It is an Alpha male syndrome that is dominant over women and men with subordinate or alternative masculinities (Basdeo, 2015: p. 1-5). Man wears his chauvinism and arrogance against the woman like badges of honour. For this, the woman has started to make him pay subtly and dearly.

In his closing remark, Ayeleru revealed that "...the African society and culture where these women operate will continue to resist this level of oppression of men by women. The

strategies of the women examined in these texts suggest an act of vengeance and a ‘do me and do you syndrome’”. This grudge-bearing retaliatory disposition of women against men, as characteristic of radical feminism, is pungent in the very first two narratives of Beyala. Thus, it becomes an important focus of this research work.

2.2.5 The Devil in the detail: Women rewriting history

Men were the spokespersons of women across history, until the table turned. Feminists in recent times have attempted to rewrite history from women’s perspective, and certain have dubbed this the ‘herstory’. This christening is considered unflattering to feminism by some feminist. Since men have been at the helm of history-writing from the classical to the contemporary era, the need for feminists to retell the story of women stems from the political problems posed by current systems and relationships. Such attempts at rewriting history to include the account of women, involved the reinterpretation of the Bible by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the rewriting of the rise of capitalism by Alice Clark. These attempts among others by feminists were squashed. The need to write history based on the myths and the facts about women and their contributions to history creates a rupture among feminists. While some believe in lauding the achievements of past great women, others believe in actualising the rewriting of history based on the negative experiences of women and the ideals of feminisms as a social movement for women’s liberation (Gordon, 1986: p. 20-21).

According to Gordon: “Women’s historians sought to proclaim a truth heretofore denied, disguised, distorted, and defamed; thereby to expose the meretricious lies of earlier mandarins”. The rewriting of history to include ‘herstory’ involves answering certain questions through whose answers the knowledge about women’s historicity is obtained. Gordon recognises these questions as bordering on ‘Domination and Resistance’, ‘Political or Social History’, ‘Difference’ and ‘Methodology’. While feminists like Simone de Beauvoir stood for the documenting of women’s oppression, domination, the channels and sources of domination and lament over women’s victimisation and woes. Others like Mary Beard support the documentation of women’s honour, heroism, resistance and struggles and highlighting women’s victories over men’s dictatorship over women. While De Beauvoir

focused on women's fragility, Beard focused on women's capability as central to women's historicity (Gordon, 1986: p. 23).

While the account of women as the oppressed 'Other' made women appear blameless and without faults or character defects, the account of women as resistant made women appear confrontational and troublesome. Aside the domination and resistance contradiction, another is that of political and social history. Social history of women tends to concentrate on the aspects often left out by political history. It showcases the customs, married life and gastronomy of the ordinary women. It focuses on the domestic lives of women that are separate from political domination. Political historians see this as romancing and denying of the oppression of women. In response, social historians criticised political history as centred only on female archetypes such as queens and not on peasant women too. Political history of women is perceived as dealing with power and the state and how they affect the daily lives of women as they participate in activities such as writing, mothering, housework and leisure.

The question of the notion of 'difference' in the rewriting of women's history became almost substitution for the notion of opposition in women's struggle in the 1980s. Second-wave feminism's most important input to the social struggle is the notion of gender. Difference signifies two aspects of the notion of gender. Foremost, it signifies difference in the voice, muse, psychology, experience of love, work, family and goal of women to that of men. Second, it signifies the difference that appreciating it makes in the situation of women. This notion of difference introduced into feminism via gender opens up new perspectives of viewing the struggle for women's emancipation. Women's uniqueness seen in this notion of difference amplifies the negative picture of women's oppression and marginalisation. In addition, the significance of the notion of difference in gender is seen in the discovery of women's voices that were erstwhile obscure. It expresses distinction and dualism of gender, as well as denotes the feminine and that which is female (Gordon, 1986: p. 25-26).

All these meanings associated with the notion of difference in feminism are reflected in the history of feminism and that of women. Feminism from the eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries contended with femininity as a force used to control and subjugate women, while later in nineteenth-century shifted in paradigm of femininity to that of the experience of motherhood. There was an obvious dichotomy of the trait of aggression in male and that of nurturance in female at this time.

While the notion of androgyny ruled the eighteenth century, that of difference ruled the second wave feminism of the 1970s to 1980s. The 'herstory' as the history of women runs parallel to the history as written by men and from the perspective of men. In the same vein, Queen James (2012) edited *The Queen James Bible* (the Gay Bible) to present the gay account of the original Hebrew narrative. Since *The King James Bible* was originally written by straight heterosexual men. The online bookstore Amazon.com (2017) describes *The Queen James Bible* as "...based on The King James Bible, edited to prevent homophobic misinterpretation". But the concept of heterosexuality ensures that women do not run a separate and parallel existence from that of men. The destinies and paths of both genders have always being crossed and intertwined, despite the desire of certain feminists to distinguish and separate them.

Heterosexuality assists in the construction of gender, which also created and delimits difference. These heterosexual limitations are observable in its economic, educational, cultural and commercial institutions. The fourth question to be asked is the rewriting of history and the writing of 'herstory' is that of methodology. The search for feminist method of writing history that is different from the male's methodology is elusive. There have been attempts by feminist historians such as Gordon; yet, an entire methodology that is uniquely female is dubious. Ascertaining what constitutes valid material for women's history using gendered methodology is rather difficult. Just as in history writing, application of female methodology to the social sciences and humanities is not an exact science. Distinguishing between the female and feminism, Gordon (1986:30) says "The female is ourselves our bodies and our socially constructed experience. It is not the same as feminism, which is not a 'natural' excretion of that experience but a controversial political interpretation and struggle, by no means universal to women".

The writing of various feminist literatures is also attempt at rewriting history from women's perspectives. Feminists express their views on men's domination and women's subordination via numerous narratives. Among such narratives are the selected works of Beyala used in the current research. Opara (1991) narrowed the quest for the 'herstory' down to Africa. In her essay "The 'herstory in Ayi Kwei Armah's Histories", she declared that women's stories have been insufficiently and negligibly narrated in African literary customs and ethics. She submitted African historical documentation as class and race biased and gendered. Exempting Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Sembène Ousmane, she observed other African writers as silent over the participation and impact of women in the political struggle for national independence. She commended both writers for their depiction of women's contributions and bringing these contributions to limelight, whereas other African authors treated women as invisible.

Opara reveals the role of the woman in African political history via the historical novels of Ayi Kwei Armah, such as *The Beautiful ones are not yet born*, *Two thousand seasons*, *The Healers* and *Fragments*. Opara posits that the role of women in Armah's post-independence society as seen in *The Beautiful ones are not yet born* and *Fragments* though immoral and destructive, yet is in preparation for a better and visionary society where women are healers and builders. Women in the new-colonial society were victims of sexism and men were chauvinists. Unlike African authors who portray men as heroes, lauding their historical political feats, Opara exposes the weakness in men across African history. She cited sexist and oppressive instances in both *The Healers* and *Two thousand seasons*. She used the term 'conjugal slavery' to describe the male-female relationship in the homes depicted in the novels. Men were pleasure-seeking and lazy from Opara's perspective of history.

In *Two Thousand Seasons*, Opara cited an instance of women rebellion geared towards emancipation from the tyranny of sex roles. She indicates this as a blow to the gender stereotypes attached to social roles. Women according to Armah in the novel became "their own protectresses, finders and growers both" (Opara, 1991: p. 118). Unlike the stereotype of women as defenceless gatherers, they picked up tools and became hunters. Opara cited a legendary woman called Anoa, who is possessed by a spirit that makes her abhor all forms

of slavery. Much like Ateba the character of Beyala in *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée*, who also being possessed by a spirit fancies herself a goddess that hates female bondage and male domination (Beyala, 1987: p. 88).

Beyala in *Le petit prince de Belleville* depicts men's helplessness and used the male character Abdou to confess men's loss of direction and desire to be led by women (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 78). Similarly in her submission, Opara identified this men's need of women across history: "It is, in fact ideal that woman pilots man to the promised land of the ancestral wholesome way." (Opara, 1991: p. 119). Feminists are insisting via their literatures that men have failed and lost their way. It is time women lead the way, as they have done in time past (in accounts obscured, distorted, denied and hidden by men across history).

Armah's illustration of the Akan tribe among the Ashanti people of Ghana, positions the female at the centrality of his narration. The nature, essence and attributes of the female gender are celebrated among the Akan people. The matriarchal system of the Akan people is ancient. It is a culture of women ruling men. These women are goddesses birthed by a Queen-mother and possessing divine abilities. The absolute authority and sovereignty of these women is equivalent to that enjoyed by men in the religious patriarchy of Islam and Christianity, until Europeans started treating Akan women's authority with total indifference and disdain. The Akan men began to feel humiliated and embarrassed about their voluntary submission to women's rule and domination (Ritual Goddess, 2016).

In this female positioning, Opara declares Armah as giving eminence to the advantages of the female gender. Men are seen as confused, unsettled and violent, while women are depicted by Armah as orderly, settled and peaceful. Women eventually subverted men's turbulent reign. This is the holy grail of feminism; women's sovereignty over men. Opara traces 'herstory' through the juxtaposing of male failures with female ideals in Armah's narratives. Healers (women) were juxtaposed with destroyers (men). Opara also noted in the 'herstory', the extent of the sexual abuse and objectification of women by men. She cited *Two Thousand Seasons* of Armah and underscores the manner of sex-exploitation of women

by men who predates over them. As a purging and cleansing by women, Opara extols the revenge of the women victims against their abusers. She sees the women expunging the depraved men from the society as messianic and reconstructive of society.

Opara exposes the predatory relationship of men towards women. She cites instances in Armah's *Two thousand seasons* where women were sexually objectified and exploited. Vividly in the novel, she sees documentation of historical suppression and debasement of women (Opara, 1991: p. 34, 59). She sees also triumphant women, whose vengeance against their destroyers heralded much awaited emancipation. Armah's male characters were no angels. They were oppressive and abusive of women to put their atrocities against women mildly. Opara reveals the deconstructive function of women, in revealing their rebellion against stereotyped roles allotted them by society. She notices the deconstruction of female sex roles of motherhood and wifeness. The new woman in 'herstory' refuses marriage and rejects social and cultural conventions that enslave her (Opara, 1991: p. 15). Her revolutionary stance forbids that she embrace the same things that compromises her freedom.

Armah's depiction of women as "healers" and men as "destroyers" is instructive of the historicity of the 'herstory'. Women in his novels as observed by Opara, are generous builders, peacemakers, problem solvers and mediators of the balance in existence. Men are the opposites. Inferring from Armah's novels, the separation of women from the shackles of patriarchal traditions, enables them to perform the aforementioned functions in the society. For Armah, women's generosity over history lacks men's response and reciprocation. Opara corroborates this with the author's comment:

"Their [men] road flies off opposite reciprocity. In their communion there is no respect, for to them woman is a thing, a thing deflated to fill each strutting, mediocre man with a spurious, weightless sense of worth" (*Two Thousand*...40).

As an assuagement of the woman's pain from man-imposed silence and oblivion, Armah gives the woman's voice pre-eminence over that of patriarchy. In 'herstory', the woman's perspective supersedes that of the man. This stifling of the male voice also characterises the novels of Ezeigbo and Beyala, where the female's voice is preferred and privileged over

that of the male. Armah portrays women as tellers of truth in the midst of mendacious men. The authoritative voice of the Akan Queen-mother in *The Healers* is testament to Armah's bias for the female voice in his writings as sources of 'herstory'. Asserting to this, Opara (1991: 122) declares that:

It is discernible that the sweet female voices are needed to effect a change in the chequered history of a beleaguered nation.

The change referred to in this citation would be such as touted in the radical feminist creeds. Opara notices also complementarist tendencies in Armah's novels. She submits that Armah preaches a conjoint relationship between the male and the female in order to build the African nation and reconstruct its history. Armah's feminism is evident also in his giving place to the woman in historical acts that also involves the man. This Opara made evident in her citing from the novel *Two Thousand Seasons* (see pages 138, 142, 201).

To Opara, the whole essence of Armah's feminist campaign, in portraying the deplorable and subjugated conditions of the woman, is to engender enough reactions to trigger a revolution against women's oppression and exploitation. In Armah's world, women are victorious and free from all objectification by men. They are free from the shackles of traditions and patriarchal norms. In Armah's world women are not condemned to marriage; rather they have the choice of celibacy. And where they desire marriage they can be both bride and suitor; without the shame of proposing to the man they desire. For Armah, gender roles are equal and the same for both sexes. This is Armah's reconstruction of history into 'herstory'.

Similarly, Ezenwa Ohaeto's essay on the novels of Chukwemeka Ike reveals female characters whose experiences are stuff for 'herstory' and are historically important. Ike's female characters added hugely to the development of history in their societies. In *The Potter's Wheel*, the character Margaret, though not central to the story, yet performs a complementary role to the male character Obechina. Margaret's contributions to alleviating his sufferings, made it possible for him to discover his socio-political importance to the society. Ohaeto's emphasis on the positive complementary relationship between the male

and the female in the novel is proof of the healthy relationship that existed between the sexes sometime in history. Such relationships were free of discords.

In *The Bottled Leopard*, Ohaeto sees historical evidence of equal intelligence between the sexes. Nma, the female character competes favourably with the male character Amobi, and often beat him to second place in academic work. This demonstrates that intelligence is not an exclusive male preserve. Ohaeto traces that point in history when society realises that difference in gender is not synonymous to difference in intellectual capabilities. She identifies the voice in Ike's writings as preaching partnership of the sexes, rather than contention.

As in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* and *Fragments* where female characters are portrayed as destructive and negative, Ike's *Expo '77* also depicts comfort as a socially abnormal female character. This form of character representation balancing suggests that women were not always angels across history. After the ravages of the Nigerian civil war, Comfort learnt to use her natural female charms to survive and further her aspirations. Antebellum Comfort was a virtuous virgin. Comfort after the war becomes a temptress whose morality is compromised in order to get ahead. Ohaeto observes the capacity of women to be dishonest like men. Citing from the novel, she affirms "one always thought girls are more honest than boys" (Ohaeto, 1991: p. 127). Comfort's actions proved that to be untrue, women were also dishonest in their dealings. Such portrayals as this are composite of the historical materials for 'herstory', that women also had weaknesses and failings in their 'herstory'. According to Ohaeto "The historical dimension of comfort is thus that she exemplifies the consequences of social abnormalities that prevent the fulfilment of historical objectives" (Ohaeto, 1991: p. 127).

In *Sunset in Biafra*, Fatima was depicted as "...the type of wife who wore the trousers...her chest would be a jungle of masculine hair" (Ohaeto, 1991: p. 128). This description of her personality by another male character Chief Ukadike, is an allusion to African female masculinity. Indeed women over African history have been seen to be the ones that wear the trousers in the home. They have been seen in hegemonic light that involves the

performance of male sex roles in the community, household and sometimes in the state. The matriarchal Queen-mothers of the Akan tribe of the Ashanti have been known to create whole states by merging several clans together. Even when she shares power with the king, only the Queen-mother can create a state from several clans. The relationship of Akan women with men is not that of male dominance or power. Rather, it is the women who dominate and rule the men, until recent history of power transference from the Queen-mother to the king. Gradually European powers undermined and disregarded the power of the Queen-mothers in favour of kings. This aside from Ike's novels is to buttress the point of female masculinity as historical material for the 'herstory'.

Fatima's metamorphosis from an unbeliever in the Biafran cause, to that of becoming a Biafran herself is instructive of the changes women go through when exposed to harsh realities of life, especially in a war situation. Her nervous breakdown and the death of her husband Amilo were eye openers. Fatima developed coping skills to survive the war conditions. She becomes an archetype of the courageous and supportive soldier's wife. These representations of women in Ike's novels accentuate the place of women in historical development. Placing side by side the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly female characters, Ike exposes the fact that women have both depravity and morality. Ohaeto illustrates this claim with Nwakaego and Sweetie in the novel *Toads for Supper*. Nwakaego was the austere one, while Sweetie was the immoral seductress who tricked Amadi into having sex with her and then claimed he is the father of her baby.

When considering materials for the 'herstory', feminists should consider that morality was not always women's strong suit. The story of Imaguero the wife of the Oliha of the Bini kingdom was that of tragedy. Her immorality led to the adultery that caused the Idah war of 1515-1516 A.D. In exchange for some coral and agate beads, she gave sexual favours to the king's porter (Egharevba, 1960: p. 28-29). Equally, the Trojan War in Greek legend was caused by the emotional indiscretion of the beautiful Helen of Troy (Microsoft Encarta Premium, 2009). It goes without saying that the 'herstory' should witness to the moral laxity and wantonness in women, just as history testifies to those of men. In essence, Beard's 'herstory' that documents women's honour, heroism, resistance, struggles and victories

would not be complete without the inclusion of these historical accounts. The exploration of women as cerebral beings and not just as emotional ones in *Toads for Supper*, was seen in the introduction of the female character Aduke, who in Ohaeto's words is 'analytical, sensible and wise... [with] the right mixture of innocence and boldness...".

In *The Naked Gods*, the presentation of Mrs. Ikin the Registrar's wife as a calculating woman, who would surmount any obstacle to achieve her ambitions, is also testament to the reality of women in history. History has it that in 1816 A.D., the Queen-mother of Ogbebo, Oba of the Bini kingdom was largely responsible for his enthronement as king, after a civil war with his contending brother. Iyoba Idia of Iselu was also a very warlike and powerful Queen-mother who helped in defeating whole armies (Egharevba, 1960: p. 44-45, 77). These depictions of women lend historicity to the 'herstory' in the historical novels as materials for the rewriting of history by women. Intrinsically, historical novels are complementary to real-life experiences of women in history. Though there are fictional handling of historical materials, yet African novelists through these works of imagination allows perception into the likelihood of actual events.

Mrs. Ikin would see her husband become the Vice chancellor so that she could occupy a more prominent position in the society. Lady Macbeth also would see her husband become king. So, in her lust for ambition she manipulates Macbeth into killing king Duncan in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. In the throes of her determination, she asked the spirits of the gods to change her sex and transform her into a man. She is convinced that as a man, she will find the courage and the callousness to murder King Duncan. This rejection of female compassion in embrasure of male heartlessness is evident in her famous lengthy soliloquy:

Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, **unsex me** here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood.
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! **Come to my woman's breasts,**
And **take my milk for gall**, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,

And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry "Hold, hold!" (*Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 5)

Such accounts of women also are historically inspirational and should lend voice to the 'herstory'. If history is the man's story fraught with violence and imperfections, the historicity of 'herstory' would be dubious without equal references not just to the good of women, but also to the bad and the ugly. Ohaeto describes another female character Julie Toogood as a sexually insatiable adulteress, whose husband is hardworking but sexually useless. Ohaeto recognises the significance of these characters as illustrative of the point in history when women lag behind their husbands both academically and socially. In Ohaeto's words "Their [women's] uncoordinated attempts to bridge this gap often resulted in social disasters especially in public affairs, and they also created problems when they possess unbridled ambitions" (Ohaeto, 1991: p. 130). Like Mrs. Ikin, Soumana in Beyala's *Le petit prince the Belleville* crashes her husband's party in order to prove herself socially conscious and ends up embarrassing herself before his ex-girlfriend.

Ohaeto submits that sometimes women need to be better cultured in order to be socially relevant. Both women's unpolished gate crashing of parties and embarrassing public exhibitions are instructive of this need. Finally, in the novel *The chicken Chasers*, Ohaeto describes the antithesis in two female characters. One, Peace Bozo, was negative and manipulative. The other Afua, was positive and supportive. Peace enjoys using men, but could not succeed with the male character S-G, who had gotten the better of her. This made Peace vengeful. Afua on the other hand draws inspiration from the same man and admire him. In this juxtaposing of both antithetical female characters, Ohaeto perceives in women the capacity to pursue honourable goals or to wallow in perversion. This dual nature in women precludes the making of categorical statement about their goodness or badness. Women's nature is often determined by individual and communal conditions. As in real life, the female characters contribute to the documentation of historical experiences of women which in turn provide materials for the rewriting of history into 'herstory'.

Women's efforts through various social movements and literary groups are all geared towards telling their own side of the stories told by men. The history of the world as we know it is challenged by women. It is challenged also by men who have identified with the feminist ideology-men who lent their voices towards exhuming the buried account of female prowess, influence and power over the affairs of men across the ages. For feminists like De Beauvoir, women's side of the story is not flattering to men, rather it is an indictment. The effect of feminist activities on the world of men is to say the least worrisome to the sense of the masculine in men.

This chapter has essentially been the exploration of feminists' grouse against male superiority and its inner workings. It explored the rise of women's consciousness of their marginalised state and their various literary attempts at changing this state. The next chapter is mostly the laying out of the principles of Hegemonic Masculinity, as a way of challenging the distorted image of the masculine in men. Among other presentations, the chapter describes how feminist ideology and its profusion compromised the sense of the masculine in men, and emasculated a good number of men right from their campaigns of the 1970s to the late 1980s. The need to foreground the theory of masculinity is vital to the verification of the image of the male as represented in radical feminist literatures of African Women Writers. Moreover, the much promoted image of the 'New man' by sympathisers to feminism (as seen in the next chapter) is antithetical to the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity as presented by Connell.

2.3 Masculinity in Africa and in Diaspora

While black masculinity in Diaspora is born of the experience of slavery and racial struggles, black masculinity in Africa is born of centuries-old traditions of African origin that predates whites' incursion into the continent and colonialism. Indeed, the masculinities of the colonial masters were exported to the colonies, and they influenced the local notions of masculinity and in some cases subverted them (Connell, 2005: p. 197-199).

An idea of manhood in Africa before the advent of Europeans was seen in Alex Haley's *Roots* (1974). A hint into pre-slavery African masculinity and its patriarchal foundation was

observed in the rites of passage into manhood of the protagonist Kunta Kinte. Unfortunately, there was a whole new perspective of masculinity for Kunta Kinte when he became a slave in the New World (America). In Africa, manhood meant holding his head high with pride and defeating his adversary like a true Mandinka warrior, in the New World manhood meant bowing his head in shame and cringing before his adversary the white man, as a good slave should. Ability to bear shame and survive characterises manhood in the black slaves as they displayed ability to laugh in times of sorrow, patience in times of weakness, endurance in times of pain mark courage in the black slaves in the era of slavery.

The whole notion of masculinity became antithetical to what the Kin tango taught Kunta Kinte. In America, manhood also interprets as the versatility and the dexterity of the black slave in pleasing his master and subsequently gaining or buying his freedom from his master. A black male slave that is hardworking and was able to acquire skills of labour and save up enough money to buy his freedom, or abases himself to a ridiculously low level before his master and his white friends, is regarded as a good and manly slave (depending on whose point of view or perspective). Of course there were defiant and stubborn slaves that went about their freedom bravely and rashly, but were mostly caught and severely punished. These were regarded as foolish by other slaves. Kunta Kinte was one of those caught and punished severely; he lost his foot and soon learnt that it was wiser to stoop to conquer and encouraged his descendants to bid their time patiently for their liberation (Haley 1974, see pages 232, 261, 313-314, 326-327, 337, 347, 360, 408, 573, 592, 599, 717, 733, 774, 884, 911).

Post slavery colonial era is of little difference in the status of the freed black slaves of Northern America. They are unjustly paid for their labour; they are confined to the shanties and the slums of colonial settlements, while the whites live in the high-brow areas in better living conditions. Manhood in this era for the black man is the ability to adapt to the unequal opportunities of trade, education, and politics in the colonial world. Black boys (excluding girls) that were subsequently given education and a form of training, were eventually given jobs and regarded as men enough to be given socio political positions and opportunities as seen in the writings of Joseph Zobel, Ferdinand Oyono among other African post-colonial

writers. Armed with education and a rebellious spirit, the notion of manhood for the Blackman changed. Masculinity became synonymous with struggle for emancipation and restoration of the cultural values of Black men. Manhood meant confrontations with the Colonial Masters. It meant fight and quest for freedom. Black men like Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Malcolm X, Louis Sedar Senghor, Martin Luther king and W.E.B Dubois exemplified black masculinity in protests, activism and fight for the freedom and dignity of the black man worldwide. Masculinity meant fighting against injustices and inequality against the black man. Men who spoke out and fought were seen as “real” men while those who cower and cringe with fear were seen as unmanly. And so, black masculinity in Diaspora was constructed amidst these struggles and experiences (Adejumo 2015).

The black man’s quest for manhood in Diaspora, specifically in America is within the cultural context of white male patriarchy. Although certain freedom exists for the black man to navigate his construction of masculinity, yet this is hindered by the racist system that is rigged against him. His struggle between who he really is and who the society depicts him to be is often a cultural dilemma, which truncates his search for a different masculinity other than that of the white male (Nedhari 2009).

The black man’s white male expression of manhood is a product of cultural clashes and a mixture of black ideals, thoughts and interests with that of the dominant whites (Hooks 2004). Inequalities against the black male inhibit his ability to function effectively at social, educational, political and economic levels. In spite of his unwitting adoption of the white male patriarchal ethics on manhood, he is never regarded as equal neither is he allowed to perform as equal to the white male (Harris 1995). A more modern form of slavery is ordained for the black male; a socio-economic and psychological type (Nedhari 2009).

State sponsored violence and killings of the black male made his reality that of a castrated man, who is unable to perform at all levels, due to 400 years of depression, oppression and torture born of slavery. The civil rights period in America brought a ray of light into the glory and hopeless situation of subjugation of the black male. The civil rights Acts of 1964 and the voting rights Acts of 1965, contributed to the emancipation proclamation of 1863

by President Abraham Lincoln, in the true liberation of the black male. The assignation of Malcolm for his activism dashed this hope, and the Black power movement came to the rescue (Nedhari 2009)

Institutionalising the fall of the black man was never clearer than the era of Edgar J. Hoover, the FBI director; a period that saw the murder of several would-be black messiahs and leaders. The gradual slackening of the white male's grip on the black male's destiny, led to social reforms and cultural transformations of the 1960s and 1970s. The annihilation of black emancipation both as an ideology and a practice extends to the introduction of hard drugs into black neighbourhood, livelihood and household. Many black males were jailed and black families are destroyed. The black male becomes stigmatised and ceases to be an appropriate model of manhood and masculinity before his traumatised wife and his disappointed children.

Black men have come a long way from the time of slavery and colonialism to modern times. Yet, the neo-slavery is the government institutions with odds stacked up against the black man, thereby jeopardizing his ease of constructing appropriate masculinity. The social disparity is such that white males with criminal records have a better chance of getting jobs than black males without criminal records. In the offices, the white male stands a better chance of being promoted than the black males. These situations are currently damaging black communities and families. The situations have affected the configurations of black masculinity in the United States. Racism is a key factor in the past and present lack of performance in black males. Racism has affected the psyche of the black male and created identity crisis in him, such that he unconsciously embraces the white male's patriarchal system. (Nedhari, 2009). According to Nedhari, "The obtaining of power and the ability to enact traditional masculine roles is the striving for every male child".

The resultant effects of these strivings are stereotyped men, who are lacking in sense of belonging, acceptance and love. The black male's journey towards manhood is truncated by unaddressed psychological issues due to his inability to fully attain manhood. Inadvertently, this situation has become determinant of his lack of success in education, profession and the

society. Nedhari submits that black male's dysfunctional behaviour is a direct result of the trauma suffered due to injustices and harsh treatments from the white dominated system of the United States. Harris (1995) in Nedhari (2009) posits that

In order to compensate for feelings of powerlessness, guilt and shame, some black males of lower socio-economic status have redefined masculinity to emphasise sexual promiscuity, toughness, thrill seeking, and the use of violence in interpersonal interactions.

Traits such as manner of carriage, clothing, speech, walking, standing, greeting and general mannerism become peculiar characteristics of the black male's configuration of masculinity (Nedhari 2009). Also, Nedhari fingers repression as the source and cause of black males' violence, misogyny and inability to engender and sustain proper relationships with black females. He identifies confusion, denial and repression in the black male as the reason of his imitating white male patriarchy.

The black male, associated the white male patriarchy with masculinity and power. Bergner (1998) in Nedhari argues that the white male is representative of a racist system that hinders the black from fulfilling his sexual needs, as well as preventing him from attaining independence and manhood, constructing proper masculinity and free will. The most dominant trait of the black male is his understanding of masculinity and manhood as sexual triumphs and escapades. This is the phallic personality of the black male that dominates out of the three personality types. Harris (1995) sees this situation as consequent of the black male's denial of his castrated position in the white male patriarchal system.

The enlightened black male attempts to distance himself from this traditional pattern of black masculinity. The post-slavery mission of white male patriarchy included the culture of violence against black males and the feeling of frustration and anger. Black male equates power and authority with violence which characterises his history of slavery and racism. Economic inequality between white and black males also contributes to aggression and violence both at the home front and in the community. Low income black households experience domestic violence more than household with higher incomes. Anderson (1999) opines that violence is usually an attempt of the black male to reclaim dominance, respect

and social position. Respect for the black male is crucial to the configuration of his masculinity, since other avenues of expressing manhood are inaccessible to him. This desire for respect and to be respected, especially by black females is essential to the construction of black masculinity.

2.3.1 African masculinity and its rites of passage

Haley's *Roots* (1974) has an account of black masculinity that is invaluable to written African history. Kunta Kinte became a man only after the cultural rite of passage into manhood among the Mandinkas in the Gambia of West Africa in 1750. This rite involves a whole lot of 'manly' activities such as wrestling, the hunt and other exhilarating and endurance gauging tests. This manhood training culminates into the circumcision of the penis. Another instance of circumcision as an important part of being a man in Africa is that of the Uganda boys who are circumcised publicly without any show of pain, nor aid of painkillers (Mutunda, 2009: p. 34, Haley 1974: p. 54, 143-144).

Similarly, Mutunda describes the Lunda tribe in Zambia as sharing the same rite of passage into manhood as the Mandinkas. Boys are isolated from their homes and from females and are taught skills required for them to become men. He mentions teaching of history, customs, hunting, house building and sexuality among others as part of the rite's curriculum. In both instances, the boys are assigned exemplars as instructors: the Kin tango for the Mandinkas and the Chilombola for the Lundas. Successful candidates among the boys return to their societies as men, who now preside over matters of the society. They are now more in company of older males, rather than women.

African masculinity differs from one African community to another. Thus, the notion of masculinity and being a man varies across societies. Some forms of masculinities are linked to conflict, while other forms are linked to agriculture. Also, meanings and types of masculinity exist as ethnic traditions and others are defined by external factors such as foreign religion, western civilisation and universal media comprising print, audio-visual and the internet, (Mutunda, 2009: p. 30).

Among the Hausa-Fulani of Nigeria, passage from boyhood to manhood involves series of tests of courage and endurance. One of these is called Sharo; the flogging of the potential groom during the marriage ceremony. The suitor is expected to endure severe public floggings without as much as flinching, in order to prove himself strong, brave and a worthy suitor to a lovely Fulani girl (King, 2015, Mutunda, 2009: p. 31-32). Mutunda in his work identifies sexuality as a domain of proving manhood in Africa. He cited sexual relationships of boys with multiple girlfriends as central to masculine identity among the Zambians, South Africans and Namibians (Mutunda, 2009: p. 34). He identifies fearlessness, virility, self-reliance, diligence and success as key expressions of masculinity among Africans in African communities. Also, expressions of manhood include being responsible for one's family and kinsmen, being temperate, decisive, honourable, dependable and having stamina and a big heart.

Mutunda observes that Lindsay (2003) recognises sex, age and status as evident in the construction of masculinity among Nigerian railway workers of 1930s to 1960s. He cites Uchendu (2007) as linking several physical and moral traits to masculinity among Nigerian youth. Such traits include strength, firmness, fearlessness, decisiveness, sobriety, daringness, adventurousness and victoriousness. He also must be a protector of the weak and principled.

The ravages of underdevelopment coupled with the socio-political climate in Africa conjure several similarities in the frustrations and challenges that confront the construction of black masculinity. When the economic means of expressing masculinity is impossible and family responsibilities pile up for the African male, domestic violence easily occurs. Lack of understanding and insolence from black females due to lack of performance of black male (as earlier observed by Nedhari) could trigger feelings of emasculation. Black male's desire to be respected in spite of his inability to perform is hinged on his past successes and performances in the home. Respect from black females is the only commodity left to be desired by emasculated black males.

Mutunda equally explores the paradox of the contrasting nature of these qualities expected of a masculine man. As example, he cited strength and compassion as alternating values that determines if a man is going to be considered truly masculine in Africa. As in Nedhari, the socio-economic dimension of masculinity in Africa is also explored in Mutunda's mention of Robert Morrell. He cited the development of communities into cities and political changes also as necessary for the study of masculinity in Africa. A paradigm shift in the perception of the sex role has seen transformation in the ways women relate with men. Women's emergence right into career status has challenged the conventional sex role division. Young South African professional males are accepting the new trend. They are the "New Men" Connell and Morrell referred to in their studies.

According to Morrell (2001) in Mutunda (2009: 39) these new men are 'non-sexist, non-autocratic, more involved in domestic responsibilities, emotionally more responsive and more willing to criticise their own position and practices'. Furthermore, they advocate for educational and occupational opportunities for their spouses, while partaking proudly in domestic chores and caring for young ones. Mutunda agrees with Lindsay and Miescher on the existence of variants of African masculinity.

2.3.2 Female masculinity: The African experience

Masculine protest describes the behaviours of men and women who reject the traditional sex role of their gender in favour of a converse role. Their wanting to gain power and feel dominant often comes from feelings of inferiority, or the sense of being secondary or lower status (Nicole 2017). According to The Concise Encyclopaedia of Sociology (2010) "Female masculinity refers to a range of masculine-inflected identities and identifications." Women who exhibit female masculinity usually refuse the traditionally ostentatious feminine or girly commodities and attires such as frills, lace, red ribbons and the colour pink, and accept more practical and sober coloured articles. They prefer to lead the way and show men how things are done and excel in jobs or activities that are usually considered to be masculine (such as fire fighting, auto mechanics, boxing, football, and wrestling). They are commonly called tomboys when they were girls.

Microsoft Encarta (2009) defines a tomboy as a “boyish girl: a girl who dresses or behaves in a way regarded as boyish, especially a girl who enjoys rough boisterous play”. Tomboyism is an aspect of female masculinity. Halberstam (1998:5-6) describes tomboyism as “an extended childhood period of female masculinity...a “natural” desire for the greater freedoms and mobilities enjoyed by boys.” It is frequently perceived as an indication of independence and self-motivation. Sometimes it can become problematic when it becomes excessive, or continues from childhood into adolescence. This is usually the foundation of female masculinity in women later in life.

Female masculinity exists also in lesbianism. Certain lesbians exhibit masculine traits not just by their clothing, but also in their attitude. This behaviour of lesbian masculinity impacts lesbian relationships and challenges the claim that masculinity is akin only to people with male bodies or that it is only constructed biologically. However, there is a difference between masculinity carried out in men’s bodies and that carried out in women’s. The masculine lesbian identity is called “butch”, while the feminine is called “femme”. This is same for homosexuals (Brooke, 2016).

This phenomenon of ‘masculine women’ centres on women who act in the capacities of men in social role ramification and in the sex role category. They are usually motivated by the desire to out-do men like Seytu, Zaynab Alkali’s main female character in *The Descendants*, who eventually became the best paediatrician ever to come out of her community (Egya, 2013: p. 219). These new women who are independent, intelligent, wealthy and powerful professionals, heiresses, dowagers and captains of industries and business empires erstwhile owned by oppressive and decadent men; are the modern amazons. They are the stuff of myths and legends, just like the female warriors of antiquity and the original Amazons of Greek mythology, the Valkyries of the Norse mythology, the biblical Deborah, the medieval Joan of Arc, the N’Nonmiton of Dahomey, Queen Amina of Zaria and powerful chieftains like Efunsetan of Ibadan. These women were influential economically, socially and politically, and were warlike and domineering over men. They fought against limitations of patriarchy of their times, (Ezeaku 2010, Messynessy 2016,

Mayor 2014, Shaheen 1999). All these have been bountiful sources of inspiration to historians, writers, cineastes and world leaders across history.

The ‘Adaobi’ and the ‘Umuada’ phenomenon among the Igbos in Nigeria of western Africa are reflective of a type of masculine protest and female masculinity. The Adaobi as the first female child assumes equal position and responsibility of a male child, over the women in the patrilineal household. It is an acknowledged and respected traditional position in Igbo communities that are usually highly gendered and patriarchal. This share of power between the male and the female is an exception in patriarchal rule. Umuada women are permitted the power of breadwinning; therefore they act also as fathers and husbands over the women in the patrilineal home.

Adimora-Ezeigbo depicts female masculinity in the Igbo culture of Umuada which is the most vital female assembly. The Umuada custom is sanctioned by patriarchy. It permits women who are daughters of a patrilineal home to act in capacities otherwise recognised as masculine. According to Maduagwu (2012) “Umuada is the association of indigenous daughters of a given community”. The membership includes young and old, single or married, divorced or separated, it is an embodiment of one of the feminine means of government in customary Igbo milieu. It provides avenue of presenting and protecting women’s interests (Maduagwu, 2012, Igbo Cultural and Support Network, 2017).

The Umuada is an acknowledgement of the women in a patriarchal culture and before the advent of the British government; women exercised authority at certain levels in the patrilineal households and the communities. Non-membership of the Umuada group could only mean that the woman is an outsider or she is being ostracised for being an anathema. The Umuada is the third recognised channel of dispute resolution in Igboland (the first being via the immediate family head and the second via the Umunna; a counterpart of the Umuada). Other roles of Umuada centres on the issues of birth, puberty, marriage and death.

The Umuada also performs the role of chastising the men, when the latter is suspected or accused of being corrupt or immoral. Such rebukes of men by women, weakens men’s power over women in a patriarchal society. In this way, The Umuada acts as checks and

balances to the authority of the males. The Umuada protects widows from their oppressors and regulate the process of their mourning and burial of their husbands. In return for their services, the men respect and enforce the decisions of the Umuada over any matter. The Umuada calls the foreign wives married to their brothers “[Our] wives” suggesting that they [Umuada] are the “husbands” of their fellow women (Odumchi 2013, Michael 2017).

Citing Achebe, Maduagwu (2012) declares that the record of Igbo women’s achievements and contributions to history is absent from post-colonial records. In pre-colonial era, women take up positions of power and influence in the village system. There was equilibrium in authority between the genders in Igbo societies; as in the case of the Akan matriarchy, the incursion of the Europeans greatly undermined the otherwise balanced share of power between the genders.

The European portrayal of the Igbo society and by extension the African society as being ran by men, informed the exclusion of women from the colonial political arrangement. Women in Igbo land usually gather wealth via economically viable occupation such as trading, farming or weaving. With this wealth they gain socio-political and economic status. In her book, Amadiume (1987) speaks of ‘male daughters’ among the Nnobi clan within the Igbo people. The *Ada*-first daughter wields the staff of authority (the *Ofo*) over the females in the family and patrilineage. She rules over the female affairs and is a counterpart of the first son *Di-okpala* who rules over the male affairs.

Amadiume speaks also of the ‘female husbands’ who were masters to men. In corroboration to this, Heinemann’s expanded edition of *Things Fall Apart* (1996) describes the *Ndi Ogalanya* as wealthy women who marry other women and “father” their own children. This position of family head is traditionally occupied by men, but under certain circumstances ‘male daughters’ and ‘female husbands’ also function in this capacity. Men are sometimes called *Onye be*, a genderless word meaning wife, because they are in service or domestic affiliation with the ‘female husbands’.

Sometimes women perform master or husband roles and men perform wifely or domestic roles. This culture supports the custom of the patrilineal wives calling the daughters of the patrilineage 'husbands'. Gender was not always synonymous to sex among Igbos. Gender formation was malleable, such that daughters could become sons and as a result male (Amadiume 1987). Umuadas were so influential that they often use their sheer number and culinary or sexual deprivation to change men's unjust decisions, actions or other negative situations. Sometimes they threaten to separate en mass from their husbands, if certain decisions were not taken in their favour. Women become title holders and members of secret cults, which enable them to exercise power and enjoy privileges in the society that were normally reserved for males (Odumchi 2013).

An interview with Chinyere Cecile, a self-sponsored first-class graduate woman of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in the Punch Newspaper, affirms the truth in the on-going practice of female children rejection due to notions of masculinity. Ajaja (2016) in his interview of Chinyere elicited responses from his interviewee that give insights into contemporary nature of Hegemonic Masculinity and masculine protest in families and among female children respectively. According to the interviewee "Dad left mum for having all female kids, I'm glad I've made mummy proud' (Ajaja p. 25)

The tendency to leave pregnant girls before birth or after birth because the baby turns out to be a girl is quite common in Hegemonic Masculinity, where female children are seen as weak and passive. Adler's masculine protest traces the decision to reject feminine sex roles or activities by female children to this rejection. Female babies under this notion of masculinity grow up feeling inferior or inadequate. Adler sees the determination of such female children to outperform or excel over the boys as a sign of protest against masculinity for undermining the female child. Chinyere says about her decision to excel academically over the boys in her class:

I was influenced to make such decision just to honour my mother by making her so proud of her "girl" child. That was what cost her marriage, so, I planned to make her proud. Female children can also attain the same level of greatness like a male child. I believe we can achieve whatever we set our eyes on if we believe and work towards it. We were more

than forty in my final year but only two of us had first class.
(Ajaja, p. 25)

Often, women who take this stance against patriarchy and by extension Hegemonic Masculinity, usually do this to prove their fathers wrong for rejecting them as worthless. They impress their mothers for believing in them and subsequently reward their mothers to spite their father (who they often abandon the same way he did them). Adler says that such women often try to prove to be superior to men or better than a particular class assigned to them by the conventions of culture and society. In Chinyere's words:

I hope my story will inspire many, mostly women, to encourage them to rise up against the various barriers and restrictions imposed on them by culture and traditions. My desire is to go for Master's and PhD...(Ajaja, p. 25)

Beyala identifies these traits of protest and female masculinities (i.e. independence, indomitability, stubbornness and intellectuality) in her female characters. She attests to this in her interview with the popular magazine AMINA (2002) where she said: "Mes personnages féminins sont rebelles..." [My female characters are rebellious...] (Translation mine).

From 1995 to 2005 when the first and second editions of *Masculinities* were published, there has been great diversification in the research on men and masculinities. The international community has known a considerable measure of growth globally in this area of research. Popular among researchers responsible for this profusion of knowledge were Kimmel and Messner (2001) from the United States, Whitehead and Barret (2001) from Britain, Welzertlang (2000) from France, Ghousoub and Sinclair-Webb (2000) from the Middle East, Roberson and Suzuki (2003) from Japan and Morrell (2001) from South Africa among many others.

The application of the new knowledge about the construction of masculinity cuts across various areas of global issues. Most commonly in the area of education, health, violence, fathering and counselling. Researchers have equally taken the task of unravelling the implications of masculinities in these settings Lingard and Douglas (1999) and Martino and

Pallotta-Chiarolli (2003) focused on the construction of masculinity in schools. They centred also on the formation of identity in youth; matters of discipline in school and cases of harassment. Works on the making of masculinity in relation to the learning problems of boys also constitute the extent of their work. In the area of health, Schofield, Connell, Walker et al (2000) and Hurrelmann and Kolip (2002) also looked into the health and safety of men and boys in relation to the construction of gender. They associated the construction of masculinity with men's role in reproductive and sexual health matters. Breines, Connell and Eide (2000), Kaufman (2001) and Wölfl (2001) also researched into the usefulness of knowledge about masculinity in averting violence by men in the home and at work, sexual assault of women by men and in war situations. Researchers such as Olavarría (2001), Mckeown, Harry and Dermot (1999) and kindler (2002) studied men's relationship as fathers and in general. They considered also the problems of traditional masculinities. They also looked at the progression of new patterns in fathering and family interactions; just as in the aspect of counselling, Kupers (1993) and Brandes and Bullinger (1996) assent that the comprehension of the formation of masculinity is essential. According to the aforementioned, understanding how masculinity is constructed makes counselling and psychotherapy of men more efficacious.

Other applications of masculinity and the understanding of its construction include intellectual applications. In this regard, comprehension of its Operation is seen as important to the understanding of other problems or theories. Such an example is seen in international diplomacy and power relations (Zalewski and Parpart 1998). Such research looks into why men are the principal players and actors in diplomacy, ministry, armed forces and corporations among other fields. Another example is seen in the culture of imperialism and in the construction of nationalism and national identities. This informs us on the nature of the society being built and the procedure of nation-building (Gittings 1996, Nagel 1998).

Research into the domestic and sexual violence domain of masculinity studies has been problematic. Also, the area of economic development in poor countries in relation to masculinity research has been difficult. Men as focal point in both case scenario, becomes worrisome, since it implies the undermining of women in the area of resources (Connell,

2005: p. xvii). Since the last 20 years, the rapid development of knowledge on masculinities and the significant achievements of researchers are not without problems. Debates have been sponsored in contentions with aspects of the masculinity research. Critics like White (2000) argues that since men are already in the focus of society, they are also part of the problem of gender inequalities, and should be part of the solution.

One of the problems is that there have not been commensurate growth in the general ideas about men and masculinities, as there have been on the method of masculinity research. Current research has shown different forms of masculinity, but there have not been an indication of how they are spread across populations. While Poynting, Noble and Tabar (1998) believe that ethnic differences in the construction of masculinity are important in the case of social conflict, yet the ethnographic studies did not measure difference among the ethnics at a given place. In this wise, knowledge on the distribution of different masculinities across social groups; ethnic communities, regions or social classes is lacking and therefore needed (Connell, 2005: p. xvii).

This research contributes to the much needed scholarship on African masculinity, by looking at the construction of masculinity among Africans in Africa and in Diaspora, through the representations of the male characters and their practices in the literary works of Beyala. The books are so selected to ascertain if there are differences between the formation of masculinity among blacks in Africa and those in Diaspora. Books like *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine*, *Le Petit prince de Belleville* and *Maman a un Amant* cover the representations of males in Diaspora (France), while *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée*, *Tu t'appelleras Tanga* and *La Négrresse Rousse* cover the representations of males in Africa.

The attacks on the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity of the 80s, despite its being precursor to a large body of research, have necessitated its review. Changes have been made to the gender theory that formulated it, and better information on men and masculinities is now accessible (Connell, 2005: p. xviii). Regardless its drawbacks, Hegemonic Masculinity provides a way of theorising gendered power relations among men. Discursive approaches

to masculinity study, despite its influence, have no grip on matters regarding economic inequality and the state, which are aspects essential to change in masculinities (Connell 2005 and Segal 1997).

It is important to state that conceptualisations of masculinity must necessarily include relevant evidences from the entire area of study in order to bridge gaps between masculinist theories and other theories of gender. There is need to reconcile the variants, in order to have a more coherent whole. There is need for an understanding of the relationships between regions and nations of the world, if there is going to be a global comprehension of Masculinities, though there be a growing record of studies of masculinities from all over the world. Marchand and Runyan (2000) in Connell (2005) recognise migration among other factors such as large-scale social processes, global market relations and ethnic cum cultural conflict, as important in the comprehension of masculinities and other gender issues.

In the lives of the male characters in *Diaspora* in the works of Beyala, there is a marked difference between when they are in Africa and when they are in Europe. Yet, their disposition of patriarchal masculinity is prevalent in their relations with women, as observable in the course of this research. Though migration is responsible for some of the men's considerations towards the women, yet it could not change the men's tendencies of being violent or unfaithful to their women.

In the consideration of the aforementioned factors affecting the understanding of masculinity globally, Guttman's (1996 & 2002) descriptions of how masculinity is configured in relation to the lives of men living in Urban-fringe working-class environment such as Mexico City, ranks among the best. In this, he shows also the link between these working-class men and the economic and political procedures which continually moulds their worlds and elicits reactions from them. In the work of Morrell (2001) he looked into the formation of masculinity among white boys in the schools of Natal, South Africa. In Connell's opinion, the work is a good illustration of ethnographic social history and Morrell accomplished also a link between a particular type of masculinity and the procedure of

conquest and colonisation, and global economic obligations, in relation to the geo-political zone of South Africa.

2.3.3 Masculinity in the novels of African writers

Often times, masculinity in African women writings are queried. Men's negative attitudes and actions often come under fire from feminist African women writers who examine masculinity. Female authors writing about men and the conditions of women in patriarchal societies have often questioned masculinity. Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* and *She no longer weeps* are examples of narratives where men are portrayed as wicked and female characters rebel against men's masculinity. In "Men and women: gender issues in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous conditions* and *She no longer weeps*" Moyana (1996) compares both Dangarembga's works with Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the cross* and identifies similarities in the female characters' desire for freedom. She describes an antagonistic and radical personality in the women, who according to her "defy law, custom and authority to mete out justice to [their] offender, seducer and symbol of [their] oppression".

Moyana sees new women with revolutionary voices and actions. She traces a metamorphosis of these women into different beings, which are products of gender related struggles. This breaking away from oppression as Dangarembga herself describes the process of 'becoming' of her rebellious female characters, is testament to their challenge of masculinity and the traditional order of things in societies governed by patriarchy. These women practice self-interrogation, resist and refuse notions that are contrary to women's estate or prevent women from thinking clearly for themselves. These women assert themselves and are not easily intimidated by patriarchy and its agencies. They are resistant to masculinity.

In *She no longer weeps*, Moyana identifies the heroine Martha, who by personal resolve metes out retributive justice to her male lover. These women are victims of problematic relationships with men. Moyana speaks of Dangarembga's women as rebelling "against their expected social roles". In *Nervous Conditions*, she mentioned characters like

Tambudzai, Nyasha and Lucia. Lucia for one is a woman of free-spirit who resists attempts to tame and break her. Traditionally, women are expected to manifest self-sacrifice and passivity in their relationship with men (Moyana 28). In addition, she identifies ‘timidity, tenderness, and compliance, docility, softness, and innocence and domestic competence ‘as womanly virtues’ that in actuality shackles the woman to cultural slavery thereby to men.

Education and creation of economic base appears to be the most consistent prescription of feminists against the exploitation and oppression of women. This is also observed in Tambudzai in *Nervous Conditions*. These female characters kick vehemently against sex role, because they envisage these roles to turn them into docile zombies or according to Moyana, into ‘sweet, sad wife’. Non-conformist female characters dots feminists’ literary writings. Unmarried single parents feature prominently, as if to remain unmarried or a single parent is a rejection of the traditional sex role.

These feminists’ female characters are resilient, self-willed and independent; necessary attributes in the fight for women’s liberation and total independence. But the story is not always a smooth sail neither is it devoid of bitter experiences. While some women escape the straight-jacket like role drawn up for them by society, others end up as nervous wrecks. As in the case of Nyasha in *Nervous Conditions* and Aïssatou in Beyala’s *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l’Africaine*. Masculinity is queried via the men that are emblematic of its patriarchal principles and affinities.

Among Dangarembga’s male characters, Babamukuru is the embodiment of masculinity. In describing this character, Moyana uses adjectives like domineering, benevolent, financially supportive, callous, unthinking, unimaginative, and uncreative. It is these contrasting negative and positive qualities in men that are often responsible for the Stockholm syndrome in women captured and enslaved by patriarchy. In the same breath, women desire to reject and accept the same social conventions that wrongly define and oppress them (Moyana, 1996: p. 30-31). Adebayo (2015: 41-50) traces this contradiction in several literary works and affirms the awareness of African female scholarship about this condition in women she qualifies as a ‘love-hate attitude’. Like slaves that love their chains, this paradoxical

condition usually leads to women's bitter-sweet experience in their relationship with men. Also, the condition counters absolute rejection of men by radical feminists and warrants womanism as a reconfiguration of extreme feminism.

In her writing, Dangarembga presents masculinity as oppressive towards women and the emasculated male. This is a feature of Hegemonic Masculinity where queers are treated as being on the same level with women on the ladder rungs of dominance. Usual traits associated with masculinity according to Moyana include 'courage, endurance, physical stamina, wiliness, [sound] judgement, and a corresponding [and] complementary conception of what is right for women'. Yet, masculinity is seen as oppressive, regardless with whom it is found; father, husband or brother (Moyana 30). Babamukuru appears to share similar patriarchal traits as Baba Segi in Lola Shoneyin's *The secret lives of Baba Segi's wives* both characters see themselves as the source of their women's lives. They are the great providers who know best, the benevolent and generous benefactors that are indispensable to women. In Moyana's words Babamukuru relish being treated as 'the origin for everything, the light we all need to see by, and the air we have to breathe...'.

The activities of the excessively dominant Hegemonic Masculinity often result in the emasculation of other types of masculinity. Men that could not aspire to the traits society deems masculine often feel less of a man. Lack or loss of functionality or performance of activities associated with mainstream notions of manhood, frequently causes men to feel emasculated. Moyana in her essay speaks of Dangarembga's picture of women who exude confidence, assert themselves and are uncontrolled by men, while painting a picture of men who are self-conceited and are too proud to admit that women are equally competent and capable of doing excellent work or performing impressive feats as men.

Men are emasculated when they lose self-esteem and feel eclipsed by the achievements of more efficient men, or when their sexual virility or preference is questionable (or questioned). Men's emasculation usually provokes issues surrounding their sexual identity. On this, Block (1984) cited in Moyana (1996) elucidates: "Sexual identity means...the earning of a sense of self that includes recognition of gender secure enough to permit the

individual to manifest human qualities that our society...has labelled (manly)”. Emasculated men often lose the sense of self and gender security as the male characters such as Jeremiah and Takesure in Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*. The Nervous conditions as a title probably refers to the women who out of fear and nervousness of their male oppressors, end up supporting and identifying with patriarchal system that subjugate and weighs them down so much. This is the hostage situation of women held captive by patriarchy via masculinity. This was the case with Maiguru in *Nervous Conditions* who was an example of women that passively and silently suffer under the yoke of slavery and abuse.

Maiguru like M’am in *Le petit prince de Belleville* of Beyala share similar traits and are definitely in similar conditions. M’am also suffer silently, patiently and eternally under Abdou’s yoke. Instead of a relationship of lovers and friends between her and Abdou as a couple, it is rather that of a lord and his slave, a master and his servant. Beyala as Dangarembga build these scenarios of abuse and neglect to a crescendo where sufferers; slaves and hostages (M’am and Maiguru) explode and lash out at their husbands. Both women in a single moment erupted like volcanoes that have been dormant for years. Like the feminist outburst and outcry of the 1970s, the men never saw it coming. The world, prior to that time, has never seen it before in that fashion. Popularly, feminists include the older women in the group that upholds patriarchal traditions. For feminists, the ‘all-wise’ grandmothers, the didactic aunts and mothers are all suspects, and part of the adherents of the tenets of patriarchy. They support the patriarchal system and make it harder for oppressed women to break free.

In *She no longer weeps*, Moyana identifies three male characters whose chauvinism borders on repulsion. Martha is the heroine. She is a love-struck young lady, pregnant and expectant for her boyfriend Freddy (one of the repulsive three). Freddy and his friends abuse women. They use gutter language in reference to women. They do this because women wear trousers like men, drink alcohol like men, argue with men, challenge men as if they are men themselves, they are puffed up by their sudden awareness born out of their education (*She no longer weeps*, 9).

We see these behaviours Martha is accused of in Mathilda, another female character of Beyala in *Le petit prince de Belleville*. Mathilda drinks and smokes in the bar with men (in the presence of her husband). She wears trousers and outrageously short skirts. She is loud and stubborn. She is always in front of the mirror making up or attending one party or the other with her friends. These character traits in Mathilda angers and frustrate her husband Kouam, who laments vehemently to his brother Abdou. Being a typical patriarchal man and a hegemonic masculinist to the core, Abdou advised Kouam to beat some senses into Mathilda and then have vigorous sex with her. Abdou believes that all women love and understand is violence and sex (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 94). In this wise, Freddy is more like Abdou. They are both typical representation of masculinism, direct products of patriarchal societies.

Freddy tells Martha that she is a bitch that will never amount to anything despite her education. He tells her that no man would ever want her, that she is useless and finished (since she is now pregnant for him.) in the case of Kouam, his inability to control or subjugate Mathilda his wife, makes him feel emasculated. Abdou makes him feel emasculated, being the lord over his house. M'am and Soumana dares not attempt with Abdou what Martha and Mathilda do with their husbands. Eventually, Mathilda sees Kouam as too emasculated for her. He is too 'soft' and understanding. She left him to be with another lover; a woman. Feminists often portray these women in a 'Before and after' manner. They tauntingly exhibit in the liberated women an 'If you could see me now, living my life without you' attitude towards the abandoned men. The oppressed women eventually break free from the restrictions of society and their oppressors. They eventually wreak havoc on their wicked male partners and avenge themselves against patriarchal society. These women live freer but controversial lives away from their forsaken male partners. Mies (1980) in Adebayo (2015: 47) explains this situation thus:

...Only when there is a rupture in the normal life of a woman, i.e. a crisis such as divorce, the end of a relationship etc. is there a chance for her to become conscious of her true condition...As long as normalcy is not disrupted, they are not able to admit even to themselves that these relationships are oppressive or exploitative.

Mathilda, M'am and Martha rose up and spoke out against their oppressors. They all triumphed over them. Mathilda's refusal to have a baby for Kouam and Lucia's refusal to marry (even when she gets pregnant for Takesure) are powerful statements in the assertion of women's rights. Feminist views about marriage and marital relationships are pushed forward in opposition and resistance to masculinist ideologies. In her experience of marital frustrations, Mathilda left her husband to become a lesbian. As unlikely as this may seem in real life, current queer issues and innovations on problematic areas addresses situations like those of people like Mathilda.

These are instances of feminists' identification with the Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) ideologies. M'am scolded Kouam and blames him for being too 'Sissy' in handling his wife. She fingers Kouam's lack of control and lack of 'balls' as reasons why his wife left him for a girl (meaning that a girl is probably more masculine than he is). This is the contemporary doctrine of feminists in conjunction with queers and emasculated men. Men like Freddy, Babamukuru and Abdou are portrayed as callous chauvinists. Therefore, women dare not take them for granted.

Nevertheless, feminists challenge such men as these. As hardy and dictatorial as Abdou is, M'am tames him in one fell swoop. As patriarchal and terribly oppressive as Freddy is, Martha dealt with him too. Sometimes radical feminism recommends extreme measures such as death, to the men-malaise. There are illustrations of these in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Dangarembga's *She no longer weeps*. For Wariinga and Martha the solution is to kill patriarchal men that oppress women (Sadek, 2008: p. 179, Moyana, 1996: p. 33). Beyala subscribes to this murderous notion in the statements of her militant female character Ateba in *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée* and that of her rebellious Soumana in *Le petit prince de Belleville*. Both characters want the oppressive men in their lives dead. Ateba wants all men annihilated as a solution to women's problems (Beyala, 1987: 88) and Soumana plans to slit the throat of her unfaithful husband, while prescribing that her mother and step-mothers beat her father to death (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 34).

Nevertheless, in several of her works, Beyala pretends a leniency in her prescription for the 'men problem'. She ultimately has her female characters vanquish their male oppressors, but she does so in less murderous ways. M'am makes a lackey of Abdou, who erstwhile has been a real thorn in her flesh. Following her eventual recalcitrance to Abdou's gestures, and her toying with the idea of murdering Abdou, she never got round to doing it. Feminists also in their writings, expose the subtle brainwashing of women by patriarchy. Women are encouraged to accept their lot and misfortune as destiny, as fate. They are to resign in surrender to the maltreatments from their oppressors and accept it as Karma. Feminists expose this patriarchal indoctrination and portray it in their fearful, docile and nervous female characters such as Maiguru, Nyasha and Aïssatou. These either lost out of the fight for emancipation, or suffered nervous breakdown. Feminists in such illustrations advocate change in gender relations. They point out the oppressive tendencies and present symbolical panacea to the problems.

Some of the solutions recommended largely for suffering and oppressed women include education, empowerment, development and emancipation via self-discovery and self-esteem. The principal lesson for women in the struggle against the social problems faced by the female characters; is not to avoid the problems. Women are not to accept their negative situations as their destinies or fates. They are to rather deal with the situations thoroughly as unacceptable and surmount them. In support of this, Moyana (1996:33) warns that "otherwise such a fatalistic attitude to life is self-destructive and there is absolutely no need for it".

In his essay "The fire this time: discourse of the body and 'scrotophobia' in the works of Calixthe Beyala" Adesanmi (2015: 201-203) presented the story of the "prise d'écriture" of African women writers as over-flogged, monotonous and over-historicised. He qualified most Francophone African female writers as embittered victims of the system, who have resultantly started what is dubbed "sex war" by feminist literary theorists. Like Mutunda (2009: 175-178), Adesanmi (2015: 203-219) recognised Beyala as a prodigy and a committed chieftain of the third generation of African female Francophone writers. He declared her post-modernist tendencies and linguistic violation as legendary. Adesanmi

acclaimed Beyala's anti-masculinist position, that has led her to write various novels in the subversion of patriarchy, an activism against men bordering on rejection symbolised in her proclamation that "La femme est née à genoux aux pieds de l'homme ..." (Beyala, 1987: p. 151), "God has sculpted woman on her knees at the feet of man" (Byala, 1996: p. 118).

It is these interesting features of Beyala that attracted the choice of her works as a focal point for a microcosmic view of a larger anti-masculinist presence in the writings of African women writers. The rarity of the application of the theory of masculinity to her novels contributes to the motivation of this study. Therefore, what this study will be doing differently is to apply the theory of masculinity solely on selected novels of Calixthe Beyala. The study will look at the dynamics of being male in the world of radical feminists such as Beyala. It will also provide insights as to how men perceive women from the masculinity perspective.

Furthermore, one of the aims of this study is to establish that despite the notoriety of the author as a radical feminist with extreme persuasion, her works do not reject men absolutely. Male characters in works like *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine* have shown her tendency to compromise and relax her severity in male portrayals once in a while. Characters like Eric Friedman have shown seemingly complementarist aspect of her perspective on the male. Though the entire tone of Beyala in *Lettre d'une Africaine à ses Sœurs Occidentales* is satirical, arrogant and condescending towards men (whom she counts as inferior to women) and their achievements over time, yet in this treatise to her feminist persuasion, Beyala (1995:7) recognised and admitted out-rightly that not all men are oppressive. Neither do they all seek to subject women forcibly. This study will investigate this claim in her writings, in order to establish the veracity of her statement and to see if her works are reflective of this.

One of the gaps in their writings is their inability to see men from a positive masculinist point of view. This is part of what this research aims to do. It attempts to see men from a positive stand point, using the same novels that often condemns men. such as the three selected novels.

2.3.4 Relevance of the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity to the research

Hegemonic Masculinity in principle encourages subordination and expects submission in women. Beyala's heroines are in direct transgression of this tenet. Ateba in *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée* is always on the warpath with men and once suggested that the only way to end women's suffering and oppression is to annihilate men. Hegemonic Masculinity is closely tied to marriage, Calixthe Beyala's male characters do not do well in the home or marriage settings and they are not role model householders. Rather, they are depicted as molesters, assaulters, exploiters and oppressors of women. They are men that put young women in the family way, then deny and reject the babies and their mothers as seen in *La Nègresse Rousse* and *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée* among others.

Hegemonic Masculinity expects women's compliance with subordination via 'emphasised femininity' by accommodating the interests and desires of men, Beyala's women are resistant and non-compliant to patriarchal norms. Aïssatou in *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine* is dominant and assertive over the men in her life. She is in control of their sexual relationships with her and treats them as inferior men that are dependent on her. As a tenet, Hegemonic Masculinity does not subscribe to men's supremacy over women via brute force or violence, neither does it condone any form of ascendancy achieved through violent means or threats, but the male characters portrayed in the works of Beyala violate and rape women as a form of oppression in order to dominate and subject them forcefully as seen in *Your name shall be Tanga*. Other times, Beyala depicts men as the ones who are compliant to sex-role reversals and defiant to stereotyping (like Souleymane Bolobolo and Eric).

Beyala portrays the female characters in her novels as if she is aware of a masculinist plot by men to attain ascendancy using oppressive means and principles. She portrays female characters that are oppositional and contrary to this tenet of masculinity and then represents the male characters as unmindful or uncaring of these women's actions, or too weak to do anything about them. This research looks into Beyala's conscious opposition to the tenets of Hegemonic Masculinity via her male representations. It is these defiant representations in her novels that appears as anti-masculinist and warrants a masculinist study of her works.

2.3.5 Application of Hegemonic Masculinity to the research

My application of the theory of masculinity will be predominantly to adapt R.W. Connell's (2005) views on masculinity and use them to analyse the realities of the male characters of the chosen novels. Since 'Emphasised Femininity' is also a principle of Hegemonic Masculinity which encourages women to embrace subordination to men, I will be looking out for instances of it in the female characters in relation to the male as they live their gendered lives in the novels. Connell has shown that masculinity is different from maleness, which is a biological state that is defined by biological traits. He has illustrated masculinity as a social construct that is interpreted from a cultural perspective, with inputs from social institutions such as school, religion, the law and profession among others.

The study will research into the portrayals of male characters using R.W. Connell's theory of masculinity (2005), and from the perspective of both chosen novels of Calixthe Beyala. This study will investigate if there are traits of Hegemonic Masculinity and other variants of masculinity in the male characters, and establish if the author portrays her male characters with a consciousness of these traits. It will ascertain whether the author's male representations are random or deliberate, by observing the relationship between Hegemonic Masculinity and the variants of masculinity depicted in the selected novels. As related texts and sources of the research data will show masculinity is about authority and the surrounding implications of its use. Authority is positional and like power it is hierarchical, masculinity is tied to power and hierarchy, which places men over women in the society. This study will look at Beyala's portrayal of men in different positions in the society of her novels. The study will try to establish if there are anti-masculinist representations of men in the male characters, in relation to power and its use. It will also describe the perception of women from the masculinist cum patriarchal perspectives vis-à-vis the masculinity theory. There will be a constant reference and comparison between Beyala's representation of masculinity and masculinity as perceived by R.W. Connell in her work *Masculinities* (2005).

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework employed in this research is the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity by Robert William Connell (2005), who recognises masculinity as a product of the society rather than nature (Mutunda, 2009: p. 8). The theory studies practices that encourage the dominant social status of men and the subordinate social position of women. It tends to explain the method and the reason of men's maintenance of dominance over women in social roles. R.W. Connell declares in the second edition of her book *Masculinities*, that writing about issues on masculinity is 'explosive and tangled' and the 'chances of going astray are good'. Researchers are currently on investigation and theorisation of masculinities from an African socio-political perspective, prominent among such researchers is Robert Morrell from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. These researches point increasingly not only to the differences but also to the similarities in masculinities world over. Construction of masculinities varies from one society to the other. It varies also from one setting to the other: for instance workplaces, schools and careers view masculinity separately.

The images of the ideal man, the masculine hero, the powerful, aggressive and dominant male is all over the media. Various advertisements of sports, electronic gadgets, clothing and toiletries are filled with pictures of what the ideal man should look like. From Microsoft computers to Hugo Boss Suits, men are depicted as confident, desirable and in control. Men represent the image of efficiency, service, toughness, courage and direction, while women are presented as delicate, dependent, passive, subordinate and acquiescent. Likewise in political and military campaign posters, masculinity is portrayed as hegemonic (i.e. dominant, violent, rationally opinionated towards women and successful). Fantasy images of men as war heroes and baby-loving at the same time fills the media and paints hegemonic pictures of men's masculinity. R.W. Connell in his landmark work *Masculinities* (2005),

which is known as authority on the nature and nurture of masculinity, emphasise the role of the media in the construction of masculinity.

It is important at this juncture to state (before dwelling on the social organisation of masculinity) that the major contemporary researches of the twentieth-century have attempted unsuccessfully to engender a consistent scholarship of masculinity (Connell, 2005: p. 67). The social organisation of masculinity recognises hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised masculinities as variants of masculinity, each having its own peculiarities and principles. The Hegemonic Masculinity as the principal masculinity theory used in the literary analysis of this thesis is the most popular and dominant of the four common variants.

3.1 Hegemonic Masculinity

The notion of 'hegemony' comes from the Marxist theorist Antonio Francesco Gramsci. He wrote on Sociology and other disciplines. Gramsci in his study of class relations discovered an operation within culture where a group claims and maintains principal position in social life. Always, one form of masculinity is elevated over others culturally. Connell (2005) defines Hegemonic Masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women".

Powerful archetypes abound in Hegemonic Masculinity, yet they do not perpetually possess power over other types of masculinity. There are always people that possess organisational authority or immense fortune that possess nothing like hegemonic ideals in their existence. Group or individual correlation between cultural model and organisational authority is necessary for the setting up of Hegemony. Hegemonic Masculinity is so institutionalised in high ranking business, military and government that feminism or contentious men have done little or nothing to budge it. The true symbol of hegemony is the flourishing claim to power, rather than the use of violence. This is not to say that there is no violence in hegemony. Hegemonic Masculinity is a rationalisation of patriarchy. It is a safeguard and

an apologia for patriarchy. It is a product of mainstream notions that has become an accepted technique of masculinity and a mainstay of patriarchy. Masculinity rises to the point of hegemony when it fulfils the duty of defence to patriarchy. As it wanes in the capacity to perform this duty, its dominant position becomes purposeless and threatened. The contentions of the status quo by new arrivals often lead to the formation of a new hegemony. Sometimes women contend this male supremacy. Hegemonic by this is a historically dynamic gender intercourse.

The notions of masculinity in the Hegemonic Masculinity are evident in its principles such as the global dominance of men over women, its dominance over other subordinated masculinities, its ascendancy through institutions of patriarchy such as religion, culture and mass media. Its notions of masculinity are also seen in acts of government such as wage structure and taxation, its profiting from subjugating women, its heterosexuality as opposed to homosexuality and its enhancement through women's total submission.

Hegemonic Masculinity is constructed in relation to women and the subordination of women globally. Men are the beneficiaries of these subordinations. The dominant position of the male over the female is characteristic of Hegemonic Masculinity (Connell, 2005). The hegemonic position of the man privileges him as the lord wherever women are found, especially in the home. In *Le Petit Prince de Belleville*, one of the main male characters Abdou sits on the sofa, watches T.V. and waits for his meals from M'am his first wife. M'am dutifully rushes home early to prepare the meals and to serve Abdou "Faut qu'on s'en aille, j'ai le repas à preparer et puis pas mal de rangement" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 18), "One should be going, I have a meal to prepare and quite some tidying up to do" (Translation mine). Stereotyping sex-roles is unacceptable to feminists, who posit that the domestic sex-role assigned to women by the society is a limitation and subjugation of women. Rather, men and women should share domestic responsibilities equally. Abdou as a hegemonic man enforces the principles of patriarchy in his home. He enjoys the dividends of patriarchy. As lord of the home, without as much as greeting his wives, he orders them around to attend to his whims and caprices. Beyala in her writings challenges these notions and sometimes condemns them totally through her female characters.

Ascendancy through religious doctrine and practice is another key feature of Hegemonic Masculinity. Abdou is an autocratic husband and a specimen of the religion empowered patriarchal man, who barks orders at his wives to do his biddings, while they scurry around to do his biddings without questioning (46-47).

Mon papa est revenue du service. Il a dit bonjour à personne, il s'est assis. Il a croquet une noix de cola. Il a mâché. Il a craché au loin, *floc-flac*. Il s'est tourney vers les femmes. Il a dit: 'Faut laver ci et repasser ça.' Il râle qu'il manqué un bouton à la chemise qu'il a mise ce matin. Les femmes, ells n'arrêtent pas de repasser, de lui reprise ses chaussettes, de trouver son mouchoir. (*Le Petit Prince*, P. 46-47)

He turned towards the women. He said: 'This has to be washed, that ironed. Find me this, get me that'. He's griping about a missing button on the shirt he put on this morning. The women never stop ironing, darning his socks, finding his handkerchief. (*Loukoun: The Little Prince*, p. 28-29)

3.2 Subordinate Masculinity

Hegemony interprets cultural supremacy in the society entirely. Within that general structure, particular gender interactions of supremacy and subjugation exist between men clusters. In current European/American society, heterosexual men's domination over homosexual men is an example of such intra-gender relations. This reflects over a broad spectrum of significant social exercises such as politics, culture and law. Homophobia, which leads to discrimination against homosexuals, has warranted a number of assaults. Gay men have been subjected to violence legally (e.g. incarceration via sodomy statute), persecution by religious right, mob actions leading to threats and murder, economic biases and individual boycotts.

Persecution has placed homosexual masculinities at the lowest rung of the gender ladder in the midst of men. Dennis Altman in his research *Homosexual: Oppression and liberation* illustrates instances of these practices wherein gay men are repressed. Homosexuality is emblematic of whatever patriarchy forbids in Hegemonic Masculinity. One of the criteria for true masculinity as stated by Brannon earlier is 'No sissy stuff'. It is this sissified attitude

in gay men that often make Hegemonic Masculinity to associate them with femininity, thereby victims of vicious homophobic attacks. Gay masculinity is not the only one on the lowest rung of the gender ladder. As homosexuals, some heterosexual men and boys are also banished from the legitimate group. In the procedure of banishment, the following invective array of lexicon is employed according to Connell “Wimp, Milksop, nerd, turkey, sissy, lily liver, jelly fish, Yellowish, candy ass, ladyfinger, pushover, cookie pusher, cream puff, motherfucker, pantywaist, mother’s boy, four-eyes, ear’-ole, dweeb, geek, milquetoast, cedric, among others that are associated with femininity.

3.3 Complicit Masculinity

Many men that are incapable of Operating in the entirety of the Hegemonic Masculinity, profit from its patriarchal proceeds. In reality as in the normative definitions of masculinity, only a few men live up to the standards of Hegemonic Masculinity. Hegemony subjugates women, therefore it is benefiting generally unto men. Yet, in the rumination on the operation of the society in general, numbers are important. Gender politics is the politics of numbers; therefore technical thinking needs involve the mass of people. This situation brings into play the need of identifying one more relationship in the midst of men’s clusters. This relationship is recognised by Connell as “Complicity with the hegemonic project”. This is put in place in order to theorise the circumstances surrounding men that benefits from Hegemonic Masculinity, but do not comply with its tenets. These are men who (against the norms of Hegemony) negotiate and agree with their wives. Though they benefit from the male domination policy of hegemony, yet they do not wear the crown of their leadership with incontestable impunity. Their authority does not undermine their respect for their wives and mothers. These men cannot be vicious to women. Rather, they assist in the domestic chores regularly. They provide the family upkeep like clockwork. Hence, they can recognise feminism only when it is so radical. (Connell, 2005: p. 79-80). Connell’s portrait of Complicit Masculinity is as follows:

- They are not to blame for the Hegemonic Masculinity.
- Their guilt only takes them as far as making some concessions in their relationship with women, not change in any fundamental way.
- They quietly benefit from patriarchy without being militant in its defence.

- Their initial commitment to feminism was shallow; no wonder they become anti-feminist later.
- They don't have alliance with gay men; neither are they making concrete plans to.
- They limit the revolutionary upheaval in gender relations that was on the agenda in the early 1970s.

3.4 Marginalised masculinity

So, within hegemony we discover that some masculinity are subordinated and equated to being feminine, while some pretenders to the throne of Hegemonic Masculinity (the slackers) are complicit with the women folk. Both are interactions within the gender order. Nevertheless, further relations involving gender, class and race generate other interplays between masculinities. In understanding marginalisation as an aspect of Hegemonic Masculinity, we need to focus on the relationships between the masculinities in relation to class and gender. For instance, black masculinities are necessary for the gender formation of white-supremacist in the United States. The colour black became associated with toughness and violence, thereby masculinity. Even sexual fantasies were woven around the black man. Yet, contrariwise, Hegemonic Masculinity maintains the establishments that oppress and terrorise blacks. This is thereby responsible for the construction of masculinities in black societies.

In his work *Black masculinity*, Robert Staples (1982) suggests that Huge Unemployment and municipal impoverishment interplay with organisational racism in the forming of black masculinity. He fingers American capitalism as responsible for violence among black men. The instability in black jobs and its vicious manipulation by the American capitalism has increased violence among black men continually. The extent of marginalisation depends continually on the degree of permission given to Hegemonic Masculinity of the predominant male cluster. Despite their affluence and renowned, black sportsmen archetypes in Hegemonic Masculinity, do not have rippling effect in the increase of social authority for black men in general. In all these, Connell recognise a viable approach for the breakdown of particular masculinities via the hegemony's domination versus subordination and complicity and the marginalisation versus authorisation framework.

3.5 Relations among masculinities: Hegemony, subordination complicity, marginalisation

Increasing interaction between gender, race and class has made it quite regular to identify diverse masculinities. These varieties of masculinities include black and white, working-class and middle-class. In tandem with the recognition of the peculiarity and the reality of the black woman in the milieu of feminism, black masculinity also is recognised as a peculiarity and a reality in the milieu of masculinity. So, Alice Walker as well as Chikwenye-Ogunyemi Okonjo in 1983 and 1985 respectively, realised this in their research into the peculiarity of the black woman vis-à-vis gender, race and class. The condition of the black woman is not just that of patriarchal oppression, but also that of racism (The Black scholar 1996, Maparyam 2012). For a white woman, the buck stops at patriarchy. But the additional social challenge of racism for the black woman, amidst so many other cultural realities of the blacks worldwide led to the theory of womanism, as a variant of feminism. Intersectionality of Kimberlé Crenshaw as a notion of multiple oppressions of women and that of Africana Womanism of Clenora Hudson-Weems, in 1989 and 1987 respectively, are variants of Black Feminism (Hudson-Weems 2004, Crenshaw 1989, Mazama 2003). Crenshaw felt these realities are better explained in her theory of Intersectionality. Black masculinity is on the inevitable track of becoming a converse of womanism and a formidable variant of masculinity. The limitations of masculinity (Like those of second-wave feminism) have necessitated the black variant, which through historical and cultural experiences of the black man caters for his realities.

Undeniable actualities of class and racism cause also a need to understand the relations between the masculinities. The situation of a gay black man may not be the same as that of a gay white man. By extension, the condition of unmanly working-class men among hegemonic masculine men on the factory floor is not the same. Neither is that of the middle-class rapist or that of the upper-class cross-dresser. It is in these realisations of the multiple types of masculinities, that the need to concentrate on the gender interactions among men arises from. Loss of focus on gender relations among men has led to the crumpling of various masculinities into a character typology, instead of being a disputable position in already stated model of gender relations (Connell, 2005: p. 17-18).

3.6 Principles guiding the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity

Another definition of Hegemonic Masculinity by Connell (1987) defines Hegemonic Masculinity as “a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organisation of private life and cultural processes.” He posited also that:

Hegemonic Masculinity is constructed in relation to women and subordinated masculinities. These other masculinities need not be clearly defined-indeed, achieving hegemony may consist precisely in preventing alternatives gaining cultural recognition...confining them to ghettos, to unconsciousness. The most important feature of contemporary Hegemonic Masculinity is that it is heterosexual, being closely connected with the institution of marriage; and a key form of subordinated masculinity is homosexual.

The features of Hegemonic Masculinity as laid out by Connell are as follow:

1. The interrelation of gender on a very large scale is centred on a single structural fact: the global dominance of men over women.
2. This structural fact provides the basis for relationships among men that define a hegemonic form of masculinity in all of society.
3. “Hegemonic Masculinity” is constructed in relation to other subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women. The dominant position of Hegemonic Masculinity is ensured by patriarchy, other forms of masculinities come into existence in relation to this dominance. Subordinate (homosexual), Complicit (compromised) and marginalised (black) masculinities occupy the same position as women/femininity in the power hierarchy in the society. The more submissive they are to hegemonic, the more powerful it becomes.
4. A patriarchal social order is based on the interplay of these different masculinities.
5. Masculinity is hegemonic among men. No femininity is hegemonic.
6. Ascendancy achieved through violent threats is not hegemony.
7. Ascendancy embedded in religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare/taxation policies is hegemonic.

8. Cultural ideals of masculinity need not conform to the personalities of actual men or the realities of everyday achievement of men.
9. Hegemonic Masculinity is very public through the mass media. It is not what men who are powerful are, but what sustains their power and what they support.
10. Most men benefit from the subordination of women.
11. Hegemonic Masculinity contains a mix of strategies such as “openings towards domesticity and openings towards violence, towards misogyny and towards heterosexual attraction.”
12. It is constructed in relation to women and to subordinated masculinities. Hegemonic Masculinity is heterosexual and closely tied to marriage. A key type of subordinated masculinity is homosexual as is dominance over young men, i.e. in the trades.
13. New forms of femininity may emerge and disappear at the mass level: however, all forms of femininity are constructed in the context of the subordination of women to men.
14. Actual femininities may be more diverse than actual masculinities.
15. In “emphasised femininity” the option of compliance is central to femininity.

3.7 Methodology

The methodology consists mainly textual analysis. There will be close reading of both chosen novels, accompanied by notations of portrayals of men and masculinity in the selected novels. This will be compared with the ideals of R.W. Connell's Hegemonic Masculinity, in order to ascertain the degree of correlation. Excerpts of instances of these portrayals will be identified, gathered and collated as data for analysis and interpretation. Observations and findings will be noted as analytic commentaries that constitute chapters of the research. Synthesis of the ideologies encountered in the research will aid in obtaining my contribution to knowledge and reaching a logical conclusion.

CHAPTER FOUR

PORTRAYALS OF CONNELLIAN MASCULINITIES IN BEYALA

This chapter will look at the representation of the male characters in the two selected novels *Le petit prince de Belleville* and *Maman a un Amant*, in order to ascertain the correlation with the definitions of Hegemonic Masculinity and other variants of masculinity such as the the Complicit Masculinity, the Subordinate Masculinity and the Marginalised Masculinity. The chapter is an exposition of Beyalian male characters vis-à-vis her feminist persuasion. It will juxtapose Beyala's male representations with the principles of the types of masculinity, in order to discover their differences, as well as their similarities.

Aspects of gender construction and identity will be discussed in this chapter. The chapter will also look at toxicity in masculinity in relation to child nurturing. It will look at the place of religion and traditions in the formation of masculinity, and the intrigues between white and black masculinities.

In conclusion, the chapter will present data that will help in ascertaining if men are truly oppressive of women as generally believed by radical feminists.

4.1 Hegemonic Masculinity of Beyala's antagonists

The man is the Lord of the home. He sits on the sofa, watches television and waits for his meals from the woman who rushes home to prepare the meals (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 18, 24-25). This is unacceptable to feminists; sex roles should not be stereotyped. Men and women should equally share domestic responsibilities, even in the kitchen and laundry. Even a boy of seven thinks holding his mother's hand tenderly or warmly is unmanly and effeminate. He is aware of the gender differences enforced by patriarchy (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 26-27).

Abdou gets Soumana the maid pregnant and makes her his second wife, without any protest from his first wife M'am. Yet both M'am and Soumana lives like cat and rat in the matrimonial home. Beyala subtly exposes the inadequacies and biases of religion towards the woman. The man is greatly favoured by religion and enthroned as the Lord and master

of the home, while the woman humbly serves her Lord diligently, sometimes in competition with other wives in the home (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 27-30).

Beyala explores what men call masculinity and explains it via Kouam and Ndongala as sexual virility, the size of a man's penis and his ability to keep multiple sex partners (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 200). She exposes Mathilda's lesbian tendencies earlier (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 145), while presenting men's erroneous belief, that the amount and manner of sex they give to women determine their faithfulness. Despite all the sex and all the efforts Kouam puts into it, Mathilda becomes bisexual and cheats on him (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 93-94, 200). Beyala exposes how men use sexual performance enhancer and aphrodisiacs (*Comment Cuisiner*, p. 95, 134-136, 152, *Le Petit Prince*, P. 200-201) in order to meet up with society's expectation of their sexual potency. The pressure to perform sexually sometimes could be an encumbrance on men's relationship with women. Society expects the man to be sexually virile and active; this sometimes informs men's resort to the use of Viagra and aphrodisiacs.

Religion is one of the patriarchal justifications for polygamy. Abdou justifies his right as a Muslim to marry more than one wife. He recounts how he has been fair and equal with both wives of his (M'am and Soumana), as he is required to do by Islamic standards (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 187-188). Yet, this is the same Abdou that fathers children outside his marriage, and elopes with prostitutes for days on end (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 28, 83, 87, 122, 126-130, 160-161). This is the same Abdou that treats his wives like rags and slaves, and never bothers about their existence or opinions. The same that condemns women's liberation and upliftment and teaches young Loukoum to abhor such too (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-81, 88, 93-94). Beyala clearly mocks men who are polygamists and adulterers, and yet see themselves as saints and dignified personalities, merely because patriarchal society justifies them. Beyala exposes Abdou's inner thoughts to see how an average man thinks under such circumstances as Abdou's. This is an anti-masculinist attack on the conscience and actions of men, who justify their injustices and maltreatments of women. But in truth, Abdou has truly kept the tenets of his religion concerning care for his wives (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 187).

The masculine ego would not allow Abdou to admit that he was wrong. He would not admit that he led his wife on to her decision to have a lover. He will not accept that his unfaithfulness goaded his wife on to her first affair. Beyala appears to say since patriarchy

excuses, permits and furnishes men with all sorts of vices against women; men generally find it difficult to accept their faults. She seems to say that men's egotistic disposition prevents them from admitting they are wrong when they are. Beyala depicts this in the following submission of Abdou, when he was asked by M'amzelle Esther if he was to blame for his wife leaving him for her lover:

-Moi? demande papa. Mais j'ai rien fait du tout, moi! Et je vous garantis que c'est pas ce que vous croyez! Du tout! Du tout! Elle me trompe. Voilà! (*Maman a un*, p. 190)

-Me? Asks father. But I did not do anything at all! And I guarantee that it is not what you believe! At all! At all! She is cheating on me. There it is! (Translation mine).

There is a sense of sovereignty and entitlement in Hegemonic Masculinity that Beyala portrays. It is evident in Abdou that he feels justified regardless of all his unfaithfulness to his wife. This sense of justification prevents him from seeing anything wrong in a philandering man, in a patriarchal society. Beyala depicts this tendency in hegemonic men through the solidarity of other men in Belleville with Abdou, and through Abdou's refusal to accept blame for his wife's infidelity.

Generally, in patriarchal societies, men rebuke women openly. Men like Abdou rebuke their wives openly (134). Mannerisms towards women and address of women in patriarchal environment is like that of a father rebuking his child, it is without consequence, no matter how rough or harsh the manner (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 17, 43-44, 74, 93, 109-110, 134).

Men barely contain feminism; they barely tolerate its changes to the traditional woman. Abdou laments "La femme a changé. Elle a travesti son pagne en pantalon...Je dois me laisser aller dans les rêvasseries pour ne pas cracher ma rage." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 159), "Woman has changed. She has changed her pagne for trousers...I have to let myself go off into reveries in order not to spit up my rage." (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 108). In this soliloquy, Abdou describes the woman as she was in Africa aforesaid. Her natural beauty and her precious adornment compliments each other. But now, the light on the woman's countenance is gone, because she has been wounded and injured. Now her story looks like a 'Before and After' picture of grace to grass. Now, this same woman has an identity crisis. The woman with so much confusion from her abused and oppressed past, promises bliss to the man. Abdou asks one of the most pertinent questions in a male-female relationship

“Comment confier son âme à une femme?” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 160), “How does one entrust one’s soul to a woman?” (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 108).

Regardless his fears, Beyala represents man as still deeply connected to woman and strongly attracted to her. Abdou, like most womanising men that keep mistresses, tries to deny responsibility for Esther’s pregnancy, in the end he has to admit. Beyala pushes her portrayal of Abdou’s toxic Hegemonic Masculinity, to the point of portraying him as irresponsible for his pregnancy. She depicts the story of an unfaithful husband, who eventually got a prostitute (of all categories of women) pregnant. Beyala deliberately allows this confession and admission of the pregnancy to happen right in the presence of M’am—the most virtuous, faithful, dutiful and patient wife any man could have. She juxtaposes this to portray the endurance, tolerance and accommodating level, suffering women attain in order to survive and preserve their marriages. In Abdou, Beyala seems to graphically and sequentially depict the culmination of men’s unfaithfulness and callousness towards women. She paints the picture as if to set M’am up for the last straw that breaks her camel’s back. This portrayal of Abdou as an irresponsible and unfaithful man is an anti-masculinist portrayal. It is an attempt to indict men for being irresponsible, immoral and unfaithful towards their virtuous, patient and loving female partners.

Finally, when M’am asks Esther what she was going to do, since she turned down Abdou’s suggestion of an abortion, Esther proposes M’am keeps and nurtures the baby for Abdou his father. This is the extent men go to hurt women. Abdou goes out to commit adultery with women who get pregnant and he brings the children home to a childless M’am to nurse and nurture. In this instance, M’am being childless is already traumatised, Abdou’s incessant adultery is another heartbreak, now he brings home babies from his adulterous acts for M’am to nurse and nurture for his mistresses. M’am nursed Loukoum for Aminata (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 128-131). She nurses three other children for Soumana (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 28-29). Now Abdou gets Esther the prostitute pregnant again and she proposes to dump the child on M’am for nursing and possibly nurturing and all M’am could do is exclaim “Inch Allah!” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 161).

M’am becomes defiant and talks back to Abdou. Her audacity in confronting him with his injustices is the feminist prescription against female bullying by males. Abdou ascribes her

rebellion to his not beating her enough: “Nom d’un cochon putassé! Certain que je t’ai pas flanqué assez de raclées! C’est ma faute, rien que ma faute”, “Name of a whoring pig! Certainly I have not given you enough beating! It is my fault, nothing but my fault” (Translation mine).

Brannon and Juni’s “give ‘em hell” (1976 & 1984) as one of the parameters of ascertaining true masculinity, is often seen in the disposition of men having authority issues with rebellious wives. Brannon says masculinity is also about the man being tough in order to assert dominance. Hegemonic men like Abdou are conditioned to believe that violence against women usually restores their total submission to men. Abdou told his wife that he should have locked her up in a cupboard and let her out only to work, eat and defecate. M’am accuses him of treating her that way already for the past twenty years (*Maman a un*, p. 118).

Abdou becomes worked up and worried when M’am leaves the house without coming back. Despite the bitter fight they had, he still loves her and worries about her. He was also livid that his wife left the house. According to Abdou, men want to be kind to women, but women are too hostile (*Maman a un*, p. 116-119). This goes to show how men often do not mean what they say or do during a fight with their wives.

From his son’s perspective, Abdou his father feels within his rights when he slept with half the ladies in Belleville. Yet, he cannot stand his wife going after Monsieur Tichit, who is a loser. It is often more painful when a woman leaves her husband for someone lesser of a man than he. It is more bearable for men when their rivals are more masculine and better than they. Understanding this hegemonic perception, Loukoum wonders why a loser like Monsieur Tichit bothers his father (*Maman a un*, p. 119-120). Most hegemonic men feel more masculine when they do not say sorry, nor admit that they are wrong. For a man to admit that he is wrong (especially to women) is termed weak in patriarchal settings. In his research on masculinities, Connell cited an instance where men refuse to ask for directions just because it makes them feel inferior (Connell, 2005: p. 3-4). Neither do men admit their errors to their wives, when they misread road maps and get the family lost during road trips. Abdou exhibits this trait when he refuses to see his wrongs with M’am. Madame

Trauchessec tells him that M'am left to punish him, but Abdou will not see what he did wrong: "Mais j'lui ai rien fait, moi!" (*Maman a un*, p. 123), "But me, I did nothing to her!" (Translation mine). Yet, he loves his wife. His not being able to eat till she is found testifies to this: "Je peux rien avaler tant que Maryam n'est pas là, a dit papa" (*Maman a un*, p. 124), "I can swallow nothing as long as Maryam is not there, said father" (Translation mine).

One does not know the most painful experience in all M'am's situations. One cannot begin to imagine the extent to which this woman feels betrayed, abused, oppressed, relegated, neglected, humiliated, violated, depressed, subjugated and repressed. The list of negative adjectives that describe the injustices of Abdou against M'am is endless. Beyala makes sure the situation of this suffering and tortured woman in a marital dilemma is well and fully narrated. She wants the reader to be clear on what a toxic masculinity looks like and how he acts towards his woman. Abdou, by all feminist standards is an oppressor of women. He has no considerations for M'am's feelings about his unfaithfulness. Abdou treats his adultery as his right, maybe since M'am could not have a child for him. He uses her negative circumstances and her childlessness as excuse to cheat on her. Instead of standing with her through her challenges, to encourage her and show her love, Abdou sees M'am's problem of inability to conceive as opportunity for philandering. He neglects M'am, his first wife, and goes after women of the streets. He disrespects and ignores her existence. He absents himself from the home for days. When he eventually returns, he gives no excuse or explanation for his disappearance. Rather, he orders her around to clean this, iron that, wash this and sew that, among other commands he is fond of giving to his slavish wives. Yet, she never stops taking care of the household and sick Soumana (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 18, 20, 25, 29, 46, 53-55, see pages 63-65, 84-86, 93-94, 117-118, 122-130, and 134-135, 139, 145-149, 163-165).

Monsieur Kaba's verbal assault and disregard for women is representative of men who cut women down verbally and reduce women to senseless creatures without voice-creatures that are better seen than heard. His manner of silencing the prostitute Esther is habitual, even when she makes perfect sense:

Boucle-la, cretine! C'est une histoire entre hommes, a
repliqué Monsieur Kaba. (*Maman a un*, p. 16)

Shut it, idiot! This is men's affair, replied Monsieur Kaba.
(Translation mine)

He insults his prostitutes, especially Esther. As their pimp, he never forgets to put them where they belong; under his feet. He treats them as imbeciles without hope or future outside prostitution. Through this illustration, Beyala exposes men's oppression and cruelty against women of the streets. Men like Kaba are exploitative of women. Esther protested against his using her earnings to place a pointless bet. In strong and offensive terms, Monsieur Kaba reminded her who the boss is. As much as Connell's Hegemonic Masculinity sanctions dominance over women and other subordinate masculinities, it does not encourage ascendancy into authority or leadership via violent threats such as Monsieur Kaba uses against his prostitutes. This construction of hegemonic masculinity is somewhat in violation of Connell's theory, though the theory also made provision for women's oppression via openings that accommodate domesticity of women, violence against women, even misogyny (Connell, 1987).

Hegemonic Masculinity is powered by the legitimate authority conferred on it via agencies of patriarchy such as government institutions, traditions/cultures, religion and other normative institutions of society. Power relations between both sexes are determined by patriarchal factors that impacts on the women at home, at work and in the society at large. M'am's independence and emancipation from Abdou's patriarchal bondage through economic and literary empowerment, is Beyala's lending her voice to the feminist campaign of gender equality through women's empowerment. Yet, society favours men over women even in work related policies on positions, salaries and wages (Connell, 2005: p. 82-83, 226).

Like most black immigrants in Belleville, Kaba abandoned his wife in Africa. For a living, he manages prostitutes in France. Hypocritically he appreciates M'am's virtues as a faithful wife to Abdou, while condemning the prostitutes in his employ (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 14-18, *Maman a un*, p. 13, 17-18). Kaba is portrayed as a hypocrite who praises virtues in married women, while exploiting prostitutes in his care. He appreciates decent women and oppresses prostitutes.

In reaction to M'am's audacity in leaving the home and going after another man, Abdou lost his temper. He remembers how he had found M'am, groomed her, brought her to France, and took care of her, only for her to despise his love and sacrifice for her. Her leaving him for a lover was too much for him. He remembers how he had sustained the family by sweeping the streets of France; only for M'am to despise his sacrifice and commit adultery (*Maman a un*, p. 275).

Patriarchal society's reaction to male differs sharply to that of female. When Abdou lived as an adulterer, the whole community of Belleville ignored it. The men even approved of it. When M'am as much as allowed herself to be in the company of another man, the rumour went round the community and everyone condemned her, even the women (*Maman a un*, p. 184-185, 237-238, 279-280).

Beyala presents this double standard and inequality of perception of the sexes by patriarchy. She paints a traumatic picture of the perplexed M'am. In M'am's soliloquy, Beyala reveals the hypocrisy of hegemonic societies:

-La justice de la tribu a été précise à mesurer mon compte de contrition. Elle me sermonne. Elle me nomme: <<Infidèle!>> Je suis l'arbre du mal.

-Mon époux me chasse. La tribu lui refuse l'hypocrisie de n'en rien savoir. Elle lui refuse la lumière, lui impose d'autres dimensions sans dimension, une morale qui me semblait interdite dès lors qu'elle annihile la révélation de l'amour, à nu.

-Mon époux me chasse, j'atteins les extrêmes de la souffrance, un demi-siècle à monnayer un pardon qui m'est refusé. Un pardon, celui d'être femme, de découvrir l'amour, les joies, les sublimes, les dimensions des sept ciels, tout ce qui forme notre humanité dépouillée des mensonges et des contresens. (*Maman a un*, p. 280)

-The justice of the tribe was precise in measuring my contrite explanation. It sermonises me. It names me: "unfaithful!" I am the evil tree.

-My husband chases me away. The tribe refuses him the hypocrisy of knowing nothing about it. It refuses him the light, it imposes on him other dimensions without dimensions, a moral which seemed to me forbidden from the moment it annihilates the naked revelation of love.

-My husband chases me away; I reach the extremes of suffering, a half century of banking on a pardon which I was refused. A pardon of being a woman, of discovering love, joys, the sublime, the dimensions of the seven heavens, all

that forms our humanity stripped of lies and misinterpretations. (Translation mine)

The double standard of patriarchy is evident in the way it excuses Abdou, and punishes M'am. As a woman, she is forbidden from being anything outside what the society assigns her. She is not entitled to forgiveness for her having a lover, yet Abdou lived in adultery all the days of their marriage. She must accept life the way patriarchy presents it, with all the lies and misinterpretations.

This is what a woman means in a hegemonic society. M'am is not expected to challenge or rebel against this. Beyala justifies M'am's actions. Her decision to protect herself from Abdou's menace and aggression, led her to seek empowerment. M'am could not remain under bondage and duress in Abdou's house (*Maman a un*, p. 281). M'am confesses that "si je n'avais pas à subir tant d'agressions, je ne chercherais pas à me protéger" (*Maman a un*, p. 281), "If I had not suffered so much aggression, I would not have sought to protect myself." (Translation mine). By extension, Beyala advocates a justification for women globally, in their quest for security from men-related violence and maltreatments. She appears, through M'am's situation, to endorse women's damning all odds to escape every form of oppression, exploitation or marginalisation from men. This is an ideal objective of feminism: to support the freedom of women from all negatively imposed circumstances of patriarchy.

Men change good women into demons. Abdou changed a virtuous woman like M'am into an avenging angel of his sins. Aminata herself testifies that M'am is a good soul. M'am's leaving the home is Abdou's loss. She is happy with her new found lover. When a man chases a good wife out of the home, he loses. This is Beyala's message. Abdou is miserable, his home scattered, M'am is happy and her new home is peaceful. M'am's happiness seems impossible for Loukoum, the patriarchal teaching he had from his father tells him that a woman who is not married is nothing at all "J'ai de la peine pour elle, car sans mari, eh ben, une femme c'est rien du tout!" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 45), "I feel badly for her because without a husband, well, a woman is nothing at all." (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 26). This statement by Loukoum seems to suggest a Beyalian recognition of the importance of men and therefore

appears a womanist complementarist perspective. It suggests a co-habitation albeit harmoniously of women and men. Such statements compromise the integrity of the author's notoriety as anti-masculinist. Her Man-eating quasi-prostitute female characters hardly desire steady relationships or raising family. They fly in the face of societal norms as rebellious and loud radicals. The author by this statement of Loukoum appears merely to state the much touted notion of patriarchy about the usefulness of the woman in relation to the man. Yet, Loukoum, a seven-year-old boy, without judgement or prejudice, accepts, admires and appreciates Esther the prostitute, while the society sees her as worthless and without dignity (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 7,8-9).

M'am is a product of patriarchal nurturing. She is as other women who through culture, religion and society have been subjugated and subdued for men to trample upon. They are women who have been conquered by patriarchy, and have surrendered right from childhood. Feminists often identify the voice of the old woman in the village as patriarchal. The voice of the old wise grandmothers is suspect and do not represent women's interest nor proclaim their desire for emancipation. In De Jager's translation of *Le petit prince de Belleville*, Soumana expresses this:

And yet you don't say anything. you're like all the women
back home, like my mother, my grandmother, and my mother
before that. Always at the feet of the men, saying thank you,
that's fine, bravo to everything they wreck on earth.
(*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 33-34)

Often in literary narratives, old women such as grand-mothers in African settings are the voice of reason, traditions and the voice of patriarchy. Beyala also depicts this in *Maman a un Amant*. Grand-mère Balbine, as the oldest woman in the black quarter of Belleville, was called upon to arbitrate between Abdou and his wife M'am. The community intervened to settle the quarrel between Abdou and his wife, and to bring M'am back home to her family. In the course of her reconciling the couple, she identifies the position of M'am as a woman in patriarchal society:

-Ma fille [M'am], tu es la lumière dans cette maison. Tu es la
vie. Quelles que soient les souffrances que te fait endurer ton
mari, tu ne dois pas t'abaisser à l'imiter. Tu dois rester digne.
N'oublie jamais: Tu es l'esprit supérieur qui guide l'homme.
(*Maman a un*, p. 296)

-My daughter [M'am], you are the light in this house. You are the life. Whatever may be the suffering that your husband subjects you to, you must not stoop so low as to imitate him. You must to remain dignified. Never forget: you are the superior spirit that guides man. (Translation mine)

In this reconciliation between Abdou and M'am, it is evident that patriarchy frowns at retribution from the woman. Rather it condemns the woman to an eternity of patience, understanding and longsuffering towards the man's excesses. The woman is elevated to the position of a guide to the man. She is to mother a full grown man; the same way she mothers a boy like Loukoum. It is this identity of the woman in patriarchy that feminism frowns upon. This is the identity of women as the eternal sufferer that cannot complain: the enduring victim of oppressive men and patriarchal institutions. This image is unacceptable to feminists, and they condemn this image in numerous writings such as those of Beyala.

Also, to the husband Abdou, Grand-mère Balbine the arbiter recognises him as the father of the woman. She compares him to an errant boy that begs for his father's forgiveness. Abdou is exhorted to forgive her and accept her back into his arms. The image of the man in patriarchy is also visible in Grand-mère Balbine's description. The man is always the offended, never the offender. He is the one who grants forgiveness to the woman, and not the other way around. The man is the one who chastises the woman, and punishes her for her sins. He afterwards receives her back into his graces.

In all these analogies no one blames Abdou for being the first to bring adultery into the home. No one spoke of his children outside wedlock, nor his incessant philandering. No one confronted Abdou, except Esther the prostitute. She challenged Abdou's innocence in his wife's leaving him. She challenged his irresponsibility towards his baby with her. This confrontation with Abdou ended with Esther being severely beaten and raped by her pimp Monsieur Kaba (*Maman a un*, p. 191-193). Monsieur Kaba assaults Esther and rapes her before other men who cheer and applaud in encouragement. Simply because of her protest against Abdou's refusal to take care of their baby; Monsieur Kaba beats up Esther and assaults her sexually before everyone. This he did to defend Abdou who has not paid any child support to Esther, since he got her pregnant (*Maman a un*, p. 191-193).

Patriarchy appears to be blind to the sins of men, because what feminism often sees as vices, patriarchy sees as attributes of masculinity via which men construct their masculinities. It is masculine for men to dominate women, even oppress them. Hegemonic Masculinity thrives under these circumstances (Connell, 2005: p. 77, 81, 90, 194).

In a momentous event, the couple is reconciled by the tribe. Amidst merriment and rejoicing Abdou and Maryam are remarried again according to the traditions of the blacks in Belleville. The ending of the story of this couple suggests that Hegemonic Masculinity as a patriarchal tool of male domination is very much active and popular in African traditions and communities, regardless if they be in Africa or in diaspora. Beyala's representations of male in the selected novels are forcefully hegemonic. The masculinity of most of the male characters is hegemonic masculinity. Although there are several depictions of Complicit Masculinity and other varieties, yet Beyala's emphasis is more on the hegemonic type. Since Hegemonic Masculinity is more common and dominant in any given society, its activities naturally comes under limelight more than others. Especially because of its notoriety to subjugate women and other alternative masculinities. Beyala through her male representations is a feminist writer. Her submissions and persuasions about women's marginalisation and maltreatment suggest a strong (if not radical) feminist presence in the chosen novels.

In *Le Petit Prince de Belleville* Abdou rejoices over Loukoum as his heir. It is a patriarchal ideology to have a male heir to whom a man leaves his legacy and inheritance. Abdou's philandering is not justified by M'am's childlessness; after all he has an heir in Loukoum. Patriarchal men like Abdou use barrenness in women as excuse for philandering. In M'am, Beyala presents women's side to the story of marital childlessness. Generally, patriarchal societies overlook men's extramarital affairs, especially when their wives are barren and are unable to give them an heir. One of the commonest reason for polygamy amongst patriarchal men is to have a male child, a son and an heir. Where the woman is not able to bear a son; the man goes to get another woman whom he thinks can. In more recent times, among the Igbos of Nigeria, in Africa, this desire for man to have a male child, an heir is quite present than in most cultures. Patriarchal society fans the flame of this desire into a roaring inferno

of matrimonial pressures and woes for the woman. Beyala exposes this patriarchal ploy of hegemonic men in this statement.

Incidentally, both Abdou's sons are by prostitutes outside wedlock. Beyala appears to paint a karmic picture attached to men's search for a male heir. She seems to introduce the element of fate into the equation of patriarchal inheritance. It is not par hazard that she depicts Abdou's legitimate wives as barren (M'am) and without a male child (Soumana). This common trend in men's quest for male children further excuses marital infidelities in hegemonic men in search of male children to inherit their properties. Ironically boys too prefer rich and successful fathers they can inherit, and not poor ones (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 83-88, 126-132, 160-161, 193, 240-242, *Maman a un*, p. 11, 16, 191, 246-247).

Through M'am's experience with Abdou, Beyala shows the impact of such societal permissiveness on women. The community of Belleville is scandalised when M'am's transformation goes antithetical to patriarchal expectations; when her dressing and audacity challenges religion and traditions. But, when Abdou goes impregnating a prostitute, the community sees him as a virile male. This is hegemonic. Masculinity that is hegemonic is the most normative and subsistent in traditionally patriarchal society. Society expects Abdou to philander since his wife is sterile. Abdou is expected to have an heir. Therefore, Abdou's unfaithfulness is excused if not encouraged. The following soliloquy of Abdou illustrates this pressure:

...il me faut assurer ma descendance en misant sur plusieurs femmes pour être sûr qu'à ma mort j'aurai un descendant. Je l'écoutais, je me taisais. (*Maman a un*, p. 101).
...I need to assure myself of my descendant by staking sexually in many women to be sure that at my death I would have a descendant. I listened to him, I kept quiet.
(Translation mine)

Unfortunately, the woman is often blamed for childlessness in a marriage. Patriarchal societies generally believe that the man must prove his virility by going into extramarital affairs to have an heir. As M'am reveals in the rest of the soliloquy, no one cares what happens to her in the course of her husband's betrayal. She herself sees her childlessness as a curse and a failure in life (*Maman a un*, p. 101-102). In the analogy, Beyala reveals the

valuing of male children over female ones by patriarchal societies. In tandem, the patriarchal tradition of excluding women and girls from paternal inheritance has been identified as injustice to the womenfolk. Consequently, one of the targets of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal on Gender equality by the year 2030; is to give women equal rights to inheritance. When achieved, this target would eradicate patriarchal traditions that put pressure on women like M'am and Soumana to bear male children or perish. It would enforce the rights of women to paternal inheritance and appreciate the value of women and girl-children (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 49, *Maman a un*, p. 101, Heisook and Pollitzer, 2016: p. 18).

In the following conversation between M'am and her lover Monieur Tichit, Beyala explores the dynamics of how a loving wife becomes resentful and unfaithful to her husband:

-Tu l'aimes toujours? Il lui demande.

-Je ne sais pas. J'ai comme une petite passion pour lui. C'est vrai que si j'avais idée de prendre un mari, ça serait lui. Mais c'est un faible. Il sait pas c'qu'il veut. Quelquefois il me gifle. Il a des choses que j'aime et beaucoup que j'aime pas.

-Tu aimes coucher avec lui?

-Non. Il le sait bien. Ca revient à quoi pour moi, hein? Il monte sur moi, il m'enfonce son machin. Moi c'est comme si j'étais pas là. Il demande: << T'aimes?>> Et moi j'dis: oui. Il fait son petit truc, il descend et s'endort. Monsieur Tichit rigole. (*Maman a un*, p. 95-96)

-Do you still love him? He asks her.

-I do not know. I have like a little emotion for him. It is true that if I have the idea of taking a husband, it would be him. But he is weak. He does not know what he wants. Sometimes he slaps me. He has some things that I like and many that I do not like.

-Do you like sleeping with him?

-No. He knows it well. That comes to what for me, hein? He climbs on top of me, he pushes his thing into me. For me, it is like I was not there. He asks; "You like?" And me I say: yes. He does his little thing, he gets down and sleeps. Monsieur Tichit laughs. (Translation mine)

The excerpt is long, but it is to expose in this conversation the sexual relationship between M'am and Abdou. Sexual intercourse between the two does not give mutual pleasure. From M'am's description, Abdou has been a bad and selfish lover. He places his sexual satisfaction alone as important. For M'am, Abdou is what is popularly called "A one-minute

man”. He does not last long enough in bed to satisfy M’am. Interestingly, this same Abdou absconded with Esther the prostitute on a sexual adventure for a whole week. He was having constant sex with her for days. He could not get enough. But with M’am he does it perfunctorily out of duty or no passion. Beyala depicts men differently when they are having extramarital affairs. To Abdou, his wives might as well be dead. He does not as much as acknowledge their presence in the home, talk less in his life (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 18, 24-25, 47, 53, 87), yet when he is with women outside his home like Esther the prostitute, he lites up like fireworks. He dresses up in suites and becomes a lover boy.

Kouam, whose wife Mathilda complains about his sexual inactivity with her, suddenly becomes the astute ladies-man with Aminata the prostitute. Adrenalin pumps into hom and he becomes excited. He becomes all-male and dares a truck driver he almost ran into. Aminata his would-be lover squeals with excitement (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 145-146,148,150-151,159). Kouam is infatuated with Aminata and lusts after her body overtly (212-216). Beyala describes the sexual pleasure between men and women as slavish (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 159). Kouam eventually sleeps with Aminata after so much sexual tension and excitement between them (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 160-161). In this scenario, Beyala exposes how a dull and unexciting husband transforms into the legendary Don Juan, when he is with a different woman other than his wife. She portrays how women of lesser or easier virtue make men livelier and more excited than their wives. Kouam and Abdou show how men come alive with philandering and adultery, rather than by the love of their wives and marital faithfulness.

4.1.1 Irrationality in men: an enduring paradox

Structuring the workplace around rationality is an ambiguous venture, which opens up the masculinity to attacks and problems. Suppression of sexuality is common to patriarchal homes. Parents do not give sex education to the children, only church restrictions to sexuality are gotten by the children. The only experience or education was gotten through hidden sexual escapades and secret sexual enjoyments. From early childhood to adolescence, sex became the root cause of pressure and worries. In one instance, Connell

spoke of how a father's sexual escapade with the maid affected his son's ability to relate with girls (Connell, 2005: p. 175).

In *Le petit prince de Belleville*, Abdou's indiscretion with women affected young Loukoum's attitude towards girls and women. Abdou was a philanderer, which rubbed off on young Loukoum. Connell posits that sexuality is not the root cause of disorder in feelings of the genders. Neither is it the domain of irrationality. Rather, it is a domain of negotiations that bring mutual pleasure and understanding between the sexes.

When the negotiation goes awry, partners have been known to behave erratically and in hurtful manner. In such instance of infidelity cited by Connell, the woman laid out some rules as regards the man's promiscuity with her friends as thus: "Keep the affairs away from the house; let the spouse know what's going on". Abdou kept the first rule, but broke the first in his sexual indiscretion outside marriage. Eventually, M'am his first wife found out and did not take it lightly. She rejected the child born from Abdou's affair with Esther the prostitute and put an end to Abdou's dominion over her and the household. She took over the headship of the home and subjugated Abdou her husband.

According to Connell, Sexuality could also be objectified. It could be made into an embodiment of monotony and jocularity that take out the wholesomeness in its essence. Rationalising the objectification of sexuality often has limits. Morality often checks the rationality behind the making of women's sexuality into a commodity for sale. Note that Abdou's objectification of sex as a conquest led him to chase prostitutes about Belleville. He is always asking for the latest, freshly arrived prostitutes from Africa from Monsieur Kaba. Eventually he got one of them (Esther) pregnant. As if by Karma, the French government caught up with him for the fraudulent information he gave about his household, in order to benefit from the social welfare programme.

Abdou lost his job (his main source of hegemonic power) and came under threat of imprisonment. Crestfallen, he lost his position in the home and his wife M'am stepped into the position and became the breadwinner. M'am rose from being full-time housewife and

picked up a trade of weaving trinkets and purses with African beads. The trade became very lucrative and her adopted son Loukoum joined in the trade. Subsequently, Abdou joined her in a trade he would normally have described as effeminate. Abdou's hegemony is shattered and he becomes emasculated. The wife becomes audacious and head of the home. This is a feminist ending to Beyala's narrative. A microcosmic representation of the holy grail of feminism; total subjugation of man and overthrow of his superiority and authority, M'am becomes dominant over the household.

Connell showcased the place of irrationality in the rational world of men, not just in sexuality but also in advanced capitalism. He cites the rational man as 'embracing the irrationality of horoscopes, New Age cults and fundamentalist religion that is spreading over United States, one of the foremost worlds of rationalised industry. He cites also the European revival of fascism, the advocacy for racism and chauvinism among others, as prominent examples of irrationality in a system constructed around rationality. Consequently, movements of men now discard the notion of rationality in embrace of the nurturing of primordial feelings for men. Such is the vision of the mythopoeia men's movement (Connell, 2005: p. 177-178).

4.1.2 Heterosexual virility: proof of Hegemony

Hegemonic Masculinity emphasises heterosexual overtones in men. Regardless their age, real men are expected to flaunt their libido and their sexual appeal at women. A real man is virile and sexually potent. Age is not a barrier to his libido. This is the stereotypes touted in the media about men. Society expects functionality from men in all ramifications. The pressure to be the sex god and the ideal male is prevalent and exerts on men. Society encourages men to flirt, and tolerates male sexual fantasies (Connell, 2014: p. 123-124, 175-176, 196). Beyala exposes this tendency in men to see themselves as God's gift to women sexually. Patriarchy sanctions men's promiscuity, while forbidding women from as much as looking upon another man other than their husbands. Beyala disdains this societal attitude by shutting down Monsieur Tichit's advances to M'am, and making him an example of feminist contempt for male chauvinism.

Little does Kouam know that the passion between them is already dead. Mathilda does not have any feeling sexually for her husband anymore. She sees herself more like his sister, than his wife. Yet Kouam uses everything in his disposal to awaken her sexual desire for him, all to no avail (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 200-201). Beyala through young Loukom's statement, claims knowledge of the solution to the marital tension between the man and the woman:

J' comprends pas très bien c' qu'elles veulent, les nanas, et j' comprends pas non plus pourquoi les hommes n veulent pas leur donner c'qu'elles veulent. Tant pis! (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 138)

I understand perfectly well what they want, these chicks, and I don't really understand why men don't want to give them what they want. Too bad! (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 94).

The excerpt above is suggestive. Beyala suggests that men ravish women and do it consistently. Through young Loukoum, the author seems to imply that all women want is good sex. She seems to expose that a woman's passion and love for a man is linked to the quality and quantity of sex she gets from him. This sexual demand from women is contributive to the pressure to perform sexually that the men experience. Men's virility and high libido as patriarchal expectations for masculinity is associated with this demand of women. She blames men whose wives leave them or cheat on them, for not being sexually competent in fulfilling the sexual desires and needs of their wives.

Virility as proof of masculinity is explored by Beyala when she blames Mathilda's separation from Kouam on his sexual inabilities and weakness. Kouam in turn recommends aphrodisiac to Abdou, as an antidote to M'am's leaving him for another man (*Maman a un*, p. 191). In hegemonic societies, masculinity is attached to male virility. A man is termed weak when he is sexually less active or inactive. Already, due to M'am's infidelity, Abdou's sexual prowess and masculinity is suspect. When Abdou lost his job and M'am becomes the breadwinner and provides for the home, Abdou's masculinity was not really challenged by the men of Belleville. Yet, the moment another man threatens to take away his wife, Abdou's masculinity and virility immediately becomes suspect. This is because of the sexual expectations of Hegemonic Masculinity in patriarchal societies (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 244-248, *Maman a un*, p. 190-192, 227-230).

Kouam also cheats on his wife, Monsieur Ndongala as well. These men are supposed to be Belleville's finest image of masculinity, yet Beyala portrays them as unfaithful to their wives also. In the translation of *Le petit prince de Belleville* of Marjolijn de Jager, she unmasks men as they make light of adultery:

-Yeah. I've put her through some pretty outrageous things, you know.

-Like what?

-I cheated on her.

-Everybody does that, says Monsieur Ndongala. That's not a crime! (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 140)

Adultery is not a crime for hegemonic men. In all these portrayals of men as cheats, Beyala introduces element of regret and amendment from the unfaithful men. Mathilda cheats because Kouam starts first. This is the 'Do me I do you...' syndrome Ayeleru (2013) observed in feminists' retaliatory stance and vengeance against patriarchal men who cheat on women. Despite her standing by him, even when her parents disapprove of Kouam, he goes on to cheat on her. This is what kills her passion for him and cause her to leave him (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 140-141).

Soumana hates Abdou, because he chases women about, even when she offers him her youth and becomes his second wife (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 15, 33, 42-43,61-62,124-25). Since Monsieur Ndongala admits that all men cheat, presumably Sonya his wife left him too because he cheats on her. Kouam's regret and his craving for a second chance, appears to be the author's way of telling women that men regret their unfaithful actions and that beneath men's hard exterior, men are not so unfeeling or tough. It is anti-masclinst to put men on the other end of the stick and watch them beg for mercy and regret their actions.

Beyala seems to tell women to pay men back with the same coin, by cheating on them too. It is when Mathilda cheats that Kouam realises how it feels to be at the receiving end, and he cried (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 200-202). It is when Aminata shows up with a man in Abdou's house that he becomes possessive and dances with her after ten years (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 98-99). When Caroline leaves Laforêt, he values her and loves her more. He went into depression and becomes a drunk (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 32-33). It appears that Beyala portrays

these circumstances to suggest to women to get even, to fight back. She appears to say heterosexual virility is not an excuse for men's unfaithfulness.

Feminists attack the very foundation that created patriarchal people and masculinists. Through their work, feminist writers like Beyala attempt to correct what they see to be erroneous in the very fabric of society, by portraying such instances and providing such analogies in their works, as Kouam finds himself.

Abdou does not show affection to M'am, despite her intense love for him. M'am is only good for sexual pleasure, and he does not caress her. She does not feel loved. She feels more like a baby-producing entity. In her soliloquy, we see her resentment for Abdou's frigidity. She followed Abdou to France to pursue a dream and live the good life. But, Abdou betrayed her and left her vulnerable:

Me voici soudain femme nue, abandonnée, stupéfaite, une femme nue qui veut comprendre, une pensée empliée de pierre dans ce cercueil-ma maison. (*Maman a un*, p. 62)
Suddenly here am I a naked woman, abandoned, astonished, a naked woman that wants to understand, a thought sealed up by a stone in this coffin, which is my house. (Translation mine).

Abdou tries to make his wife less seductive to monsieur Tichit, by rebuking her indecent exposure as a Muslim wife:

- Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, bon Dieu de merde! Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'une histoire? T'as pas assez de t'être ridiculisée hier soir comme une minette-de-rien-du-tout, il faut encore que t'aïlles montrer tes nichons? (*Maman a un*, p. 65)
What does that mean, good fucking God! What is this story? You have not had enough of ridiculing yourself yesterday evening, as if you are a worthless girl, should you go and show your boobs again? (Translation mine)

4.1.3 Gender construction and childhood

Researches into masculinity identifies standardised rites of passage into manhood which consciously or unconsciously the male child is made to go through (Tosh, 1999:112). Hanging out and spending time with their fathers or other male adults, the male children learn about and adopt patriarchal views. They learn to be masculine, to be male, by

submitting to various teachings and skill acquisition from their fathers or other adult males in the society. They subsequently and consequently begin to think, talk and act like their fathers or other adult males around them. Failure at which they are regarded as unmanly and weak (Mutunda, 2009: p. 30-34, Haley 1974: p. 54, 143-144, Mosse, 1996: p. 56).

Beyala explores the paternity men feels with their son. The male solidarity men experience with their boy child. Men see themselves in this replica; therefore, they try to raise the boy as an imitation of their patriarchal selves. The more they imitate their fathers, the more masculine the male children feel. The more the fathers see themselves in their sons, the prouder of their sons they become. Regardless that they were far from home in Africa, Abdou makes certain that he takes Loukoum his son on a traditional Malian rite of passage into manhood (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 205-206).

His philandering and adultery aside, Abdou has tried his best to be there for Loukoum as his heir. He spends sometime with him in discussions as a father in the home (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 20-25,37,80,81), he goes out with him to the mosque:

...nous sommes allés à la mosquée. On a mis nos djellabas blanches, les deux pareilles...Nous sommes chics. Nous marchons côté à côté. Il m'explique plein de choses pendant que nous allons à la mosquée. On fait très bonne impression. Des femmes se retournent et lui font des sourires. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80).

...we went to the mosque. We wore our white djellabas, both are alike...We look nice. We walk side by side. He explains a lot of things to me as we go to the mosque. We make very good impression. Women turn and smile at him. (Translation mine).

Loukoum criticises women's liberation and declares it as bad. Women's liberation extends to their sexual independence (*Maman a un*, p. 8). Employing Loukoum as Porte parole, Beyala exposes the male thoughts towards the sexual liberties of women. One of the core areas of feminists' grievances is in the way women are cooped up sexually by taboos, traditions and religious restrictions:

La liberté des femmes, c'est de la mauvaise graine. Elle pousse n'importe où, même entre leurs cuisses. (*Maman a un*, p. 8)

Women's liberation is a bad lot. It grows anywhere, even
between their laps. (Translation mine)

The above is Abdou Traoré's instruction to his twelve-year old son Loukoum. This is a male to male indoctrination about the ills of feminism. The instruction is part of Loukoum's rite of passage into manhood from his father.

Abdou goes with Loukoum to the mall to see Santa Claus (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 139-142). He spends time with him at the local café' (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 57, 72-75) and other events (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 79-80, 188-189). Even if his motives for these 'Father and Son' times are sometimes suspect, yet it is an undeniable fact that Abdou has time for his son (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 53-54, 139-140).

In *Le petit prince de Belleville*, Beyala amply portrays this 'father and son' solidarity, as emanating from the teachings of a patriarchal father. Severally, she presents dialogues of young Loukoum and adults depicting patriarchal influence. Beyala attempts a trace of the patriarchal foundation of men, in order to expose the root cause of men's patriarchal mentality and disposition. Abdou's soliloquy reveals his commission to the patriarchal education of his son Loukoum (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 205-206).

From childhood, young Loukoum is already immersed in patriarchal indoctrinations. He is fully aware of the sex-roles. He knows the chores and duties of women from those of men (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 7,18,26,46-47,96,80-81,203). His father taught him not to listen to women "Mais il l'écoute pas. Les hommes n'écotent jamais les femmes, alors..." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 53), "But he does not listen to her. Men never listen to women, well..." (Translation mine). Loukoum is also nurtured to believe that women are opinionated, stubborn and unreasonable. The following statement exposes his bias "Ça sert à rien de discuter avec une femme lorsqu'elle a des idées." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 215), "It doesn't pay to discuss things with a woman when she's made up her mind".

Loukoum is also told that women marry to take care of the home for men. Monsieur Ndongala's wife Sonya was sent packing because she could not perform her domestic chores as seen in the following statement:

-Si une femme se marie, c'est pour bien tenir sa maison et ses enfants. Fallait voir ça! la maison dégueulasse. La même pas lavée. Le nez qui coule. Répugnant. J'osais même plus la toucher. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 96)

-If a woman marries, it is to take care of her home and her children well. You should have seen it! The house is disgusting. The kid unbathed. Running nose. Repulsive. I dare not even touch her any longer. (Translation mine).

These sex-roles allotted according to gender by patriarchy to every child from childhood, constitute fundamental concern for feminism. Beyala in the chosen novels depict scenarios that expose patriarchal mentality in the division of labour between the man and the woman. In the selected novels, she portrays this mentality as present in patriarchal men from childhood. Loukoum's statement is indicative of this "Je l'aide [M'am] quelquefois. Mais je dois pas faire certaines choses, vu que je suis un homme." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 203), "Sometimes I do help M'am. But certain things I shouldn't do because I am a man" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 142).

Loukoum's patriarchal mentality is very evident in his engagement of gender related notions. One of these is his opposition to serving a woman:

-Servir une nana ! Quelle idée! D'abord, c'est aux femmes à servir les hommes, à les soigner jusqu'à ce que mort s'ensuive. (*Maman a un*, p. 199-200)

-Serve a girl! What an idea! Foremost, women are to serve men, they are to take care of men up till when death takes them (Translation mine).

Loukoum's masculinity is hegemonic; Abdou makes sure of that through his father and son sessions. He teaches Loukoum patriarchal perceptions. A masculine man, a real man, must not serve a woman. This is the African masculinity imported into France from Mali. Yet, when the White man's masculinity says otherwise, and since Loukoum lives in France, he decides to serve a girl (*Maman a un*, p. 199-200). This is a change from Loukoum's patriarchal mentality when he first came to France with his father. He believes women are the ones to serve him "J'ai pas besoin d'apprendre à cause que les femmes vont bosser pour moi" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 7), "I do not need to learn because women will work hard for me" (Translation mine).

Making allusion to the nature of men, Loukoum speaks about dogs. In the following statement, he supports the biological-reductionist theory that men are what they are by nature. That masculinity is a question of nature and not nurture (Connell, 2015: p. 46-48):

Il faut comprendre et pardonner aux chiens sous réserve de possibilité de changer de compagnon si l'homme trouvait mieux. Les chiens n'ont pas choisi d'être ce qu'ils sont, c'est la nature qui veut ça. (*Maman a un*, p. 48-49)

One should understand and forgive dogs subject to their possibility of changing companion if man finds better [companion]. Dogs did not choose to be what they are; it is nature that wants it so. (Translation mine)

Abdou's investment in his son's masculinity is from his childhood. He teaches young Loukoum that masculine men do not discuss with women, they do not serve women that women are rather to serve men until their death. Abdou's toxic Hegemonic Masculinity is being formed in Loukoum. Yet the white brand of masculinity conflicts in certain principles with the African type. As a result, Loukoum's construction of masculinity is in conflict with his voice of education of what a man should be. His environment as a migrant influences his formation of masculinity. At twelve years old, Loukoum is aware of his responsibility to his father's household. Perceiving himself already as a man, he sees himself as obligated to his annoying sister Fatima. He decides he would marry her off and be rid of her pesky nature, should the time come (*Maman a un*, p. 22). This is an example of patriarchal nurturing in male children that gives them a sense of leadership entitlement over women later in life. Most young males are trained for leadership positions in adult life (Connell, 2005: p. 195).

Masculinity is constructed from childhood. Children observe adults in their environment and mimic them. Sometimes they get direct teachings from adult males on what a man is and what a man is not. Adult males such as Abdou, Monsieur Ndongala, Monsieur Guillaume and Monsieur Michel among others influence Loukoum's construction of masculinity (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 58, 80, 88, 95-96, 106, 200-203, *Maman a un*, p. 98-100). Patriarchy and its rites of passage often subject and expose young boys to trainings and tests that graduate boys into adult males. They are taught that only women complain, cry or express emotions. They grow up believing that the expression of any emotionality outside

anger is tantamount to weakness in a man (Mutunda, 2009: p. 34, Haley 1974: p. 54, 143-144). Some of the lessons young boys learn is that a man is tough, strong and endures pain. A man does not complain he suffers and endures in silence (*Maman a un*, p. 147-151, 217-219).

It is against this backdrop that Beyala portrays Loukoum's quiet suffering from the bullying of Sidibé. The bully beats him up at every given opportunity and injures severely, yet Loukoum feels that it is not masculine to report this bullying to his parents. At their queries of his battered face he simply lied to cover up the truth. For Loukoum, it is unmanly to complain of one's problems:

-Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Mon pauvre chéri!
-Ne m'appelle pas 'mon chéri', d'acc?
-Qu'est-ce qui t'a fait ça? a demandé mon papa.
-Ya plus grave, j'ai répliqué. C'est la vie! J'allais pas me plaindre comme une gonzesse vu qui'il était temps que je pense à mon avenir. (*Maman a un*, p. 218-219)
-My God! My God! My poor darling!
-Don't call me 'my darling', agreed?
-Who did this to you? asked my father.
-It's no longer serious, I replied. That is life! I am not going to complain like a girl, seeing that it is about time that I think of my future. (Translation mine)

Loukoum's formation of masculinity in this illustration is conventional in a patriarchal society. The boys reject anything that suggests that they are weak or feminine. To them, to be a girl or woman means to be weak. When M'am used the word "Fiston" [lad] with affection to comfort Loukoum, while she presses his wounds with hot water, he rejects being called 'Fiston' because of the emotionality his foster mother attaches to the word:

-Doucement, M'am, j'ai fait. T'es en train de me cuire tout vivant.
-C'est à peine chaud, fiston. Il y avait un trop d'affection dans le fiston que j'ai entendu et je n'ai pas voulu écouter. (*Maman a un*, p. 219)
-Gently, M'am, I said. You are about to boil me alive.
-It is hardly hot, lad. There was too much affection in the word 'lad' that I heard, and I did not want to hear it. (Translation mine)

Loukoum as a boy rejects every vestige of emotionality in him. Rather than report Sidibé's bullying to his parents, he fantasises about getting big and growing up enough to punch Sidibé on his jaw for bullying him (*Maman a un*, p. 218). Equally, Antoine, Loukoum's classmate rejected his mother's public show of love towards him. He was ashamed his classmates would see him as a lad, and laugh at him. To this Loukoum says "C'est vrai que les adultes ne comprennent pas que leurs mômes ont grandi..." (*Maman a un*, p. 213), "It is true that adults do not understand that their brats have grown up..." (Translation mine). Being grown up for the boys mean rejecting anything society labels feminine or anti-masculine. It means staying far away from anything that will make them to appear feminine. Freud identifies this period of growth in boys as the post-oedipal period. According to Freud, boys tend to reject their mothers for their excessive show of emotionality and their over-investment in the gender identity of boys (Connell, 2005: p. 20, 122-125).

Even in the nurturing of children, the male children are more privileged than the female children. Loukoum gets to stay up late, while his sisters get sent to bed early. The reason simply being that he is a male child:

-M'am me ramène un peu sur terre en envoyant mes soeurs au lit.

-Et Loukoum? demande Peste Fatima en me lorgnant avec des couteaux.

-C'est un homme! répond mon papa. Il peut dormir plus tard. Il est plus fort.

-C'est pas juste, elle fait! Moi, quand je serai grande, je zigouillerais tous les mecs. (*Maman a un*, p. 178)

-M'am brings me a little to reality by sending my sisters to bed.

-And Loukoum? Asks Fatima the pest eyeing me with eyes like knives.

-He is a man! Replies my father. He can sleep late. He is stronger.

-It is not fair, she says! Me, when I am grown, I will kill all men. (Translation mine).

As infantile as Fatima's statement may appear, we see from the author's illustration, the beginning of gender conflict right from the nurturing of the children in the home. The

privileging of the male children and preferring them over the female ones generate emotions in the children that lead to gender conflict and violence.

The theme of broken homes in the chosen novels is recurrent. Mathilda is broken up with her husband Kouam, M'am and Abdou also broke up, Monsieur Laforêt is broken up with his wife Caroline, Monsieur Ndongala is broken up with his wife Sonya, the little boy Alex that stays with Monsieur Guillaume is from a broken home, Loukoum's girlfriends Lolita and Goéline are both from broken homes, Inspector Antoine also is a divorcee among others. With the exception of Monsieur Laforêt, all other men in these relationships were alleged responsible for their broken homes. The effect of these ruptured marriages on the gender construction of the children is monumental. Loukoum's masculinity is compromised by fleeting notions of patriarchy taught by his father and observed from the men of Belleville (who are not good exemplars). Raised by a single parent, Lolita also develops a bitter impression in her nurturing about men:

-Parce que ma maman...dit que...les mecs c'est tous des salauds. Peut-être bien qu'elle a raison?

-Tu sais, depuis que mon papa est parti, ma maman est de méchante humeur. Faut comprendre, elle n'a plus d'homme pour lui raconter des mensonges. (*Maman a un*, p. 207, 209).

-Because my mother says that all men are bastards. Maybe she is truly right?

-You know, since my father left, my mother has been in a terrible mood. You should understand that she no longer has a man to tell her lies. (Translation mine).

Parental over-investment in gender identity and gender preferences creates conflicts between the genders right from childhood. Patriarchal societies favour the masculine over the feminine. Male is superior to female. Abdou's reason for asking Loukoum to stay up later than his sisters is because he is male, and being male makes him stronger. It is this mentality in child nurturing and development that feminists aim at correcting. Feminists like Adichie recommends that male children should be brought up as feminists, in order to neutralise patriarchal influences and thinking in them (Adichie, 2014).

So, Fatima threatens to kill all men when she grows up. Rather than correcting that impression in Fatima, M'am her foster mother only told her that killing all men would take a lot of time (*Maman a un*, p. 178). Beyalian female characters have often threatened killing men as solution to injustices against women. Ateba in *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée* recommends the annihilation of men (Beyala, 2000: p.88), Soumana, Mathilda and Mrs. Vieilledent in *Le Petit prince de Belleville* and the sequel *Maman a un Amant*, have entertained similar sinister and malicious thoughts towards men for their oppression of women. Even M'am wished her father's wife had united to kill him for his wickedness against them and their children (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 53-55, 138, *Maman a un*, p. 84-85).

Madame Saddock is representative of feminism and its movements. Beyala depicts her as a champion for the emancipation of women. She embodies feminist ideologies and activism, yet young Loukoum as a symbol of patriarchal system resisted her. Loukoum almost frustrated Madame Saddock's mission of recruiting his foster mothers into a feminist movement and inciting them against their unjust and unfaithful husband. The end game for Madame Saddock is to have Abdou arrested for falsification of births. She probably wants Abdou's wives to him, and be free from his unfaithfulness and tyranny. But, Abdou has trained his son well. Beyala depicts the training process and induction of Loukoum by Abdou into the patriarchal order of things. Beyala reveals father's training of their sons as protégé and foot soldiers for the patriarchal order, as partly responsible for the patriarchal disposition, mentality and attitude of the adult male. She gives a glimpse into the masculine bond between the father and the son, which in turns creates a solidarity between them. No wonder Abdou is proud of his son and his paternity to him (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 205-206)

Following Madame Saddock's visitation and her attempt at indoctrinating Abdou's wives with her feminist notions, Loukoum seeks audience with his father to ask him about feminist women. In this dialogue, Beyala exposes how men indoctrinate their sons against feminism and women emancipation movements (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 88). Beyala's anti-masculinist tendencies manifest in her subtle exposure of this father to son passing of the patriarchal baton. She reveals the primal source of male-female agitations for recognition and supremacy. She portrays men as nurturing and scheming against the women folk. Men

ensure the continuity of their patriarchal dynasties in their male offspring. They equip their sons from childhood with all that is necessary and needed to perpetrate themselves in power and in rulership over the woman. No wonder the girl-child is relegated, deprived and denied the privileges enjoyed by the male child. Paternity of the child in patriarchal society equals the ownership of the child. Abdou in full understanding of this warns Aminata sternly about her behavior and Loukoum's welfare in her custody, lest she will never set eyes on him again (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 210, 212).

Twelve-year old Loukoum would not cry when he sees sights so moving he should cry. His only reason is a patriarchal one "Et j'en avais la larme a l'oeil. Mais je ne pleurais pas, vu que je suis un homme" (*Maman a un*, p. 20), "I had a tear in my eye. But I did not cry, seeing that I am a man" (Translation mine). The age long stereotype in most patriarchal societies that men do not cry has already been ingrained in Loukoum by his patriarchal nurturing. Masculinity for Loukoum means not crying. Only women and the weak cry. It is this kind of stereotype in the nurturing of boys that Adichie (2014) condemns. In the 70s, traditional male nurturing was resisted by the feminist movements. Modern male nurturing tends towards raising men to be complicit in their masculinity. Men are allowed to express emotions that were otherwise bottled up. Men had a sense of liberation in their emotionality, since they were allowed to express their feelings just as women do (Connell, 2015: p. 25).

The male child is not allowed to express certain feelings of love, compassion, sympathy or empathy overtly, because it is seen as a sign of weakness. For the male child, it is sense over sensibilities. He is brought up to depend on his reasoning ability for sound judgement, rather than on his feeling or intuition, as the female children are wont to do. Feminists believe this to be a stereotype, because the female children are capable also of logical reasoning and not just depending on their gut feeling intuitions for judgement. Beyala exposes this childhood nurturing in male children and their tendency to become insensitive and unfeeling towards the female even their mothers and sisters. Speaking about his desire to reach out in love to his traumatised foster mother, Loukoum expresses a restriction as seen in his confession "Il ya comme quelque chose qui me pousse vers elle. Pour un peu, je prendrais bien cette main-là pour réchauffer mes doigts glacés mais je le fais pas parce que je suis un home." (*Le Petit*

Prince, p. 26), “Something pushes me towards her. Just for a while, I would love to take that hand to warm my icy fingers, but I did not do it because I am a man” (Translation mine).

This post-oedipal versus patriarchal rejection of the mother by her son is both a psychological and societally imposed conditions. Boys are to remain unemotional in order to express their masculinity. Patriarchal society expects boys to remain detached from feelings that are unmanly and project weakness. Only anger is allowed as a masculine emotion, because in it male dominance through violence is established over women and other subordinate masculinities (Connell, 2005: p. 78, 83-85, 99-100, 257-258, Connell, 1987). As hegemonic men, Monsieur Kaba and Abdou convert their anger into violent threats against women to subjugate them and put them in their place (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 107-113, *Maman a un*, p. 65, 117-119, 165-169, and 264-268).

Beyala presents men’s attitude towards conversation with women as aloof, superior. Men are not expected to reply to women’s questions nor engage their comments. In popular patriarchal cultures, women are to be silent all together. Women’s opinions on important matters, even those about women, do not matter. Women do not have a say over the man, the children, the home and the society and its institutions at large.

Loukoum observes that his father is indifferent to his mother’s insinuation, that he is philandering “Mais il l’écoute pas. Les hommes n’écotent jamais les femmes, alors...” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 53), “But he isn’t listening to her, which is normal since men never listen to women, anyway...” (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 32). The seven-year-old sees men’s snobbery towards women as normal. This is patriarchal mentality engendered in kids that the author attempts to expose. Men often neglect their children and ignore their wives, leaving the women to fend for the kids themselves (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 54-55). In De Jager’s translation, M’am tells Soumana of how her father shirks his responsibilities of taking care of his over a hundred children “My father, he never even paid any attention to us, as if Mum had brought us into the world by herself!” (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 34). Loukoum sees it as masculine to ignore women, even neglect them. Abdou’s example has provided grounds for the formation of Hegemonic Masculinity in his son Loukoum.

Though patriarchy privileges the male child, it also obliges him morally. Loukoum has all it takes to be uncontrollably immoral, yet his voice of religious education helps him. Yet, not always. Loukoum starts to lose his religious resolve from *Le petit prince de Belleville*, now in *Maman a un Amant* he does not even remember his Qur'anic instruction, while Goélène performs sexual activities on him (*Maman a un*, p. 70).

Rather than reprimand the kids for their immorality, Madame Vielledent encouraged them. She told them to use condoms because of AIDS, and warned the kids that their parents are approaching (*Maman a un*, p. 71). In the same vein, Esther the prostitute This is one of the female characters in Beyala's world. They are not always role models, nor are they without vices. Yet, the male characters are usually represented as the negative influence. Despite the bad examples set by the female characters, the male characters came out demonised at the end of Beyala's novels.

M'am goes swimming with Monsieur Tichit wearing a bikini that leaves nothing to the imagination. Loukoum decides to hang around the river to discourage any unfaithfulness between his mother and her lover. He saw M'am's bikini and remarked "Je me demande si on peut se sentir à l'aise avec ça". (*Maman a un*, p. 72), "I ask myself if one can resist that." (Translation mine). Loukoum judges his mother's swimming attire as irresistible to any man, including Monsieur Tichit. So, he decides to keep a watch over the two. He knows that Monsieur Tichit wishes he was not there, but his religious convictions kept him (*Maman a un*, p. 72-73). Loukoum as a good son protects his father's interest by keeping a watch over the affair between his mother and another man. Although he was starting an immoral relationship with Monsieur Tichit's daughter Goélène, yet he would not allow him to defile his mother. Loukoum excuses his mother's behaviour before another man "Il faut comprendre: dans son bidonville de Belleville, personne ne l'a encore traitée comme une damme" (*Maman a un*, p. 72), "One should understand: in her shanty town of Belleville, nobody treats her like a lady any longer." (Translation mine). Loukoum understands his mother's need of attention and affection as a woman. Things Abdou his father has long deprived her, but freely gives to prostitutes like Esther (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 63-65, 83, 87). In his letter to his girlfriend Lolita, Loukoum describes his mother's rebellious behaviour as follows:

Ma maman prend des drôles d'airs. Elle va chercher son indépendance jusque dans sa façon de s'habiller, des petites culottes courtes et des robes à fleurs qu'elle exhibe... Elle se laisse tripoter par un monsieur... Il s'appelle Monsieur Tichit. Il sait y faire avec les femmes. Et ma maman laisse envahir son âme par des voiliers. Elle le regarde, muette et stupide, jamais rassasiée d'altitude. (*Maman a un*, p. 88-89)

My mother takes on some funny looks. She goes to search for her independence up to her manner of dressing, short knickers and the flowery dresses she exhibits... She allows herself to be groped by one man... His name is Monsieur Tichit. He knows his way around women. And mom allows his words to invade her soul. She looks at him, dumb and stupid, never satisfied with the thrill. (Translation mine).

Loukoum warns in his letter to his girlfriend Lolita that soon his father Abdou will explode. He warns of an impending scandal and doom for his mother and her lover. He was melancholic that the heart of an adult could find love so late. Beyala paints a scene of the expected end of patriarchal relationships.

In his letter to Lolita, Loukoum confesses that he is dying to leave this age where everyone has something to teach them (children). Loukoum agrees that he has been learning from adults. Judging from his comments and actions, Loukoum's nurturing as a patriarchal and hegemonic male is already underway (*Maman a un*, p. 89).

This dual position of Loukoum sometimes confuses him. He is loyal to both his father and his mother at the same time. He tries not to choose sides. Rather he decides not to meddle in his parents' affairs. Yet, the situation between his parents puts him constantly on the defensive for both of them. This is the psyche of a child going through his parents' marital problems. Loukoum tries to remain positive by being neutral. He tries not to judge his parents' actions, he only narrates. His sisters' psyches would not be as affected in their nurturing as an older Loukoum who sees and understands all (*Maman a un*, p. 66).

Monsieur Tichit tries to come into M'am's life as a lover, through the cracks in her marriage:

-Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous mariée?

-Vingt-deux ans.

-Et vous n'avez jamais trompé votre mari?

-C'est pas permis, répond M'am. Dieu a dit....

-Laissez Dieu là où il est.
-Et mon mari?
-Vous rend-il heureuse?
-Ça va, ça vient. Ça dépend des jours.
-Vous mentez.
-Pourquoi que vous dites ça?
-Vos yeux. Ils sont tristes. Si j'étais votre mari, je vous couvrerais de cadeaux et de baisers, et je travaillerais jour et nuit rien que pour vous. (*Maman a un*, p. 72-73)

-Since when have you been married?
-Twenty-two years.
-And you have never cheated on your husband?
-It is not allowed, answered M'am. God said....
-Leave God where he is.
-And my husband?
-Does he make you happy?
-Things are fine, we are happy. It depends on the days.
-You are lying.
-Why do you say that?
-Your eyes. They are sad.
-If I were your husband, I would cover you with gifts and with kisses, and I would work day and night only for. (Translation mine).

Goélène asked Loukoum an important question “D’ailleurs, pourquoi qu’il [Dieu] fait que les mamans partent et laissent les petites filles avec leur papa?” (*Maman a un*, p. 75), “Besides, why does he [God] make mothers leave, and leaving the little girls with their fathers?” (Translation mine). One of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations towards the year 2030: is to ensure paternal presence in the nurturing of the children in the home. Researches have shown that children raised in homes with both parents have higher intelligence and emotional quotients, than those raised by single parents (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016: 13). Beyala paints the picture of the single parent situation in Africa thus:

...en Afrique, il ya des tas de femmes qui font des mômes sans être mariées. Alors, elles voient pas d’autres moyens que de les abandonner.” (Le petit...42)

...in Africa, there are loads of women who make babies without being married. Well, they see no other solutions than to abandon them.” [My translation].

The place of masculinity in the home, especially homes with male children can not be undermined. In his research, Connell interviewed some of the young men who live a reckless life of drug addiction, violence and crime. Several of them do not have a paternal presence in the home. The following excerpt from one of the interviews is testament to the need of paternal presence and masculinity in the home:

-Connell: What was it like growing with your Mother and your Nan [Grandmother]?

-Mal Walton: Hard.

-Connell: Why was it hard?

-Mal Walton: Two women-never had a man there to, you know, give me a good tan [beating] about the arse. Because I've, I've pretty well had it my way, you know, but-that's why I wished that I had a Dad, so, you know, he would kick me up the bum and say 'you've done wrong'. Because I have always done the opposite. I've kicked Mother up the bum and said, 'No, I want to do that.' (Connell, 2005: p. 110).

The presence of masculinity in the home often keeps the children in check. Patriarchally, men are the stern punishers of evil doers in the family. Men are the masquerades with which women scare errant and rebellious children. The young man in the interview confessed that a masculine presence in the home would have made a difference in his life. His childhood and teenage years had witnessed multiple counts of sexual immorality and crime. His mother reported him as uncontrollable. He dropped out of school, went into crime, used drugs, stole and got arrested, joined a motorbike gang, got heavily tattooed, got severely injured from motorbike accident, does not have a job, lives with a friend, and is indebted (Connell, 2005: p. 110). This is an illustration of what a life without a father figure in the home could lead to. Likewise, Loukoum the hero of both selected novels was caught in sexual activities with Lolita his classmate, on school grounds. Abdou his father was summoned to the school director's office. Lolita's mother, a divorcee, was livid with rage and was already waiting at the director's office. In the following lengthy explanation of Loukoum, he describes his father's reaction towards him and the situation:

Mon papa a reçu une convocation du Directeur de mon école. Il est colère et frappe de temps en temps le mur avec ses poings. Sûr qu'il meurt d'envie d'en foutre une à quelqu'un. Mes soeurs se tiennent tranquilles...Le père est fringué comme pas deux...Mon papa va vers le portail, il revient encore, il trifouille son chapeau, il regarde sa montre. (*Maman a un*, p. 193-194)

My father received a summon from the director of my school. He is angry and hits the wall with his fists from time to time. He is surely dying to beat someone. My sisters kept quiet...Father is worked up like no other...My father goes towards the door, he returns again, he feels his hat, he looks at his watch. (Translation mine).

Most adults can identify with the almost comical but severe implications of the gesticulations of Loukoum's father in show of perplexity and anger for Loukoum's offense. Loukoum's description brings to mind childhood disciplinary moments, when fathers are aggravated by their children's juvenile antics and delinquencies. Often it means severe corrections from fathers are in the offing:

Mon papa gueule:

-J'veis t'apprendre à vivre, espèce de...de...Il a plus de mots. Il faudrait des mots en martinet pour me faire comprendre, mais il n'en a pas. Il bondit sur moi.

-Calmez-vous, Monsieur! Crie le Directeur.

-Calmez-vous! Qu'elle dit la maman de Lolita, faux jeton. Enfin il se calme. Mais juste comme un serpent qui attend que vos pieds soient assez proches pour vous mordre. Je prends pas de risques. Je m'éloigne. (*Maman a un*, p. 195)

My father bellowed:

-I'm going to teach you how to live, you excuse for a...for a...he was lost for words. Disciplinary words are needed to make me understand, but he has none. He jumps on me.

-Calm yourself down, sir! shouts the director.

-The 'Calm yourself down!' said by Lolita's mother was insincere.

Finally he calms down. But only as a snake that waits for your feet to be close enough to bite you. I take no risk. I distance myself from him. (Translation mine).

Though a lengthy excerpt, yet it is necessary to appropriately create the mental image of what fathers do to keep the children in focus and well nurtured. As Mal Walton in the cited

inverview missed the corrections and directions of a father, Loukoum enjoys the presence of his father in his life.

Goélène interrogates the existence of God, citing separations in marriages and the fate of little girls abandoned by their mothers. In *Le petit prince de Belleville*, Monsieur Laforêt's wife Caroline cheated on him and left him for another man: she left him with three children. Aminata Loukoum's mother too abandoned him with his father for ten years. In all these cases, it was the men that bore the responsibility of nurturing the children. Goélène as Beyala's voice exposes this aspect of women's wrong doings against men. Goélène also is a victim of such situation, she is without a mother; her father Monsieur Tichit caters for her. Deductions from Beyala's analogies exonerate men from being the usual suspect and perpetual villains that she is wont to project in her writings.

Men are not entirely bad. They have positive aspects to them. Connell also cites instances where the young men used in his social experiment agree that they are involved in taking care of their babies and doing house chores; especially if their spouses have better jobs (Connell, 2005: p. 109). Though it was after his fall that Abdou became humble enough to do domestic chores, but he eventually changed his ways and started helping M'am around the house (*Maman a un*, p. 225, 276, and 281). Even Bolobolo helps Aïssatou with domestic chores in *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine* (Beyala, 2000: p. 63, 91, 139). Regardless of their construction of the patriarchal Hegemonic Masculinity, men get in touch with their nurturing personality when there is need.

Beyala exposes the unguarded sexual antics of adults as the cause of early sexual immorality in children. Loukoum's exposure to the nudity of women like Soumana his step-mother and Esther the prostitute, makes him so sexually aware that he describes with great ease the breasts of prostitutes such as Esther and Aminata his biological mother (see *Le Petit Prince*, p. pages 43-44, 59, 65, 124, 128, 144, 156). He engages in voyeurism of nudity and sexual play with Lolita his classmate (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 156-157). This family pornography that Loukoum sees in Soumana's nakedness is usually one of the earliest sources of sexual awareness in children (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 59, 156).

Oui, c'est M'amzelle Esther. Elle porte un collant noir avec un body sous son manteaux. Avec ses cheveux partagés en deux tresses, on dirait une gamine. Mon papa la regarde. Ses yeux lui mangent la figure. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 58)

Yes, it is M'amzelle Esther. She wears a black close-fitting body hug under her coat. With her hair divided into two braids, she looks childlike. My father looks at her, his eyes devouring her face. (Translation mine)

M'amzelle Esther a enlevé son manteau. Elle est mince comme un morceau de planche avec sa taille comme mon poing. Elle a des seins comme j'en ai jamais vu avec des pointes roses. J'ai jamais rien vu de plus joli. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 59)

M'amzelle Esther removed her coat. She is as thin as a piece of plank with her height like my fist. She has breasts like I have never seen with rose coloured tips. I have never seen anything finer. (Translation mine)

...je leur ai raconté que M'amzelle Esther avait des seins du tonnerre et qu'on avait été se promener au jardin avec mon papa. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 65)

...I narrated to them [Abdou's wives] that M'amzelle Esther had breasts like thunder and that we took a walk with my father. (Translation mine)

Loukoum is well aware that his mother is a prostitute. He is not so young as not to understand that she sleeps with men for money. This does not bother him in the least as seen in the following statement:

Je pensais que ça m'était bien égal, qu'elle pouvait coucher avec toute la terre si ça lui faisait plaisir. Mais j'ai rien dit.

Le troisième jour, j'ai lui demandé.

-T'as pas peur de tomber enceinte?

Elle a rigolé, puis elle a dit:

-Quelle idée! J'ai pris la pilule. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 229)

...but that didn't prevent me from thinking she could sleep with the entire world, I wouldn't toady up to them.

The third day, I asked her:

-Do you want to have another baby?

She giggled and then said:

-Yeah, but I'm on the pill." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 161-162).

The religious induction and indoctrination of Loukoum by his father introduces him to Coranic perspective of gender identity and their construction. Often, Loukoum would quote what a man or woman should be from religious perspectives. Abdou makes sure he passes his religious beliefs on gender to his son Loukoum (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 7-9, 26, 45,53-55, *Maman a un*, p. 225, 252-253, 275-277). Loukoum's religious induction and indoctrination influences the type of masculinity constructed by him, and the manner of its construction (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 79-82, 88, 93-94, *Maman a un*, p. 65-66, 116-119, 173-176, 220-221)

The child brought up as a man under patriarchy is taught religious beliefs and traditions that inhibit early sexual activity or freedom. This is Loukoum's upbringing. Lolita, the child brought up under western ideologies and civilizations, is quick to strip herself naked and show her vagina to her classmate, because she had no inhibition whatsoever. When she asks Loukoum to show his penis in return, he objects and says; "There's a place in the Koran where it says that it is bad" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 107). Lolita throws herself on Loukoum, grabs his trousers and pulls at the zip to uncover his private part. He struggles to be free and starts to be aware of a strange feeling of being with a girl.

Beyala exposes the earlier formative years in children and how different notions or ideologies are responsible eventually for their stand later in life. Loukoum at seven plays with Lolita's clitoris and fumbles with her vagina and reminds himself that next time he will fiddle with it a bit longer. This is the background children grows in, despite all the exposures to pornography, Loukoum still remembers his religious teachings and adhere, while Lolita that lives in a more controlled and private environment, quickly jumps at the opportunity to engage in sexual immorality with her peer (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 156-157). The didactic of this illustration affirms that attention is needful in the nurturing of children. Yet most of the homes represented by Beyala in the selected novels are either with single or divorced parents. Loukoum quickly takes his leave from Lolita's room telling her "Faut plus faire ça, sinon le bon Dieu va pas être content." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 158), "We shouldn't do that again, or else, the good Lord is not going to be pleased with us" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p.

107). Loukoum is already feeling betrayed by a girl at his age. He's already forming judgments about women. He thinks women are treacherous (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 105).

Abdou in his fallen state opens up to his son. He laments his wife's attitude to him and her new found life style and aspirations. It saddens him that M'am no longer sees a husband in him. She does not care if he is suffering from her maltreatments. Abdou tells his son Loukoum that money makes love flexible. He realises that what he needs is to find a job. Since he lost his job, he had become powerless and without control over his home. Abdou tells his son that his finding a job is the solution to his situation (*Maman a un*, p. 245-246). Connell (2005:90) submits that "In relation to production, masculinity has come to be associated with being a breadwinner". Since Abdou was no longer productive, he loses his masculinity to his wife M'am the new breadwinner.

Loukoum's bias against women is from his father's tutelage. Abdou influences Loukoum to construct a hegemonic disposition towards women. Men's culpability is a leitmotiv in Beyala's writings. This is her constant song, her perpetual theme: that men are guilty of all that happens negatively to women. Hegemonic Masculinity's affiliation to patriarchy already condemns it to feminist criticism. The semblance between both notions is so close that feminists may not distinguish between both. Hegemonic men show their masculinity by being patriarchal.

Separations and divorces are now so common that they no longer shock or move children who are victims of both. Though, the psychological affectation on children's sensibilities and their construction of gender identity later in life is significant. According to Beyala's representation of little Lolita's home, separations are quite normal. Children nowadays brace themselves for the worst of these events in their homes (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 175-176).

Finally, Loukoum gets a letter from Lolita his love. After much apprehension of its content, Loukoum opens it and discovers that she misses him as much as he did her. Lolita it appears suffers mentally from her childhood experience in her home. Yet, young Loukoum plans to keep their love alive until they grow up and marry. As the omniscient narrator of the events of the novel, Loukoum's final submission on male-female relationship and the nature of things is that he is a novice with much to learn (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 246-251). Yet he attests

that “Oui, les chemins du Bonheur sont bien complexes.” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 252), “...the paths of happiness are very complicated.” (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 177).

Nurturing boys to be feminists as suggested by Adichie (2014) has far reaching anti-patriarchal consequences. It means boys will form masculinities different from the Hegemonic Masculinity that maintains patriarchy and sustains its institutions. It means bringing boys up to be more in touch with their sensibilities. This male gender liberation experiment was performed in the 70s, it ended with men becoming confused, emasculated and consequently rebelling against feminism and its proponents (Connell, 2005: p. 206-211, Mutunda, 2009: p. 10-11). Inadvertently, instead of a stronger personality, masculinists believe this type of nurturing creates effeminate boys that become wimps and sissies. Men like Kouam who has no control over their wives, or authority in their homes, are seen as weak men. In trying to salvage the feminists’ battered masculinity image of men, several therapists like Farrel (1971-1972) and Goldberg (1988) wrote to encourage men and restore their masculinity. They refuted feminists’ claim that men were the problem. Connell (2005:208) presents this thus:

Goldberg too counselled men that they were not to blame for gender troubles. Liberation had been tried and failed, leaving men confused and resentful. It failed because it denied the basic emotional differences between women and men, which in Goldberg’s view were polarized unconscious characters macho vs. earth-mother.

4.1.4 Toxic Hegemonic Masculinity and child nurturing

Loukoum confesses that the conflict between his parents affects his performance at school (*Maman a un*, p. 253-254). The psychological trauma of conflict in the home on children also is explored by Beyala. She shows through the children’s narratives that their parents’ acidic relationship and negative disposition troubles the children, even at school.

The effects of conflicts in male-female relationships inadvertently affect the successful construction of gender identity. Connell in his study of several young men discovers that their construction of masculinity is affected by their family, background. The masculinity

types are formed partitively by environmental influences from the home. Connell discovers that abusive homes and parents often influence the construction of negative gender identities in children from such homes (Connell, 2005: p. 99, 109-110). Loukoum's formation of masculinity is largely influenced by Abdou's life as an exemplar of masculinity. Loukoum's often quote Abdou's hegemonic masculinity ideologies and principles in his thoughts or speech in the selected novels (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 81-82, 88, *Maman a un*, p. 100, 245-246). Parental conflicts in the home affect the children's psyche and who they become:

-Mais papa et M'am me désorganisent la matière grise. Ça devient une famille au jour le jour. Une famille où il y a du vent qui souffle et tout le monde doit s'accrocher a quelque chose. Et parfois, je regrette mes trois ans, quand je pouvais en toute impunité ne rien comprendre. (*Maman a un*, p. 254)
-But father and M'am disorganise my grey matter [brain]. We become an everyday family. A family where wind blows and everyone must hang on to something. Sometimes, I miss my being three-year-old, when with all impunity I could not understand anything. (Translation mine).

Loukoum begins to miss his childhood when he was oblivious to his parents' fights and marital problems. He yearns for those years of stability and happiness in the home. This situation in itself is witness to Loukoum's troubled psyche.

M'am promises Loukoum to forget her lover and return home in few weeks' time. She needs Loukoum to accept her, since the whole community rejects her. She explains to Loukoum that her relationship with his father had ended a long time ago. She tries to make Loukoum understand her suffering in the hands of Abdou. She cajoles him, and takes him through memory lane of his childhood. Loukoum avows his undying love for his foster mother, but he also declares that his heart is not healed yet. He concludes that it is the price M'am pays to realise her dream. She realised her dream, but lost her home. Beyala in this touching mother and son scenario describes vividly women's investment in the emotionality of the children. Often times, children are the last recourse of oppressed wives and mothers. M'am actually endured Abdou's toxic masculinity because of her children. She mortgaged her freedom, mental health and aspirations for her children all these years, until she says no

more and went after her own dreams and happiness. Incidentally, her mother also endured her father's oppression and subjugation just because of her children:

Ben j' vais te dire, tu me fais penser à ma mère. Toujours à la botte de mon père. Inch Allah a tout c' qu'il dit. Et elle lui répond jamais. Elle se défend jamais. Des fois elle prend le parti des gosses, mais ça lui retombe toujours dessus. Plus elle nous défend, plus il lui en fait voir. Il déteste les mômes qu'on croirait pas qu'il en a une tonne. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 54-55)

Well I am going to tell you, you make me think of my mother. Always under the boot of my father. Inch Allah to all he says. And she never replies him. She never defends herself. Sometimes she takes sides with the kids, but that always falls back on her. The more she defends us, the more he makes her suffer. He hates kids so much that one would not have believed that he has loads of them. (Translation mine)

M'am's mother shared her home with twenty-nine other wives of her husband, who are constantly at war. She grows to hate the sight of men, let alone touch men. Yet she has kids for her husband. Children are often the consolation of women in marriage. Children are seen and treated as the only good thing that can come out of oppressive and wicked man. M'am's mother developed an absolute rejection of men mentality, because of her negative polygamous experience and suffering in a patriarchal home (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 54-55,121). Regardless of being abandoned for ten years, Loukoum gradually gravitates towards his mother. He opens his heart to forgive and accept her (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 221-222). According to Freud, the male child and his mother are initially quite close. Their bond subsists, until he goes through an oedipal process of masculinization with his father (Connell, 2005: p. 8-12, 135). This is how Loukoum's attachment oscillates from his mothers (M'am, Soumana and Aminata) to Abdou his father.

Most times, children's welfare is the principal reason women are tied down from pursuing their dreams, or escaping from men's prisons. The children are part of the patriarchal set up that prevents women from seeking their freedom from oppressive masculinity. We see this in M'am's dilemma of choosing between staying with her children in the oppressive and abusive home of Abdou, or leaving the children and Abdou's maltreatments for the arms of

her lover Monsieur Tichit. Beyala depicts this perplexity of choice in M'am's dialogue with Loukoum (*Maman a un*, p. 272-273) and in the following soliloquy:

-La bipolarité du monde: mes enfants ou mon amour. Un choix difficile, car au fond de moi, l'un n'exclut pas l'autre et cette impossibilité d'envisager ma vie avec l'un sans l'autre, un choix illusoire, une liberté qui s'annule. Que faire, l'Amie? (*Maman a un*, p. 280)

-The bipolarity of the world: my children or my love. A difficult choice, for deep within me, one does not exclude the other and this impossibility of envisaging my life with one without the other, an illusory choice, a liberty that annuls itself. What should I do, friend? (Translation mine).

Women have sleepless nights over men's irresponsible and unfaithful actions in marriage. Since Abdou her husband disappeared and went philandering with Esther the prostitute, for a whole week M'am could not sleep. She worries a lot and prays fervently for his safety. Abdou's actions have left M'am a husk. He tells her nothing about his plans or actions. He brings in young Loukoum into the childless marriage without informing M'am, neither explaining the origin of the child after bringing him in. Even children in this kind of marriage suffer. Loukoum has no knowledge of his mother, and only recently found out that it was not M'am (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 29-30, 83). He tries to find out about his mother from his father Abdou, and this conversation ensued:

-Pourquoi tu veux savoir tant de choses sur ta Maman?

-Parce qu'elle est ma Maman, même si elle m'aime pas. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80)

-Why do you want to know so much about your mother?

-Because she is my mother, even if she doesn't love me. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 53)

This is the psyche of a child from a home with a fragmented male-female relationship. Young Loukoum is a product of a ruptured home and so, he is a child in search of his identity and origin. Monsieur Guillaume observes that in male-female conflicts in the home, the children are often the worst hit:

-Pauvre gosse, fait Monsieur Guillaume. C'est injuste, c'est toujours les enfants qui trinquent dans ce genre de situation. (*Maman a un*, p. 189).

-Poor lad, says Monsieur Guillaume. It is unfair; it is always the children who suffer in this kind of situation. (Translation mine)

The oedipal attachment to his foster mother M'am, makes Loukoum to protest against her being treated as a prostitute by the men of Belleville. He assaults Monsieur kaba in protest. Loukoum as a boy of twelve years could not bear to see his mother maltreated by his father's patriarchal friends. He forsakes his patriarchal solidarity with his fellow males, and supports M'am his foster mother. This is what feminists like Adichie, and Beyala among others expect the nurturing of male children to produce: solidarity with all women (Adichie, 2014). Boys are to be nurtured to protect and support women at all times, just as Loukoum has been towards his mother. The Freudian explanation of this solidarity of the male child with his mother is perceived in the child's preference of his mother over his father on the long run (Connell, 2005: p. 134-138).

Beyala's portrayal of this woman-bashing scenario, without the woman actually committing the crime, is intentional. It appears to amplify the patriarchal bias against women, especially when M'am is castigated as having sex with the first man that comes along the way, when actually she is yet to have sex with him.

Children see all that goes on in the home. Consequently, they're influenced and they form their idiosyncracies. Loukoumm and Fatima notice the rivalry between monsieur Tichit and their father over their mother. The patriarchal nurturing is already evident in Loukoum, while the feminist protests are echoed by his little sister Fatima. The following dialogue between the siblings represents a masculinist versus feminist debate:

-C'est pas juste que c'est toujours les garçons qui commandent.

-Les femmes sont toutes des putes, alors...

-Les garçons sont tous des vilains.

-Ben, si ce type [Monsieur Tichit] Continue de regarder M'am...

-C'est interdit par la loi coranique de regarder une femme mariée (*Maman a un*, p. 54)

-It is not fair that it is always boys that command.

-Well, all women are whores...

-All boys are ugly

-Good, if this guy [Monsieur Tichit] continues to look at M'am...

-It is forbidden by Qur'anic law to look at a married woman
(Translation mine)

Loukoum and his sisters know M'am loves them, and they exploit this fact to make M'am forgive their father and stay with them. Loukoum in particular keeps malice with his foster mother. He goes as far as challenging her decision to leave them for another man. His emotional investment in his parents' conflicts is quite visible enough for all to see. M'am reconsiders for the sake of her children, but Abdou did not give her the chance to repent finally. He reaches the end of his tether with M'am's scandal and attitude (*Maman a un*, p. 189-194, 225-226, 244-247, 251-261, 272-277).

Loukoum never stopped being the arbiter between his father and his foster mother. He visited M'am at her lover's place. He narrates how his father suffers from M'am's absence, and how he beats the children out of sorrow. He begs her to return and prays for her return. Eventually, M'am considers the children and returns to her husband Abdou. She left her lover Monsieur Tichit, and left her quest for love. She submits to patriarchy by declaring that "la femme est née à genoux aux pieds de l'homme" (*Maman a un*, p. 291), "Woman is born on her knees at the feet of man" (Translation mine). This way, her children brings her back to submit to her husband and to patriarchy. M'am in humble resignation declares:

-J'aime mes enfants. Je suis revenue pour eux,
-Abdou, mon maître? Il est mon Soleil déchu. Chaque posture de lui le déshabille, je le vois devant moi, nu, l'esprit plein de jouissance, de conquêtes et de domination. Je suis revenue, l'Amie. Je reste muette devant ce simple portrait d'homme. (*Maman a un*, p. 291-292)
-I love my children. I came back for them.
-Abdou, my master? He is my fallen sun. Each of his posture undresses him, I see him naked before me, his spirit full of pleasure, conquests and domination. I came back, friend. I remain dumb before this simple portrait of man. (Translation mine).

Abdou could no longer tolerate M'am's attitude and defiance. He recalls that he has been caring for the kids for a year, while M'am abandons the home. In the bid to keep his marriage and home, Abdou imbibes complicit masculinity traits. He breaks the sex-role rules of patriarchy and performs domestic chores in the home. Since Abdou's subjugation by his job loss and his wife's empowerment, he has been a model husband to M'am. Yet,

she threw it all in his face by undermining his authority and engaging in adultery. In a fit of anger, he drives M'am out of the home. M'am tries to reason with him reminding him that she is his wife, but Abdou could no longer accept. The kids are traumatised and they cried (*Maman a un*, p. 276). He throws her clothes out of the window, regardless her begging him to open the door. Abdou refuses and sent her packing. The effect of this rupture on the children is evident in Loukoum's soliloquy:

-Mon Coeur a fichu le camp dans ma poitrine. J'étais bouleversé. Mais j'ai partagé mon chagrin entre hommes avec moi-même. Que voulez-vous? Les grands sentiments conduisent à la catastrophe. (*Maman a un*, p. 278)

-My heart left my chest. I was overwhelmed. But I shared my grief as a man with myself. What do you expect? Great emotions lead to disaster. (Translation mine)

Abdou's ego may have informed his final resolve to send M'am packing. That ego is the same masculine stubbornness and deafness to the plea of femininity. It is the fortitude against feminism and all it stands for. Indeed, Abdou was patient enough for M'am to change, but she was determined to follow her heart into adultery and unto her dream of being literate, even at the expense of her home.

M'am did not beg her husband for long when he threw her out of the house for adultery. Rather, she submits "Comme tu veux" (*Maman a un*, p. 277), "as you wish" (Translation mine). The children dried their tears and went to bed. Abdou alone was left on his armchair. Looking pained and drawn. Beyala's feminist ethos is manifest in this illustration. Feminism encourages women to be emancipated from male oppression regardless the cost. Since M'am does not support killing Abdou in order for her to be free she abandons him and the children in pursuit of her happiness instead (LLP, 53-55, *Maman a un*, p. 277).

As an epilogue to Abdou's demise, he becomes a drunk who does not laugh, nor stay at home. He beats the children and does not prepare delicious meals for them as he used to. Since M'am left the house, Abdou does not talk about her. He treats her as if she is dead. The children miss both absent parents. They feel traumatised and abandoned by both parents. Since his wife left, Abdou becomes unrecognisable. He is a sharp contrast from the avatar of Hegemonic Masculinity that he used to be. Abdou's emotional apathy becomes so

exacerbated that he neglects his hygiene and that of the home. His ex-wife Aminata comes around to care for the kids and the home. She even bathes him sometimes (*Maman a un*, p. 281-282). Beyala paints a vivid picture of a man fallen from grace, due to his wickedness towards women. The didactic of Abdou for all men is for men to beware of being domineering, oppressive and unfaithful to women, lest they become like Abdou. This is an anti-hegemonic masculinity instruction from Beyala to all men exercising toxic masculinity towards women.

Faut pas désespérer. Meme les idiots trouvent des gonzesses. D'ailleurs, mon papa dit qu'il ya beaucoup plus de femmes que d'hommes sur la terre. (*Maman a un*, p. 100)
Do not despair. Even idiots find girls. Besides, my father says there are more women than men on earth. (Translation mine).

The above fraternal consolation of Loukoum to Michel on his not having a girlfriend, exposes a popular assumption among men. The general demographic assumption of men is that the global population of women is more than that of men. Patriarchal men usually use this assumption as excuse to have several women as sexual partners. Contrarily, recent studies around the world have shown that there are unprecedented increases in the births of male children than females (Stauffer, 2019). Among men, it is generally considered being more masculine to exhibit one's virility through multiple sexual activities. Loukoum in his conversation about marriage with Monsieur Michel submits that women are so many that even idiotic men find some. This is what Abdou tells his son. The patriarchal nurturing of Loukoum impacts on his thinking and actions strongly.

Loukoum's exposure to Abdou's bad parenting and irresponsible example continues to impact him emotionally. The same way he fancied older women and his classmate Lolita, he also does Goélène Monsieur Tichit's daughter. His womanising tendency is perceived in the following statement "Quand on est môme, on est une proie facile pour les gonzesses" (*Maman a un*, p. 68), "When one is a kid, one is an easy prey for chicks" (Translation mine). In fairness to Loukoum both girls actually initiated the sexual experiences between them and Loukoum. Goélène went over and kissed Loukoum, which actually disgusted him (*Maman a un*, p. 69-70) Loukoum's early sexual exposures made him susceptible to sexual immorality, but his Qur'anic lessons and beliefs keeps him in check sometimes.

Loukoum's sexual objectification of women is from environmental influence. He looks at his father's pornographic magazines. He regularly follows his father and other adults to a bar patronised by loosely clad prostitutes. Adults like Esther and his step mother Soumana conduct themselves indecently around him. He sees and hears adults in the community talk and engage in sexual activities often. Consequently, his sexual description of women is vivid and raw, and his notions about male-female relationships are "all male" as is wont to be said.

Une gonzesse avec un derrière énorme comme celui d'une vache braille:

-Des carottes, mesdames! Des carottes, mesdames!

Elle s'égosille. C'est drôle, vu que c'est d'abord les carottes qu'on donne aux dames et le bâton après (*Maman a un*, p. 104).

A chick with an enormous behind like that of a cow yells:

-Carrots, madams! Carrots, madams!

She shouts herself hoarse. It is funny, seeing that one gives carrots to ladies first, before giving them the stick afterwards. (Translation mine)

Elle a...des mamelles plus grosses que'une assistante sociale. (*Maman a un*, p. 105)

She has teats bigger than a social worker (Translation mine)

Beyala paints a picture of the masculine as perceived by men, right from childhood. Loukoum apparently has been taught to perceive, think and talk the way he did in this except. To be masculine is to be sexually interested in women's body and to objectify women sexually. For Loukoum, to be masculine is to beat women into submission, even with a stick (*Maman a un*, p. 104). Brannon's masculinity scale features a parameter that says that for one to be regarded as masculine; he must give women hell. A real man must be tough and dominant (Brannon, 1976, Brannon and Juni, 1984). This is what Beyala exposes through Loukoum's ruminations about women.

For Loukoum, a woman with big breasts in the employ of a pimp will make a fortune as a prostitute. This obsession of men with women with big breasts is subtly traced by Beyala to childhood nurturing. Abdou's sexual immorality rubs off on his son, and on his son's thought process. Even his classmate Lolita noticed Loukoum's sexual voyeurism:

-T'aimes pas les elephants? Elle me demande.
 -Bien sûr, j'lui dis.
 -Tu mens.
 -Et alors?
 -J' pense c'qui t'intéresse, c'est de regarder les filles.
 -C'est pas vrai.
 -Tu mens tout le temps, elle répond. Tu regardes Mademoiselle Garnier.
 -C'est pas vrai.
 -Mais si! Je t'ai vu. Tu regardes ses vêtements et quand elle croise les jambes, tu regardes ses chaussures.
 -Inch Allah! (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 102)
 -You do not like elephants? She asks me.
 -Of course, I tell her.
 -You lie.
 -Well?
 -I think what interests you, is to look at girls.
 -It is not true.
 -You lie always, she replies. You look at Mademoiselle Garnier.
 -It is not true.
 -But of course! I have seen you. You look at her clothes and when she crosses her legs, you look at her shoes.
 -Inch Allah! (Translation mine).

Lolita's observation about Loukoum is true: Loukoum loves looking at Mademoiselle Garnier and other women too. Through the negative influence of Abdou his father and other immoral adults in Belleville, Loukoum becomes a full-blooded patriarchal boy with all the appendages of Hegemonic Masculinity (*Maman a un*, p. 105).

Loukoum's description of women of all ages is laden with sexual overtones. What he sees in women is mostly their private parts and sexual gestures. As a young boy, his descriptive power of women's sexuality is appalling. Patriarchal society expects this of a virile, healthy and normal patriarchal man, and Loukoum is fast growing into one.

The table turns, M'am threatens Abdou with divorce. This usually is men's reprieve during fights with their wives. He sees the threat of divorce as enough to call any woman to order. Beyala seems to expose to women that when they are empowered, threats of divorce from men becomes useless and ineffective. Abdou becomes so emasculated and powerless that even his daughter would not run errands for him, unless he says please (*Maman a un*, p.

176). Beyala's depiction of the overthrow of toxic masculinity by feminism is vivid in the conversation between Abdou and his wife M'am.

Abdou becomes confused and lost. M'am has successfully tamed her philandering, violent and arrogant hegemonic husband. She becomes the Lord and master of her own destiny. She gains total control over her life and her home.

Beyala prescribes a remedy for toxic masculinity in the empowerment of women. She, with her illustration, states categorically that Hegemonic men can be overthrown, and women could be emancipated from patriarchal bondage enforced by toxic masculinity such as Hegemonic Masculinity. Patriarchy creates a vindictive mentality in men. When things go wrong in a home, or in a man's life, women are held responsible. Kouam finding Abdou unhappy, immediately fingered his wife as the culprit: "Quoi de neuf Abdou? T'as vraiment l'air pas bien. Et quand un homme va pas bien, c'est la faute d'une femme" (*Maman a un*, p. 178), "What's new Abdou? You truly don't look well. And when a man is not well, it is the fault of a woman" (Translation mine)

The blame game between the sexes appears to favour the man. Society supports the vices of the man in the guise of masculinity. Women are expected to acquiesce to men's demands and kow-tow to men's authority. Beyala raises this patriarchal bias directly from Kouam's submission on Abdou's domestic well being.

The power in the home shifts from Abdou to M'am. Rather than prepare a table of meals for Abdou, M'am now makes him to eat from the refrigerator. The children realise this loss of authority in the home, and they defy Abdou their father at will. There is hardly any affection between Abdou and M'am his wife. His past life in the home as a tyrant robs him of compassion or love from his wife. There is a visible distance between the couple. Abdou now spends most of his time on the armchair or glued to the television. Even Loukoum his son pities his lonely and fallen state (*Maman a un*, p. 217-221).

M'am's transformation from the loving and dutiful wife into the resentful and indifferent one, is glaring and sharp. Loukoum knew in his heart that his foster mother was going to

leave his father for her lover Monsieur Tichit. He sees it in the way she no longer cares for the family as before:

-Avant, M'am était une bonne ménagère, une bonne cuisinière, et une bonne mère pour nous, et papa n'aurait pas pu trouver mieux même en cherchant bien.

-Qui a rompu l'équilibre? Que s'est-il passé pour que M'am abandonne ses attributions conjugales? Pourquoi ne jouit-elle plus de la bénédiction nuptiale? Pourquoi refuse-t-elle de réjouir l'appartement? (*Maman a un*, p. 220-221)

-Before, M'am was a good housewife, a good cook, and a good mother to us all, and father could not have found a better even if he searched well.

-Who ruptured the balance? What happened that made M'am to abandon her conjugal assignments? Why does she no longer enjoy her nuptial blessing? Why does she refuse to take delight in the apartment? (Translation mine).

Beyala uses this didactic illustration as an example of the possible end of marriages where the masculinity is negative. She uses the analogy as a lesson to men who oppress their wives. She seems to be saying that toxic masculinity will result into a ruptured home and unhappy marriage. This example is intended to cause men to rethink.

Loukoum realises that these changes in her foster mother began when she met Monsieur Tichit her lover. He concludes that monsieur Tichit was the devil that came between his parents. He concludes that only a man can understand that one does not take other people's wives on a romantic adventure. Loukoum detest Monseur Tichit for the changes in his parents' marriage and in his home (*Maman a un*, p. 220-221).

4.1.5 Male solidarity in Hegemonic Masculinity

Madame Saddock's incitation of Abdou's wives into activism and rebellion against him met with Loukoum's opposition and disapproval. In solidarity with the Hegemonic Masculinity of his father Abdou, Loukoum becomes the eyes and ears of his father in the home. The following excerpt testifies to this:

Et l'autre jour, j'me suis fâché et j'lui ai dit: -Je dirai tout à mon papa. -Qu'est-ce que tu diras à ton papa? Madame Saddock a demandé en rigolant, mais J'étais pas pour la bonne humeur et j'ai répliqué: -Je dirai à mon papa que la Soumana dit des gros mots quand il est pas là.-C'est pas beau de répéter c'qu'on entend, Loukoum. -J'étais en rogne. Je

savais pas quoi faire. Alors, je me suis penché comme un cow-boy, j'ai pointé vers elle le doigt avec lequel il faut pas montrer et j'ai fait pam-pam! et je l'ai tuée. Personne n'a réagi pendant quelques minutes. Puis Madame Saddock a dit: En voilà un que j'aimerais pas que ma fille épouse. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 117-118)

And the other day I got mad and told her: 'I'll tell my dad everything'. 'What'll you tell your dad?' Madame Saddock asked laughingly, but I wasn't in the mood for jokes and answered: 'I'll tell my father that Soumana uses bad words when he isn't here.', 'It's not nice to repeat what you hear, Loukoum'. 'I'm telling him anyway', I went sulkily. 'Why would you do a thing like that?' 'Cause it isn't nice to say nasty things.' I was in a stinking bad mood. I didn't know what to do. So I pretended I was a cowboy, pointed at her with the finger you shouldn't point with, went bang-bang! And killed her. Nobody reacted for several minutes. Then Madame Saddock said: 'Now there's one I wouldn't want my daughter to marry.' (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 80-81)

Loukoum at age seven, already has become a proponent and champion of patriarchy (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 7). He excuses his father's shortcomings, thereby advocating for patriarchy (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 115-118). He contends with Soumana's new feminist craze in the absence of his father. He is so passionate about it that Madame Saddock recognises the strong patriarchal traits in him and retorts "En voilà un que j'aimerais pas que ma fille épouse." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 117-118), "Now there's one I wouldn't want my daughter to marry" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p.81).

Loukoum is in solidarity with his father against Monsieur Tichit's flirtations and advances towards his mother. This makes him in anger to go on the attack. He spits in Monsieur Tichit's glass cup. He trips him deliberately. He even set a trap for him where he takes his evening stroll. Abdou's children rally round him to bring him out of his frustration and misery with the whole situation. Even when Monsieur Tichit knowingly opens the door of the bathroom to ogle M'am's breasts, Loukoum would not leave or close the door. Rather he pushes Monsieur Tichit away deliberately (*Maman a un*, p. 94). Loukoum's love for his father makes him to fight for his father's marriage. The father-son bond Abdou nurtured in Loukoum right from *Le petit prince de Belleville* actually pays off.

Abdou's masculinity appears to go through a reconstruction. He is crest fallen and disarmed by his wife's empowerment and defiance. His son asked him why he allows another man to be with his wife, and in total resignation to his current situation, Abdou replies:

-T'es toujours obligé d'accepter des choses même si elles te font pas plaisir. (*Maman a un*, p. 194)

-One is always obliged to accept things, even when they are not pleasurable. (Translation mine).

Abdou is forced to accept the fact that his wife is seeing someone else. He realises that anger, violence and threats are useless against his wife. She has already presented divorce as an option. He realises he would be at the losing end, should be react as a hegemonic man. He puts off his patriarchal toga and bows to his wife's will. Hegemonic Masculinity has been subdued by empowered feminism. M'am now calls the shot in the marriage, and in the home. Abdou is finally at the receiving end of his wife's vengeance (*Maman a un*, p. 173-176, 194).

Loukoum is enraged by his mother's encouragement of Monsieur Tichit's flirtations. He feels like strangling his mother and hitting Monsieur Tichit on the face. When Abdou pays M'am the same compliments as Monsieur Tichit, she gives him an empty look. She throws her head backwards and laughs at him like a real Negress (*Maman a un*, p. 81). Obviously, M'am scorns and detests Abdou strongly. There seems to be no love in her heart for him anymore.

Loukoum appears not to share Soumana's opinion on her maltreatment by his father, because he is his father's son. Neither does he encourage feminists to bring down his father, regardless who he is and what he does:

Et la Soumana l'écoute religieusement et lui fait des confidences, même que c'en est une honte. Elle dit à Madame Saddock que mon papa est un vaurien, un trousseur, un fossoyeur, et qu'il a mochement compromis ses jolis rêves, qu'elle en a marre! Mais vraiment marre d'être traitée comme ça. A l'écouter, on dirait qu'elle est la championne des mauvais traitements et qu'elle mérite le prix Nobel de la femme la plus bafouée du monde. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 116-117)

Soumana listens to her religiously and confides in her, even though some of it is too shameful to be told. She tells Madame Saddock my dad is a good-for-nothing, a skirt-chaser grave digger, that he has horribly compromised her fancy dreams, and that she's had enough of it! That she's really sick of being treated this way. Listening to her, you'd think she is a champion victim of ill treatment and deserves the Noble Prize for the most rejected woman in the world. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 80).

Young Loukoum defends his father, instead of supporting his father's wives and inciting the women rights crusader Madame Saddock against him. He never tolerates the woman or her feminist views on his father. Loukoum refuses to co-operate to bring down his father, regardless his father's personality or wrong doings. This is patriarchal masculine solidarity, the type given to Abdou by the Men of Belleville in the hour of his emasculation (*Maman a un*, p. 229).

When young Loukoum sees his father's vulnerability and his suffering, he chose his father over his seemingly callous foster mother M'am (*Maman a un*, p. 246-247). This is the father-son connectivity Freud explains as post oedipal acceptance of his father by the son, while at the same time rejecting his mother (Connell, 2005: p. 122-125). Loukoum is growing in his father's foot steps as a model. Abdou and other males in Belleville have become exemplars of masculinity to Loukoum. He observes and learns from them. His notions and practices of masculinity is largely dependent on how these adults construct masculinity. Loukoum's formation of masculinity is essentially hegemonic since his models in Belleville are largely hegemonic in their masculinity.

Loukoum in solidarity with his father keeps malice with his foster mother. According to him:

-J'ai mal de son indifférence envers mon papa. Il est devenu comme une mouche posée sur le dos d'un éléphant. Avant, elle était si digne et si respectueuse! (*Maman a un*, p. 252).
-I am uncomfortable with her indifference towards my father. He has become like a fly kept on the back of an elephant. He has become like a fly kept on the back of an elephant. Before, she was so worthy and so respectful!
(Translation mine)

Loukoum confronts M'am's indifference and blames her for her attitude. He accuses her of being responsible for the disorder in the home. She defends herself that her work puts food on the table. Loukoum tells her that her work is responsible for the negative situation in the home, seeing that they are neglected because of her absence (*Maman a un*, p. 252-253). Loukoum's nurturing is forcibly in support of patriarchy. His religious background supports patriarchy. According to him, no one thought M'am could descend so low as to be like the good for nothing prostitutes in the street. She was a dignified and dutiful muslim wife. Seeing the way M'am treated his father, Loukoum concluded that;

-Les femmes sont toutes des traîtres courants d'air. Elles vous collent des rhumes de cerveau sans légiférer ni rien.
-Le Coran dit: <<l'infidélité est un acte criminel>>
Et l'infidélité, c'est un tour du Diable qui en a plus d'un dans son sac. (*Maman a un*, p. 253)
-All women are treacherous draughts. They stick you with a head cold without authorisation or anything.
-The Qur'an says: "infidelity is a criminal act". And infidelity is the devil's revolution with more than one lap.
(Translation mine)

M'am's maltreatment of her husband gradually slips him into depression. He eats himself almost to oblivion and his children notice and become worried. (*Maman a un*, p. 225). In her bid to be vengeful towards Abdou and follow her heart unto another lover, M'am sacrifices her home alongside her foster children.

In solidarity, the Black men of Belleville visited Abdou and offered to assist him in getting rid of his rival Monsieur Tichit. They suggest cutting off his penis and killing him off (*Maman a un*, p. 229). Finally, the hegemonic blacks in Belleville ostracized M'am for having a lover and neglecting her husband. In solidarity with Abdou, they stand against M'am's rebellion against traditions since M'am would not comport herself as a self-respecting Muslim wife. Since she defies her husband and betrays his trust, the patriarchal community too rejects her and treats her as invisible (*Maman a un*, p. 268-269).

M'am feels justified for having a lover since Abdou was the first to betray her. She feels her learning how to read and write is her right, just as her pursuit of true love also is her right.

Loukoum will not listen to these excuses; rather he recommends that his foster mother explains all to his father.

M'am's dance with Monsieur Tichit is so passionate that part of her breasts are exposed, yet she does not care. Loukoum notices M'am's demeanor in her dance with Monsieur Tichit, and he observes that "A la voir, on ne pouvait pas imaginer qu'elle a des responsabilités familiales" (*Maman a un*, p. 86), "Seeing her, one cannot imagine that she has family responsibilities" (Translation mine). M'am actually decides to have fun and dance at Madame Trauchessec's birthday for a change. She confesses that it has been years she last danced (*Maman a un*, p. 86). While Abdou was gallivanting with prostitutes, he forgets M'am. He does not take her out, nor engage in romantic activities with her. M'am's rebellious transformation affords her the independence necessary for her to have fun also.

Loukoum, seeing his father's sadness over his mother's behaviour engages him in a father-and-son conversation. In this conversation, Loukoum speaks as a growing boy. He speaks almost as an adult, as if to advise his father. For the first time, Loukoum expresses perspectives his father does not know he is capable of grasping. He told his father that if he was in his place he'll compete with Monsieur Tichit for his mother. He tells his father that he will not allow his wife to do whatever she likes. He also tells him that if the father of the girl he loves, sees him as unworthy of his daughter; he will get his daughter pregnant. Abdou warned his son that the girl's father would not like him if he gets his daughter pregnant. With a shrug of his shoulder, Loukoum tells his father that it does not matter, since the girl will already be his (*Maman a un*, p. 87). These declarations of Loukoum, though from a boy of twelve years, are as a result of his patriarchal upbringing. Right from *Le petit prince de Belleville*, Loukoum has been expressing several of his Qur'anic and African traditional convictions. Beyala systematically shows the gradual development of the male child from tabula rasa into a patriarchal individual, with all the Hegemonic Masculinity appendages.

The modern application of William Wordsworth's popular saying "The child is father of the man" from his 1802 poem "My heart leaps up" (Simran Khurana, 2019) is previewed in Loukoum's matured conversation with his father, who was otherwise hurt and confused by

his wife's outright defiance of religion, culture and the patriarchal order of things. Abdou was so shocked by Loukoum's masculine perspectives that he kept on asking him "Qui t'a dit ça Loukoum?" But, Loukoum never answered that question of "Who told you that?" The boy needs not be told of the antics and lifestyles of grown-ups. All around him, he can see the grown-ups and imbibe from their character traits and habits.

Loukoum's advice galvanised his father to fight for his mother. Abdou gets up, enters into the dancing room and asked Monsieur Tichit if he could dance with M'am his wife. There was an awkward moment as everyone turned towards them. Monsieur Tichit eventually unhands M'am and allows Abdou to dance with his wife. Abdou was ready to fight with Monsieur Tichit for his wife; Loukoum felt the tension in the room. Loukoum, though a boy, intervenes in the marital life of his father. Beyala paints this scenario almost as an indication of Loukoum's attainment of the age of the rite of passage into adulthood. He is truly his father's son, and he has always supported and came through for his father, even when his father is oblivious (*Maman a un*, p. 87-88).

4.1.6 Religion and tradition: resources of Hegemonic Masculinity

Connell (2005:242) posits that "Men's interest in patriarchy is further sustained by women's investment in patriarchy, as expressed in loyalty to patriarchal religions". Religion assists patriarchy in subjugating women. Most of what M'am and other women do in Belleville is weighed in the light of the Qur'an. They are expected to conduct themselves as respectable Muslim wives, while the men are free to live as they so wish. Again, African culture also mandates the women to be submissive, respectful and faithful to their husbands as behooves good wives. We see these similarities and contrasts in both societies as depicted by Beyala. Yet, there is an indication that the rebellion of the African woman like Mathilda, Soumana, Aminata, Sonya and M'am is grossly influenced by the white societies and persons they encounter, persons like Madame Sadock, Monsieur Tichit, and Mamzelle Esther the prostitute.

The activities of hegemonic masculinity are usually entrenched in religion. The masculinity type also services and maintains traditions that are favourable to men. Hence, feminists

often see religion and culture as agents of patriarchy. Hegemonic Masculinity recognises dominion through legitimate means. Religious and traditional institutions are legal enough to perpetrate patriarchy and maintain male dominion over female. It is these institutions, systems or agencies that Beyala questions their legitimacy and their continuation in contemporary societies. Right from the time of M'am's forefathers till now, men remain those who must be obeyed and women remain obedient to men. This is the grouse of feminism; the sin of men against women.

Religion as a principal agent of patriarchy is projected by Beyala in the chosen novels. An anonymous female character patronises Monsieur Cérif the marabout of Belleville, but she gets duped. She wanted a charm that will transform her skin from black to white so that men may find her appealing. Again, Monsieur Guillaume advises Abdou to go to a marabout, so that he may enchant or curse Monsieur Tichit his rival (*Maman a un*, p. 191). Similarly, in *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine*, Aïssatou patronises a marabout in order to get a husband (Beyala, 2000: p. 45).

Through M'am's soliloquy, Beyala interrogates the statement "La femme est née à genoux aux pieds de l'homme" (*Maman a un*, p. 47), "God has sculpted woman on her knees at the feet of man." [Beyala, 1996: p. 118]. She ascribes the statement to men. She attributes its existence to male sentiments made into Faith. She narrates the woman's helplessness against faith and its ordinances for women. She recognises these ordinances of faith as fabricated by men, even religious men. She traces male dominion to her fathers and recognises the inability of women to rebel, only obey the commands of men. This, she says is the order of life, and so it continues. Beyala declares African women as living behind prison bars in their homes and in their souls. Prisoners made by Faith through religion (*Maman a un*, p. 47-48).

Religion appears to be the last stronghold of patriarchy against feminism. The most enduring, probably the only enduring frontier radical feminism battles with, are the religious notions that enforces patriarchy. Introducing Madame Saddock as a feminist advocate of Abdou's wives, Beyala positions herself for the promotion of the feminist agenda and battles against excesses and the injustices in Abdou's home. Like a true feminist, Madame Saddock

submits to both women “C’est inadmissible...Intolérable! Il faut vous battre! Moi je vais pas le faire à votre place.” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 84), “It’s unpardonable’...Intolerable. You’ve got to fight it! I’m not going to do it for you” (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 55). In Madame Saddock, Beyala is poised to do battle against Hegemonic Masculinity and its patriarchal appendages such as religion. Soumanana asks M’am by way of encouragement to fight Abdou:

-Alors, qu’est-ce que t’attends? Que ta vie soit par terre?

-J’en peux plus, elle edit. Cet homme, c’est la mauvaise graine. Il pourrit tout. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 84)

-So what are you waiting for? For your life to be in shambles?’

-I can’t take it any more, that man, he’s the bad seed. He spoils everything’ (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 55).

The voice of patriarchy in M’am deters Soumana from fighting their oppressive and philandering husband Abdou. Instead, she offers Soumana faith in God as solution to their sufferings. But Madame Saddock takes side with Soumana by supporting her atheistic stance:

Tout à fait d’accord, dit Madame Saddock. Je sais même pas si Dieu existe. Par contre, je sais que l’homme est partout et c’est lui que vous devez combattre. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 84)

She’s right’, says Madame Saddock. I don’t even know if God exists. On the other hand, I do know that men exist, they’re everywhere and you have to fight them. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 56).

Atheistic tendencies are sometimes observed in extreme feminism. the notion of an all-powerful, all-knowledgeable and all-present God, who does nothing about women’s suffering in the hands of men, but excuses the excesses of man, brings a doubt in the existence of God for the radical feminist. If God exists at all, he’s the God of men only and not women. this is a common observable theme in Beyala’s writing. She does not only antagonise masculinity, in guise of patriarchy, she challenges the existence of an all-good God, that allows women to suffer so much at the behest of men.

Unlike M'am, Soumana puts her foot down and chooses women rights over religion. For her, enough is enough of Abdou's oppression, she was ready to fight him (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 56). Feminists in creating awareness of women's civil rights, encourage women to choose reason over religion (patriarchy). They tout women's fundamental rights through movements and activist groups. They fight against the marginalisation of women and for their emancipation.

M'am and Soumana suspects Abdou's infidelity and toys with the idea of getting rid of him, before he ruins them with his infidelities. Abdou jumps after the possibility of a sexual encounter aside his wives and they have no say about it. Religiously he is permitted to have more than one wife and he takes advantage of this to sleep with Soumana his maid, and impregnates her. Yet, he is interested in prostitutes. So, Soumana contemplates murdering him:

-Ben, je sais pas comment je vais faire pour pas le tuer.
-Faut tuer personne, Soumana, jamais tuer.
-C'est vraiment dur, M'am, très dur.
-C'est dur d'être le prophète aussi, mais il y arrive, lui.
N'oublie pas ça, Soumana: Tu ne tueras point, il a dit.
Probable qu'il aurait voulu dire plus. Il savait bien a quelles bandes d'idiots il avait affaire.
-Ouais, mais Abdou n'est pas le prophète, et nous non plus.
-J'crois que j' me sentirai mieux si je le tue, Soumana dit.
Parce que là je suis pas du tout dans mon assiette.
-J'aime Abdou, tu sais. Je l' jure devant Dieu. Mais qu'époquefois, j'ai envie de l'étendre raide mort. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 53-54)

-Well, I do not know what to do for me not to kill him.
-You should not kill anyone, Soumana, never kill.
-It is truly hard, M'am, very hard.
-It is hard to be the prophet too, but he persevered, him.
Do not forget that, Soumana: you shall not kill ever, he said.
He had probably wanted to say no longer. He knows what group of idiots he has to deal with.
-Yeah, but Abdou is not the prophet, and neither are we.
-I believe that I will feel better if I kill him, says Soumana.
-Because I am not at all happy with the situation.
-I love Abdou, you know. I swear it before God. But sometimes, I feel like laying him down stone dead.
(Translation mine)

De Jager's translation of the above excerpt reveals more sinister intentions of Soumana towards Abdou. She declares "One day, I'll have to do him in; otherwise I'll have to kill myself. You don't have a recipe by any chance? 'Like What? Plants that shred the intestines?'" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 33).

Religion comes in and saves Abdou from Soumana's desire to kill him for his philandering (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 54). Even when Loukoum entertains patricidal thoughts towards his father, he remembers that the Qur'an would not allow him to strangle his father to death (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 64). As a patriarchal resource, religion often comes to the rescue of men. It provides the protection and the environment men need to practice Hegemonic Masculinity. Beyala explores the excuse of religious beliefs that shields men from scrutiny and vengeance: the belief systems that absolves him of his crimes against women. When man should come under scrutiny and criticism, when his excesses should have been called to order, religion easily comes in and gives him immunity. De Jager's translation is succinct:

'Got to kill him'
'Seems to me that's the worst idea you've ever had. I tell you, it serves no purpose. Besides, it's a sin; that's what's written in the Koran. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 33).

Since M'am's rebellion against Abdou's injustices, she has gradually dared patriarchal subjugation through religion. She knows what is expected of her as a Muslim wife in dressing, comportment and gender relationships. Yet, she flies straight in the face of patriarchy and defies its authority and consequences. M'am shuts her husband up and challenges his authority over her.

-Oh, la ferme, elle lui a répondu. Tu prourrais pas penser à autre chose pendant seulement cinq minutes, pourchanger?
(*Maman a un*, p. 65)
-Oh, shut up! She replied him. Couldn't you think of something else for only five minutes, for a change?
(Translation mine)

Feminists have often identified religion as an agent of patriarchy, that perpetrates, promotes and propagates men's vices and injustices against women, especially their wives. Feminists argue sometimes that, if God exists, and God is all-good and all-powerful, He could not have allowed women, His creation to suffer thus much in the hands of men. If God exists,

He could not have possibly turned away His face, while helpless, weak and innocent women are being molested and assaulted daily by brutes and oppressors such as men. Since there is no checking of men's excessive evils towards women, the radical feminist logic is that there is probably no God at all. Beyala pushes this argument by using Soumana-her feminist character, to interrogate the existence of God (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 113-115). Soumana submits:

Toute ma vie, j'ai cru en Dieu, J'ai cru qu'il m'aiderait. Mais il écoute pas les femmes! Il se prélassait là-haut assis sur son trône à faire la sourde oreille. Mais tu as raison, c'est pas facile de se passer de lui. Même si on sait qu'il n'est pas là, c'est dur de faire sans. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 167)

He gives me the impression that he doesn't listen to any woman, that he's asleep up there and couldn't care less about us, you know. But still, it's something to think he's [God] around, that he loves us [women]. At least there's someone there we can check with to see whether he loves us. And you think maybe he does (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 115).

Beyala's insight into this notion of atheism and her painting a possible scenario of how a woman of faith could lose her faith, all because of the injustices of patriarchy cum Hegemonic Masculinity, attempts to depict how grievous the sins of men against women are. Men are guilty. Their wickedness towards women has made women atheists. Beyala's narratives are wont to pronouncing men as guilty of all the woes of women. In depicting Soumana's lot, Beyala paints the end result of a constantly attacked psyche and the eventual psychological breakdown marital violence and unfaithfulness could cause. On her sick bed, Soumana looks at her lot and she says that there is no God. This is one of the anti-masculinist strongholds of feminists, who finger religion and tradition as the principal culprits for men's supremacy over women.

Religion puts men over women and tradition permits their excesses. Feminists see the notion of God as an invention of men. Moreover, if there is a God, then he must be male. Therefore, if women do not believe in the God of this religion that so supports men, then women do not need to be subject to men, nor see men as their head. This, for feminists, is the beginning of psychological emancipation. If women would challenge traditions and religions that

relegate them, then women would not be oppressed by patriarchal men and systems (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 165-167)

Contrarily, in balancing her story, in arguing for and against, Beyala also illustrates M'am's faith in God. Her undying loyalty and allegiance to her God. Despite the vicissitudes in Abdou's home, despite the neglect and marital unfaithfulness of Abdou, M'am keeps her faith. She chastises Soumana's unbelief and doubts, and affirms her faith in her God. Despite childlessness, her unattractive physical traits and her educational background, she declares that God loves her and keeps her alive. She is content with these blessings alone. But, Soumana wants more, she expects more from God. The argument between M'am and Soumana for and against the existence of God is lengthy. M'am believes the gender of God as male, was invented by men for their selfish reasons and in order to Lord over women and oppress them (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 165-167).

Soumana believes God is deaf and he is male: and that is why everything is in shambles and the world is in a mess. She believes God could care less about women. Moreover, he doesn't listen to women and He is asleep altogether. These are radical feminists' ruminations and arguments that Soumana on her sick bed puts forward, while M'am also champions patriarchal indoctrinations via religion and tradition (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 167).

M'am's unanswered prayers for a child of her own, makes her grow resentful of religion (*Maman a un*, p. 92-93). No wonder she eventually sets religious tenets and restrictions aside to allow her live freely from their limitations. Little wonder her dressing and flirting becomes too audacious for a Muslim wife. Beyala goes through the mind of a childless woman, whose husband has abandoned her for other women. She exposes M'am's thoughts and shows how painful it is for a woman in this state. M'am's agony of being childless appears to be aggravated or exacerbated by Abdou's unfaithfulness to her.

The dilemma of living with Abdou's philandering and not being able to do anything about it tests the patience and the faith of M'am and Soumana, who wanted to do him in. Yet M'am as the voice of patriarchal reasoning thought of the religious consequence of killing Abdou. She cautions Soumana against it. Advising her rather to endure, defy the pressure and not cave in, because it is what men actually want. Often times when men betray

women's sincere love for them, the women feel like having vengeance and do something rash. In the case of Soumana, she wanted to gut Abdou like a fish. The English translation renders it thus:

I've loved Abdou from the very first day I saw him. I swear to you, M'am! But when I see him carry on, I feel like slitting his throat from one and to the other... (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 33).

By Soumana's standards, Abdou was a real nuisance, meriting nothing but death for his unfaithfulness to his wives.

Though M'am understands Soumana's pain since she is also a victim of Abdou's unfaithfulness, in fact M'am is the principal victim, yet she is more patient, more level headed in the circumstances. Beyala by this illustration of both women identifies the dilemma of women caught between opinions, as to how best to deal with the menace and injustices from men. Most times when their bile rises up and they feel like punishing the man, women's voice of reasoning fashioned from nurturing by religion, traditions, the society and other agents of patriarchy, curbs their intentions and muffle their voices.

It is this silence and acquiescence of patriarchal women that Beyala tends to rupture loudly and provoke the women to speak out and protest against men's oppression and injustices. As she boldly does through the character Soumana.

Even when Abdou stole Loukoum's precious moments with Esther, the young boy in male competition with his lustful dad, felt like strangling him. Again, religion came to his rescue (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 64). In De Jager's translation, this religious immunity of men is caught succinctly in the following excerpt:

If this continues, I think I'm going to strangle my dad. But there you have it, the Koran forbids that, it says so in black and white. 'Thou shalt honour thy father, thy mother, whatever happened...' (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 41).

Feminists like Beyala challenge this permanent status of men as worthy of honour and respect, even when he is clearly unworthy. Beyala subtly juxtaposes Abdou's life with religious injunctions that promotes patriarchal reasoning and notions, that are not found on

contemporary realities in the life of men. Feminists generally accept that religion excuses and strengthens men, while restricting and weakening women. When the news of Abdou's unfaithfulness reached his wives, this dialogue ensued between both wives:

'Why does the good Lord hate women?'
'He loves us but he doesn't want to show it, that's why'
'What arseholes!'
'Who?'
'The good Lord! Men! Life! They all stink.' (*Loukoum: The Little*, p.42)

In De Jager's translation, there is the visibility of the radical feminists' notion of religion being unfavourable towards women. According to feminists, religion does not prioritise, nor favour women. Hence, religion is seen as a patriarchal construct to dominate, oppress and exploit women. Religion does not give women the justice they clamour, neither does it afford them the emancipation from bondage. Beyala, in this dialogue clearly depicts the growing defiance of oppressed women to religion, and its patriarchal doctrines that protects and privileges men (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 66). Soumana expresses her perplexity at this thus "Pourquoi qu'il permet les choses comme ça, le bon Dieu?" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 66), "Why does the good God allow things like this?" (Translation mine). De Jager translates this as "What's the most shocking to you? That Abdou cheats on you or that the good Lord watches without reacting?" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 42).

Traditions appear to be gradually waning in his resolve against feminist notions. In recent times, via the help of urbanisation and the social media, mass-culture tends towards the acceptance of the woman as equal of the man. The challenges of feminism are not as they were in the years of the first and second waves. Migration from Africa to Europe, America and other western regions of the world, has watered down the African patriarchal roots and traditions. As depicted by Beyala, many migrants like Abdou encumbered with the challenges of surviving in diaspora, have compromised the old ways. Many, like those in France, as portrayed by Beyala in *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine*, *Le Petit Prince de Belleville*, *M'amam a un Amant*, *Les Honneurs Perdus* and others, have boldly embraced the western ways of life. Though, one notices the struggling and the hesitations to leave traditions behind, yet shameless transformations in both the male and the female in this populace are evident. Beyala depicts this conflict between the old and the new between

modernisation and tradition, between scientific ideologies and faith (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 19-20, 56-57, 68-69, 77-78, 114-115, 187-188, 197-198, 205-207)

Abdou notices the agitations in his home. He notices how westernisation gradually invades his wives and son. He is not oblivious to the fact that his faith is being challenged by western traditions. His very life too is changing gradually. Emigration is not gentle on African traditions, in fact, Abdou thinks the old ways are endangered (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 197-198).

4.2 Variants of masculinity in the selected novels

Complicit, Subordinate and Marginalised masculinities exist as masculinity types among the male characters in the selected novels. Their interaction with Hegemonic Masculinity and feminism often give insights into gender identity issues among the characters of both selected novels. Complicit characters like Kouam and Laforêt negotiate with their wives. They do not force them to act against their will. Sometimes this backfires as evidenced in the rebellious behavior of their female partners. The homosexuality of the Subordinate Masculinity does not relate well with the homophobic nature of heterosexuality. Hostility towards homosexuals is evident in the male representations of Beyala. The Belleville community whose masculinity is predominantly hegemonic, attacks homosexuals such as Nkomo, Tatiana and Mathilda. Also, the Marginalised Masculinity of the blacks render them inferior to the whites who intimidate the blacks at every turn. The racist tendencies of white supremacist masculinity make even policemen to harass the blacks at every given opportunity. The foregrounded features of these variants of masculinity assist in identifying traits in Beyala's representations that are coherent with the masculinity theory.

4.3 Complicit Masculinity as male compromise

Most men find it difficult to navigate or express emotionality. This stems from popular notions that men are logical and not emotional. The cognitive rationality in men is believed to inhibit their affective emotional development (Connell, 2015: p. 90, 164-181, 191-194, Munroe, 2001: p. 145).

Yet in the 70s, with the profusion of feminist activities against patriarchy and hegemony, men opposed patriarchal restrictions and became more in touch with their emotions. Complicit Masculinity became the favourite type of masculinity, and many men went into therapy on how to deconstruct their hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005: p. 206-211, 221, and 242).

When Abdou suggests to Kouam to beat some sense into His wife Mathilda, he declines and prefers instead to wait patiently for her permission to have a child (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-81, 94-96).

Other variants of masculinity may obtain reprieve from feminist attacks, due to their being marginalised also by Hegemonic Masculinity. Yet, these variants are present in all patriarchal societies, even Belleville. Though traces of Hegemonic Masculinity are seen in their actions sometimes, yet men like Kouam, Monsieur Tichit and Monsieur Laforêt appear to construct complicit masculinity. The following dialogue between Monsieur Guillaume and Monsieur Laforêt, though lengthy, is insightful of this:

-Tu peux pas comprendre. Moi je l'aime, Caroline. Depuis toujours et pour toujours. J'peux pas l'oublier comme ça.

- Ben tiens donc, dit Monsieur Guillaume, pour foutre ta vie en l'air! (Là, Monsieur Laforêt a grogné.) Elle a pas hésité à te lâcher à la première difficulté.

-Moi, ça m'est bien égal...

-Et son jeune amant qu'elle a maintenant. (Il hoche la tête comme s'il pensait à quelque chose de très sérieux) Va savoir si les trois mômes sont bien à toi, mon vieux.

-Eh ben moi, j' vais te dire une chose, tous les enfants de Caroline sont à moi. J' peux le jurer! (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 33)

-You can not understand. Me, I love Caroline. Since always and for always. I can not forget her like that.

-Well, a toast to throwing your life away! says Monsieur Guillaume. (At that, Monsieur Laforêt grumbled.) She did not hesitate to leave you at the first sign of difficulty.

-For me, it is all the same to me.

-And the young lover that she now has. (He shook his head as if he was thinking of something very serious) Go and find out if the three kids are truly yours, my old man.

-Well for me, I am going to tell you a thing, all Caroline's children are mine. I can swear to it! (Translation mine)

Monsieur Laforêt's insistence of his love for Caroline, regardless her infidelities and cruel abandonment of their home and children, was understandable and foolhardy before Monsieur Guillaume who is a more reasonable man. Beyala paints the picture of a man subjected by his affective domain, while being guided by his friend who approaches the problem with his cognitive domain. Men generally are seen as unfeeling and callous. Yet, antithetically Beyala creates a parody of the table turning and men being on the receiving side of marital infidelity for a change. Monsieur Guillaume persists in convincing his friend to be more rational in his approach to the situation.

-Ecoute bien, si t'es décidé à rester un clochard et à te soûler la gueule parce qu'une femme t'a lâché, libre à toi!

-C'est pas Caroline qui m'a lâché, c'est la société.

-Ecoute, vieux, je suis de tout coeur avec toi. Il y a peu d'hommes qui continueraient à aimer leur femme dans ces conditions. Mais voilà, c'est arrivé, t'as qu'à te secouer un peu. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 33)

-Listen well, if you have decided to remain a tramp and a drunken face because a woman left you, you are free!

-It is not Caroline that left me, it is the society.

-Listen, old man, with all my heart I am with you. There are few men who can continue to love their wives in these conditions. But there it is, it has happened, all you need is to shake it off a little. (Translation mine)

Regardless his wife's adultery and her leaving him with three children, Monsieur Laforêt avows his undying love for her. Instead of blaming her for being unfaithful: he blames society. As a complicit man, Laforêt is tolerant towards his wife's act of rebellion and defiance. Contrarily, when M'am goes after her lover Monsieur Tichit and later returned to Abdou, he threw her out of the house. He would not condone such audacious act of insubordination and rebellion towards authority (*Maman a un*, p. 275-277). Mathilda sleeping with the commissioner of police would not have mattered also to Kouam her husband. Even M'am knowing Kouam's Complicit Masculinity testifies before his wife

Mathilda (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 137). This is the contrast between Complicit Masculinity and Hegemonic Masculinity. While Complicit Masculinity compromises its patriarchal rights over the women, Hegemonic Masculinity enforces them. Such women do not deserve to marry men like Kouam and Laforêt, whose masculinity is complicit towards women, nor men of sterling qualities like Ndongala.

Instead of punishing adulteresses, sometimes, complicit men use a least expected and humane approach to solving the problem, they increase their care, concern and love for their errant women. Complicit men give better attention to their whoring wives and treat them better than they treat themselves, in order to keep their marriages happy. Complicit men have been known to say to their errant wives 'Come home, all is forgiven' (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 32-33, 170-171). Even the author is surprised at how men could tolerate and accommodate sexual immorality in their wives. She wonders how men could look the other way, while their wives dress half-naked and sleep around with other men. Beyala seems to jeer at men's powerlessness against this new found courage and rebellion in women. She seems to goad feminism on, while she reveals men's predicament as hopeless and pitiable (*Le Petit Prince*, P. 170-171).

Women like Mathilda often end up with the best of men and yet treat these men like trash. Despite Caroline's infidelity, Laforêt still loves her and waits for her return after leaving him and three children for her lover. Ndongala is a man of the people, an icon of excellence. His wife Sonya was a real slob, who had no concern for the home or her children. Kouam is the most understanding and patient of the lot, now Mathilda is thinking of divorcing him. These are Beyala's women, whose cry for freedom to do as they crave, which is often without considerations of the consequence on the home. These Beyalian women that abandoned their families hardly suffered from inequalities or injustices from their husbands. These women by Beyala's description and depiction of their homes, were just plain dirty, selfish, stubborn, rebellious and immoral. Presenting these characters as feminist representatives of liberty and emancipation is an outright hypocritical anti-masculinist stand of the author.

M'am reminds Mathilda that Kouam her husband loves her regardless of her unfaithfulness to him. Mathilda is unrepentant of her adultery and thinks rather to get a steady lover outside

her marriage, or she would leave Kouam altogether. She submits to M'am "Depuis qu'on est mariés, il n'a qu'une chose dans la tête, c'est de me forcer à lui obéir. C'est pas une femme qu'il veut, celui-là, c'est un toutou." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 136), "Sine we married, he has only one thing in his head, it is to force me to obey him. It is not a wife he wants, it is a puppy." (Translation mine).

Men that construct Complicit Masculinity do not enforce patriarchal regulations and principles on women, though they enjoy the dividends of patriarchy. If Kouam's masculinity is hegemonic, he could become violent and beat sense into Mathilda as his uncle Abdou advised. He expects dividends of patriarchy such as forced submission, obedience and respect from Mathilda his wife, but his complicity prevents him from using hegemonic violence to enforce the dividends. To Mathilda, Kouam appears hegemonic because he demands for obedience. To Abdou, Kouam his nephew is not a man, but a weakling with Complicit Masculinity. He tolerates Mathilda's excesses and complains without calling her to order, as a real hegemonic man would. Rather he supports his wife's decision of living free of patriarchal restrictions and not having a baby.

Complicit men are undeserving of the negative treatments they get from women; neither are they responsible for the ultimate decisions of these women to leave the home. Instead of subduing their wives and curtailing their rebellion, these men wait patiently for their wives to consider and change their ways. Beyala's portrayal of homes where men also suffer in the hands of women appears to be a balancing of the story. She seems to avoid the danger of a single story as prescribed by Achebe (Adichie, 2014). Yet, it is evident that Beyalian women are heroines of the anti-masculinist musings of the extreme and radical feminists.

Kouam weeps over the wife that cheats on him and eventually left him; he goes into a psychological trauma, comes out of it and forgets about her. He moves on. Such is the emotional power of men. Beyala depicts men's ability to bounce back regardless the emotional trauma, unlike women who brood and pine away like Soumana (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 142).

Kouam still loves Mathilda his wife, despite her unfaithfulness to him. Regardless his accommodating and understanding of Mathilda's excesses, she still goes awhoring. She has

no consideration for her husband whatsoever: she cheats on him. She is heady, rebellious and sluttish. Moreover, she would not have a child for him (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-81,93-94,200-202). Mathilda's frustration of her husband is so overwhelming that he almost resorted to wife-beating as Abdou advised (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 200-201).

Soumana's illness becomes worse after her confrontation with Aminata, during the New year's eve party, she grows worse. As callous and aloof as Abdou is to his wives, reality dawns on him about Soumana's failing health. He becomes more concerned and involved. He even goes as far as bringing in a doctor for her (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 135, 163-167). Beyala portrays a Complicit Masculinity side to Abdou. She shows his humanity. Beyala depicts Abdou as a caring husband, willing to part with his money, just to see his beloved wife well again. He goes close to Soumana to dote over her, to express his solidarity in her illness and to be there for her in her time of need. Beyala portrays Abdou as if to pay penance for all his unfaithfulness and maltreatments of his wives (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 163-165).

The premonition of nemesis catching up with Abdou, sends him into a panic, after a realisation that "J'ai des femmes qui finissent par m'étrangler dans mon sommeil." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 223), "I have wives who'll end up strangling me in my sleep." (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 156). He also notes sadly that "J'ai un fils qui ne me prolonge pas." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 223), "I have a son in whom I shall not be continued" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 156). Abdou's only legacy, his pride, his continuity in his son, has become improbable. Abdou's realisation does not lead to genuine realisation does not lead to genuine penitence that makes him repent of his patriarchal injustices against his wives, nor stop his philandering. He has lost his wives' love and he expresses this thus "Aujourd'hui, sans réelle parenté, sans amours et plein de remords, mon monde explose en gerbe de feu dans mon crâne." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 223), "Today, without any real kingship, without any love and full of remorse, my world is exploding in a burst of fire inside my skull" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 156).

It took the death of his wife to jolt Abdou back to the reality that he has not been a good husband. According to Loukoum's account:

Mon papa a beaucoup changé. Maintenant, il aide M'am pour les enfants et à la cuisine aussi. On dirait qu'il a pris des

millions d'années en deux semaines. C'est comme s'il s'était passé quelque chose sur la terre qui fait qu'il n'est plus le même. Il parle à M'am avec respect et quelquefois, il lui fait des caresses comme ça qu'on dirait des petits bisous dans le cou. Je l'avais jamais vu faire ça auparavant. Il lui parle souvent gentiment, mais M'am on dirait qu'elle y croit pas trop. Alors, elle éclate de rire et recule. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 231)

My dad has changed a lot. Now he helps M'am with the children and in the kitchen too you'd think he'd grown millions of years older in two weeks. It's as if something has happened on earth that caused him not to be the same anymore. He talks to M'am with respect and sometimes he caresses her, just like that, like little kisses on her neck. I've never seen him do that before. He often speaks to her kindly, but you'd think M'am didn't believe in it too much. So she bursts out laughing and pulls away. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 162-163).

Beyala seems to say that tragedy changes a man. Especially when it strikes close to home. Abdou is oppressive, callous and unconcerned for his wives' feelings. An incurable philanderer, who now turns a caring and loving, tender husband overnight. It was almost a miracle and too good to be true for M'am, so she does not get too comfortable with it. But, tragedy, disaster and calamities often achieve that in people. Here, Beyala shows the human aspect of men. Regardless, men are also flesh and blood. Therefore, men are subject to the transforming power of vicissitude. Abdou becomes more sensitive to the care of his children, even pregnant Esther the prostitute. He becomes tolerant to the whims of Esther, because of her condition. Circumstances have made Abdou submissive to his wife totally. Even as they pack for their holiday trip to Cannes, she dictates what must be done. All Abdou could say is "Comme tu veux, ma chère,..c'est toi qui payes, alors." (*Maman a un*, p. 21), "As you wish, my dear...Besides, you are paying." (Translation mine)

Since M'am's first outburst against Abdou's injustice and callousness, he has become more submissive to her, and she has become bolder and more authoritative in the home. She derides Abdou, who is now quite tame. She even calls him a moron to his face. She shuts him up and treats him like a child. M'am loses respect for her husband Abdou. The table

has turned (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 164). Clearly Beyala's message to the women folk is 'Rebel, revolt, protest, release yourselves from men's bondage and oppression'. By making Abdou subservient to his wife M'am and making M'am strong enough to put him in his place, she advocates that the method works. Women are encouraged to lash back, stand their ground. In cases where the man is unchanging, uncompromising, women are encouraged to leave him.

The presence of complicit men such as Kouam, Laforêt and Inspector Antoine in feminist writings such as those of Beyala is a corroboration of her claims in her treatise *Lettre d'une Africaine à ses Sœurs Occidentales* that not all men are oppressive of women. Neither do all men desire to subjugate women forcibly and marginalise them (Beyala, 1995: p.7). Not all men are mean towards women. There are men like those mentioned above who genuinely love, cater and promote the welfare of women.

4.4 Subordinate Masculinity of the Homosexual

Monsieur Nkomo, Aminata's escort, was exposed as gay by Monsieur Makossa. The common negative attitude of Africans towards male homosexuality is observed in the invective employed against Nkomo by Monsieur Makossa and others. All the fury and adjectives associated with homophobia are used to describe Nkomo (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 148). Au contraire, when Mathilda was clearly making sexual advances towards Aminata, the reaction was mute. Only seven-year-old Loukoum notices the anomaly of lesbianism in a patriarchal setting (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 145). The author appears acquiescent to lesbianism. She chooses to see it via the innocent and naïve eyes of Loukoum, rather than the prejudiced and intolerant eyes of Monsieur Makossa. This is a subtle illustration of how society reacts to gays and lesbians. There is hypocrisy where gays appear to be intolerable, lesbians are generally ignored, if not encouraged. Society plays the ostrich when it comes to lesbianism.

Beyala in these depictions portrays tendencies in the society towards homosexuality. Patriarchy cum Hegemonic Masculinity, believe heterosexuality is a key component of a masculine personality. The more sexually attracted a man is to women, the more masculine he is. Gays often run contrary to this rule in their sexual attraction towards men and not women. Therefore, a man that is attracted to other men is not masculine in the patriarchal

or hegemonic sense (Connell, 2005, Brannon and Juni, 1984). Lesbians do not feature in this patriarchal equation of masculinity, therefore are mostly undisturbed. Since society is patriarchal by default, Beyala exposes systematically the bias towards homosexuality (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 148). Using Loukoum, Beyala has this to say:

Mais moi, ce que je peux vous dire, c'est que j'ai rien contre les pédés, parce qu'ils ont toute la bonne conscience populaire contre eux. Mais donner son cul, il faut aimer ça sinon c'est dégueulasse, parce que, après tout, vendre son cul, c'est quand même un métier de gonzesse. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 148-149)

But as for me, I can tell you that I've nothing against faggots, because they have everybody's clear conscience against them. But to offer your arse, you really have to like it otherwise it's pretty repulsive, because after all selling your arse is really a chick's job. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 100)

Byala appears not to discriminate about homosexuals, gays to be precise. Yet using Monsieur Makossa, Abdou, Kouam and others, she exposes society's negative reaction to them. Homophobic tendency of Hegemonic Masculinity is seen in its strict sense of heterosexuality. For Hegemonic Masculinity, real men love and have sex with women, not men. The conflict between Hegemonic Masculinity and subordinate masculinity of homosexuals is seen in L'inspecteur Harry's violent physical attack on the prostitute Tatiana, whom he suspects to be a man. When she tries to give him a "Lap dance" at the bar, he rains blows upon her and injured her. When Monsieur Kaba her pimp intervened and begged on her behalf, the inspector of police revealed his homophobia to kaba in their dialogue:

-Ne lui en voulez pas, mon ami. Elle voulait vous faire plaisir. Jamais elle ne causerait d'ennuis à personne!

-Vous voulez dire IL! J'ai pas trouvé ça drôle, pas drôle du tout!

-Excusez...

-Jamais! Elle me le paiera. (*Maman a un*, p. 168-169)

-Don't be angry at her, my friend. She wanted to please you. She has never been a problem to anyone!

-You mean to say 'He'. I did not find that funny, not funny at all!

-Excuse her....

-Never! She will pay for it. (Translation mine)

Loukoum the twelve-year-old main character of the novel (through whom is the narrative) excuses Tatiana. He sees Tatiana as a sweet, tender and kind girl, whose unlucky bout with nature has made her buttocks flat and absent. This makes her to look masculine, and makes the inspector to see her as a man, and homosexual. Therefore, he assaulted and wounded her (*Maman a un*, p. 167-168).

Often times, in the bid to gain freedom from their husbands, women in Beyala's novels become sexually loose. They express their freedom by being sexually independent of their husbands. Women like Caroline, Aminata, Mathilda, Juliette and M'am. In lesbian relationships, the butch is the male, while the female is called femme. Such "She-males" such as the butch often have masculine attributes which are forms of female masculinity dispositions. They could be overly assertive and sometimes dictatorial with their partners just like hegemonic men are to their wives. Mathilda is the epitome of these descriptions. Women like her usually become sexually independent as a way of saying 'If men are doing it, so could women'. This is an anti-masculinist defiance of the patriarchal order: a "Do me, I do you" mentality.

Societies appear not to persecute gays as much as lesbians (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 144-149). Ndongala in the following dialogue with Kouam even suggests that bisexuality in women is not grievous:

Tu t'rends compte? Dit l'oncle Kouam. Elle me fait cocu avec une femme! Ca compte pas, fait le docteur Ndongala. Chez les femmes, c'est une question de circonstances. Il suffit qu'un homme se trouve là au bon moment et... (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 200)

'D'you realise? Uncle Kouam says. 'She's cheating on me with a woman!

'That doesn't count' goes Doctor Ndongala.

'With women it's all a question of circumstances. It is enough for a man just to be there at the right moment and...'
(*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 139).

In De Jager's translation, Mathilda's statement "Unless I find myself someone else to do it with" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 94), is indicative of her conviction that a fellow woman will give better sexual pleasure to her than a man. Her leaving Kouam for a woman is an

affirmation of this. Beyala seems to say ‘Because men are such disappointments sexually, lesbianism is better’. This lesbian alternative to heterosexuality is a definite statement that men are not desirable to radical feminists. Men’s negative actions against women create the monster in women. Men are responsible for women rejecting them and embracing their fellow women. Hegemonic men’s inability and incapacities in male-female relationships necessitate lesbianism and homosexuality. This is what Beyala seems to be saying with these depictions in her novels.

4.5 Marginalised Masculinity of African Immigrants

Connell in his research on masculinities submits that there are as many brands of masculinities as there are gender, race and class interactions. Therefore, it should not be strange when one hears such masculinities as black masculinity, working-class or middle-class masculinities. The research establishes the existence of multiple masculinities and not just one (Connell, 2005: p. 76-77, 191-198).

Migrant masculinity is the masculinity of the immigrants constructed around the realities of the country of emigration. Abdou had to lie on the number of children in order to access the social welfare of the state (France), so as to provide for his family. This he does in order to perform his duty as provider, as required of a man by society. Again, Abdou could not do anything against the open attempt of Monsieur Tichit to seduce his wife into his arms. He could easily challenge any other Black man, even exhibit a violent masculinity as per requirement of power relations, but before a White man his masculinity is powerless and inferior (Connell, 2005: p. 75, 80-83, 197).

Adichie (2014) exposes patriarchal society’s tendency to measure masculinity by material success of men. As an historical background to modern masculinity, the Gentry form of masculinity was also linked to the possession of wealth and material success. Wealth and material possession gives men control over women sexually (Connell, 2005: p. 190-191, 195). In tandem, Connell (2005: 226) posits that “Heterosexual men of all classes are in a position to command sexual services from women, through purchase, custom, force or pressure”. Monsieur Tichit shows off his social status to M’am by pretending to recollect

where he had previously met her, during which he mentions highbrow places he has been to. This he does with the hope that M'am would be impressed, and eventually have sex with him. The method subsequently worked. M'am moved in with him in Seizième-one of the highbrow areas in France. She abandons Abdou her penniless husband who lives in the slum, and becomes Monsieur Tichit's lover.

Even Loukoum Abdou's son rejects his father's poverty, and wishes he has a wealthy father like his mother's lover Monsieur Tichit (*Maman a un*, p. 45, 239-246). Beyala depicts the vanity and pride of men when they try to impress women and lure them into sexual relationships. Patriarchy and Hegemonic Masculinity terms it normative and acceptable. Beyala sees it as rigged up by society at women's expense. Monsieur Tichit openly and freely makes advances at Abdou's wife right in his presence. He ogles her and lusts after her right before everyone and Abdou is powerless. The following statement of Loukoum is testament "On dirait que Monsieur Tichit va manger M'am des yeux...Papa baisse la tête" (*Maman a un*, p. 45), "One would have said that Monsieur Tichit is going to eat M'am with his eyes...Papa lowers his head" (Translation mine)

Abdou could do nothing but rant and rave, while monsieur Tichit touches his wife affectionately all over. Abdou could not as much as rebuke or caution Tichit from lusting after his wife in his presence. He is already defeated and emasculated right from home. He has no masculinity left to exhibit. He could not defend his honour as a husband over M'am. He has been whipped into place. He could only bow his head in defeat to another man before his family.

Unlike in the United States where calling a Black man a "Nigger" to his face, could result in a violent altercation for a White man: in France the whites call the blacks "les Nègres" meaning "Negroes" to their faces and Black men are powerless against this. Marginalised masculinity is a repressed, oppressed and powerless masculinity against white masculinity (Nedhari, 2009). Abdou could say or do nothing against the insult of the white men that calls him and his family "Chimpanzees" and derogatively called them hungry and famine ravaged Somalians, while they are not from Somalia. The racist stereotyping of Africans in migrant countries often goes unchallenged and rather accepted by Africans desperate to eck

out a living in the United States of America, Europe, in this case France (*Maman a un*, p. 43-45, 75-76, 130,138,153). This aspect of masculinity is very evident in the marginalised masculinity of the blacks constructed under racist and oppressive situations the blacks find themselves in.

Police inspectors like Antoine, Harry and others come regularly to raid Monsieur Guillaume's bar. They beat up and arrest mostly the blacks there. Monsieur Kaba hides his marginalised masculinity before white supremacist masculinity. He trembles like a leaf, kowtows to the inspectors and often offers them bribes to be let off. The commissioner of police also demands that Mathilda, Kouam's wife, have sex with him. He threatens that all the arrested black men from Belleville will rot in jail, except she complies. He told Mathilda that he has the power to do so. These are similar circumstances as those described by Nedhari (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 107-113, 137, *Maman a un*, p. 165-169, 264-268, Nedhari, 2009). This is the abuse of the white hegemonic masculinity of the Frenchmen over the poor and helpless immigrants. The white masculinity is constructed with superior authority to the black one from the French colonies. It subverts and dominates it easily, especially on home turfs (Connell, 2005: p. 36, 76, 80-81, 109, 197). Abdou submits that the Whites are not bothered with the Negroes, even if the blacks die one after the other.

The masculine audacity in white masculinity is seen in the open flirtations of Monsieur Tichit with Abdou's wife (*Maman a un*, p. 48, 60-61, 64-65, 72-73, 94-96, and 116-118). As a White man with white supremacist masculinity type, Monsieur Tichit as a Frenchman dares the masculinity of Abdou an African. His open rivalry with Abdou for his wife is an example of the helplessness of the marginalised masculinity of the Black man in relation to the White man.

Monsieur Tichit followed Abdou's wife from their holidays at Pompidou to her home in Belleville in Paris. This is in spite of possible threats that the blacks may pose to him for trying to sleep with a married Muslim woman. (*Maman a un*, p. 102, 155-156).

Seeing his father's pitiable state, Loukoum renounces any fatherhood with the economic limitations of black men. Rather he prefers fatherhood with all the privileges of a white man like Monsieur Tichit. He prefers a masculinity that can afford the good things of life: the

masculinity of a father that is a minister, a medical doctor or an engineer. He would rather have a white father who is rich and successful, than a black one that never makes ends meet. This is how the marginalised masculinity of the black man is undermined and dominated by the masculinity of the white man. Even young Loukoum could see the difference in the life of his poor black father, and that of the rich white Monsieur Tichit (*Maman a un*, p. 246).

The men of Belleville feeling very masculine decide to assist Abdou in dealing with Monsieur Tichit his rival. They suggest cutting off his manhood as penance for his sins against Abdou. He rejected such treatment for his rival, and asked rather that they accompany him as he confronts his rival *mano a mano*. In a great anger and masculine ego Abdou got up to go; only to be reminded by these same men that Monsieur Tichit is an upper class White man. They cower at the thought of confronting him, seeing they are black immigrants in France. This is a typical black masculinity bowing before white masculinity scenario (*Maman a un*, p. 229).

The masculinity of the black immigrant becomes inferior to that of the white supremacists like monsieur Tichit. This is exactly the situation of marginalised masculinity of the blacks as explained by Nedhari (2009) and Connell (2005: 80-81, 196-198).

Regardless that the black Hegemonic Masculinity is constructed under patriarchal legitimacy, yet the white Hegemonic Masculinity is superior and empowered by legitimate white institutions that recognise the White man over the Black man. In this wise, about twenty of the blacks encouraged Abdou to fight for his wife. They left with a rather trembling Abdou, who almost backed out, if not that Monsieur Kaba called him a weakling who does not care what happens to his wife (*Maman a un*, p. 226-231). Their escapade to confront Abdou's rival-a white man was not particularly successful, since Monsieur Tichit fainted on seeing a Black man at his door step. The black men ran away for fear that he is dead. Eventually, Abdou collapsed and cried like never before. All of a sudden, he realised he had become old and his dreams unrealised. He remembers how he loves M'am right from their younger days as a couple. He wonders how M'am easily forgets the ancient African traditions and betrays her marriage (*Maman a un*, p. 241-245).

4.5.1 Altercations of white and black masculinities

The dynamics of the types of masculinity and their construction is seen in the black masculinity exhibited by the black men of Belleville, versus the white masculinity of the White man in France. Although, Hegemonic Masculinity type exists among every race and community, yet there is a difference in the manner and the intensity of its construction. The black man's masculinity is seen as inferior by the white man, since it was constructed under racist or oppressive circumstances of colonisation. Beyala's male characters show that black masculinity is constructed in recognition of the institutions that supports and protects white masculinity. The characters show also that Hegemonic Masculinity is dominant of other masculinity types in patriarchal societies. Further more, other masculinity types such as complicit, subordinate, or marginalised masculinities are often victims of the dominant Hegemonic Masculinity.

M'am's soliloquy reveals the bondage women go through under the dominion of men. In the following excerpt, she exposes how African men ignore western ideologies and rather enforce African patriarchal ideologies on their wives in France. Through M'am, Beyala exposes the restrictions and oppressions of women under African patriarchy:

L'homme instaure son autorité. Les idéologies accidentales ne passent pas. Il les exclut, avec ses griffes, avec ses dents, avec ses phrases. Il brode sur le mariage, une angoisse sociale, le sens réaliste et comptable de mon Bonheur. <<Sors pas, c'est dangereux. -Touche pas ci! -Fais pas ça! C'est pour ton bien>> S'exclame-t-il. (*Maman a un*, p. 79)
Man establishes his authority. Western ideologies are not permitted. He excludes them, with his claws, with his teeth, with his sentences. He weaves into marriage, a social agony, the realistic and accountable sense of my happiness. "Don't go out, it is dangerous. -Don't touch this! -Don't do that! It is for your own good! He exclaims." (Translation mine).

Abdou's restriction of M'am is vivid in her soliloquy. She goes to say how words are not allowed to alleviate her suffering. How no hands rest on her shoulder in solace, and how everything must be proper and in order in Abdou's house. M'am feels lost and out of place in the home. She feels no sense of belonging. She sees her future as ambiguous and hopeless. Yet, she fears being returned to the suffering in Africa. Her silence grew. Silence shows hierarchy, since she is at the bottom of the ladder, she keeps her silence regardless Abdou's maltreatments (*Maman a un*, p. 79-80).

White Masculinity appears to be more accommodating towards women. African Masculinity as seen in Belleville appears hostile, oppressive and domineering towards women. Most of the female characters in Belleville are full-time housewives, prostitutes or divorcees. Even Mathilda reconsiders divorcing Kouam at first, seeing that there are already too many divorcees in the society and they do not fare well (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 136). Beyalian men are wife-beaters, drunks, adulterers, or women oppressors. This is in sharp contrast to the white communities where the women have decent jobs like those of Mademoiselle Garnier, Madame Saddock, Madame Vieilledent and Madame Trauchessec. The white men are all under the authority of their wives. Monsieur Laforêt, Monsieur Bernard Vieilledent, Monsieur Ferdinand Trauchessec and even Monsieur Étienne Tichit surrender to M'am-Abdou's wife, and follows her about to do her biddings.

This comparison is not to say that Hegemonic Masculinity is absent among white males. Monsieur Guillaume allows the oppression and exploitation of prostitutes in his bar (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 15-17, 74, 107-108). Lolita's father abandoned his family when he could not tolerate his wife (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 175-176), Monsieur Vieilledent also lives in open adultery (*Maman a un*, p. 105-108), when Abdou describes M'am's breast, Inspector Antoine and the men of the police brigade made cat calls and exhibited all the lewdness ascribed to heterosexual hegemonic men (*Maman a un*, p. 132).

The strong patriarchal nature of African societies is described in Abdou's response to the white man Monsieur Vieilledent's question. The later wanted to know what African men do with their plenty wives and Abdou responded that in order to gain respect from their wives, African man beat them (*Maman a un*, p. 84). The hierarchical position of gender is inherent in patriarchal societies. The men are ontop of the food chain, followed by the women, then children. Alternative/Subordinate masculinities are usually between the women and the children. Hegemonic Masculinity is constructed in relations to women and the Alternative/Subordinate masculinities. Violence is a major opening provided for the construction of hegemony. Violence subdues and submits women and weak masculinities

to hegemony. Often times, violence is a tool of ascendancy to supremacy of Hegemonic Masculinity (Connell, 2005: p. 78, 83-84, 99-100, 191-194, 257-258, Connell, 1987).

Surprisingly, Monsieur Vieilledent asked Abdou to kill his wife for him. He claims his wife wants to kill him. Mrs. Vieilledent sighted both men, and went towards them. She accuses men of always betting, putting poor women in hell and suffering the innocent. Considering that her husband had just asked Abdou to kill her for him, her assertions about men seems justified (*Maman a un*, p. 84-85).

Beyala portrays male sexual degeneracy in the manner male immigrants sit outside the café's doing nothing but ogling the buttocks of young ladies and commenting lewdly about them (*Maman a un*, p. 13). This is a portrayal of men as sexually degenerate and shameless. This is antithetical to patriarchal tolerance of men's overt expression of sexuality as a form of male virility.

Ils regardaient les jeunes filles passer. Quelques-uns commentaient le cul bas d'une gonzesse ou la démarche de l'autre. Ils rigolaient. Les immigrants raffolent du sexe. Ils en parlent tout le temps... Et comme leurs femmes sont restées en Afrique pour raisons économiques, ils s'ennuient. (*Maman a un*, p. 13)

They looked at young girls that go by. Some commented on the low ass of a chick or the type of the other. They joked. Immigrants adore sex. They talk about it all the time... And as their wives remained in Africa for economic reasons, they are bored. (Translation mine).

Other men on the same street of Belleville are represented as drunken and dirty tramps, which are resentful and rebellious to society (*Maman a un*, p. 13).

The sexuality associated with the masculinity of the immigrants is sometimes derogatory and prejudiced. Beyala portrays the men as ogling or discussing female passers-by, since they left their wives in Africa like Monsieur Kaba (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 14, 198, *Maman a un*, p. 13). She describes their language as vulgar, since they could not act upon their lust for the girls they see go by. This is similar to the typical hegemonic males' catcalls, when girls are in passing. She describes this stereotype image of men as their daily disposition

and occupation. This stereotyping is anti-masculinist. Connell describes even wolf whistling as a type of women's intimidation by men (Connell, 2005: p. 83). Cat calls and wolf whistling as sexual admiration of women are forms of violence used by men to dominate women. Labouring men such as construction workers are notorious in this regard. Idle immigrant labourers in the chosen novels exhibit these hegemonic masculinity traits too (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 198, *Maman a un*, p. 13, 147).

In hegemonic society, it is common for women to fight over men. The man is king. He is worth fighting for. Since all the privileges in the society belong to him, women would be wise to fight for his favours and graces. Beyala challenges this mentality by making men to fight over women instead. Abdou competes with his nephew Kouam for his ex-wife Aminata (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 212-213). Loukoum competes with his father over the affection of M'amzelle Esther (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 63-65). Now, Abdou competes with Monsieur Tichit for his wife M'am (*Maman a un*, p. 65-66, 86-88). With these analogies, Beyala appears to say women are also worth fighting for. Men do not hold the exclusivity of being desired by women. Women could also be objects of desire by men. Men could also fight rivals for women's love and attention.

The white women also are mostly divorcees and adulteresses like Madame Laforêt (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 32-33), Lolita's mother (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 175-176), and the wife of Inspector Antoine (*Maman a un*, p. 136-137). The contrast of white Hegemonic Masculinity and that of Africans is mostly in the intensity of women's rights and treatment in both white and black societies. White women in the communities of the selected novels are more audacious, confrontational and assertive as seen in the women earlier mentioned. Women's rights and fight against inequalities against women is visible among the white women like Madame Saddock (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 84-86, 115-118).

African women are helpless against patriarchal agents such as culture and religion; thereby Hegemonic Masculinity is stronger in Belleville as a black quarter in France. White Hegemonic Masculinity is moderated by existing laws that protects the rights of women to an extent. White women have the right to work; religion does not easily encumber them. Unlike white Hegemonic Masculinity, the masculinity of the hegemonic black men in the selected novels easily and communally oppresses the women.

The grouse of patriarchy with Beyala's recommendations for women's happiness is the collateral damages in the children casualties. M'am should be able to seek self-development without jeopardising the fragile minds of her children. Her neglecting the high stakes of her personal pursuits speaks of malice and transferred aggression towards her home. Abdou's actions and attitudes though odious, do not justify M'am's callous vengeance. As a woman of faith, M'am ought to practice forgiveness as a Qur'anic injunction. Rather she threads the high way of retribution by doing the same things she condemns Abdou for. She also goes into adultery with her lover Monsieur Tichit. She leaves the home intermittently for weeks to be with her lover, just as Abdou left with a prostitute for a whole week (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 87). She neglects the welfare of her husband and children. She disregards tradition and religion to follow her own principles. She dresses like the prostitutes she condemns (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 18, *Maman a un*, p. 225). She disregards the whole Belleville community, and pitches her tent with white men.

M'am forgets what it cost Abdou to bring her from her humble background in Africa to France. She forgets Abdou's sacrifices and favours in his hour of benevolence. These in themselves are inequalities and injustices against her husband, home and her community. This is not to justify Abdou's toxic Hegemonic Masculinity in any way; rather it is to submit that two wrongs do not make a right. Feminism's approach to the men problem could be less retributive and punitive. It could be more rehabilitatory and negotiative. It is the need to negotiate with patriarchy for the emancipation of women that informed the theorising of Nego-feminism. Rather than retribution and violence, there is compromise between the sexes in negotiation (Obioma, 2004: p. 357-385). In her compromising and reconciliatory ending, Beyala's prescription for conflict resolution in male-female relationships border on negotiation between the sexes. M'am eventually comes back home to Abdou her husband (*Maman a un*, p. 294-298). This way, Beyala's feminist persuasion is not that of absolute rejection of men: even though majority of the broken homes were not reconciled at last.

M'am and her lover had their first fight. She obliged Monsieur Tichit to look for her foster children, he refuses. She accuses him of wanting her only for sex. Tichit tells her not to assert herself, since women are fragile and only good at crying (*Maman a un*, p. 287).

Evidently, Monsieur Tichit appears to be hegemonic in his mentality too. It seems his patriarchal education is very much inherent, regardless his colour or race. All his lovey-dovey romance with M'am and his gentleman romantic demeanor appears to be for the benefit of having sex with M'am.

CHAPTER FIVE

BEYALIAN ACTIVISM IN CONTEMPORARY GENDER ISSUES

Chapter five of this research identifies Calixthe Beyala's musings on several emerging contemporary trends in gender studies. The chapter looks at how she reflects them in the chosen novels. Issues of subordinated masculinity of homosexuals such as gays and lesbians are contemporary and are therefore engaged in this chapter. Also female masculinity as a form of Masculine Protest against conventional female sex roles will be examined. The anti-masculinist tendencies in Beyala's representations of the male characters in the selected novels are examined with the aim of establishing her literary stand on gender relations. The chapter explores the literary position of Calixthe Beyala vis-à-vis the portrayals of her characters in order to ascertain her theoretical persuasion on gender identity and relations.

In the 1970s, there was solidarity between feminism and the subordinate masculinities. The women's movements of the 1970s found support from gay men, since the homophobic nature of Hegemonic Masculinity sees homosexuals as feminine, inferior and less of men. This situation has been reciprocated by feminists' tolerance and acceptance of homosexuals (Connell, 2005: p. 39-42). In this chapter, instances of feminist identification or sympathy with the alternative masculinities in the selected novels will be investigated.

5.1 Masculinity versus feminism: Beyala's advocacy

Abdou admits that since feminism steps into his home, his masculinity ceases:

Depuis que les femmes servent de longues rasades d'indépendance dans ma maison, depuis qu'elles boivent de cette sève, j'apprends à ne plus être un homme. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 162)

Since the woman have started serving glasses full of independence in my house, since they've been drinking that

sap, I am learning how not to be a man any longer (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 111)

This is an outright admission by Beyala via Abdou, that the presence of feminism in the home, is the exit of masculinity in the home. She admits that feminist indoctrinations and activities of women are anti-masculinist endeavours to emasculate and dethrone men from their pedestal of authority. Abdou's rhetoric goes on thus:

Dis-moi, l'ami, comment fais-tu? Comment as-tu réussi à extirper de ton corps, de ton âme, cette liberté de ton épouse qui enchaîne tes forces mâles? (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 162)
Tell me, friend, how do you manage? How did you succeed in extricating from your body, from your soul this liberation of your wife's which chains up your male strength? (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 111)

Indeed, radical feminist principles and activities chain up the masculinity of a man in the home. They fly directly into the face of Hegemonic Masculinity and challenge its principles, also the masculinity of the man. The whole situation of woman perplexes man, sometimes it confuses him and he seldom knows a way out, nor to whom to turn for solutions (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 162). Hegemonic man would not surrender his authority to the woman willingly, nor share it with her. It is his exclusive preserve given to him by patriarchy, and he intends to keep it so.

An analogy of Hegemonic Masculinity versus radical feminism is the power tussle between Abdou and Aminata. When she comes into Abdou's New Year Eve's party looking dazzling and sexually attractive. Seeing the admiration and the lust in the eyes of both his male and female guests, Abdou charges at her in fury, ordering her to take off her dress immediately, forgetting she is not under his control any more. She refuses to obey him, but rather deftly dodged the confrontation. Abdou's true intent is revealed when he quickly whisks her to dance with him in the same dress he has condemned. Beyala shows men as petty in this scenario between Aminata and Abdou. The author portrays men as shameless and horny he-goats, who quickly forget the sins of their past. She sees men as thinking more with their loins than their heads. As serving men their just desert, Soumana comes up between Aminata and Abdou, insisting that he dances with her and not Aminata (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 145-148).

Abdou tells both women, that as far as he is concerned, they are both dead to him. Both women made a scene and eventually Abdou had to intervene. Beyala in this instance, paints a picture of the usual occurrence in the life of men who womanizes and keep many sexual partners like Abdou. She shows how disastrous and laborious such relationships are. How they end up so ungracefully and embarrassingly. Aminata left after being stopped by Abdou from fighting with Soumana, who though sick, was screaming at the top of her voice. Abdou's home at that moment knew real chaos. Using Abdou as a scapegoat, Beyala seems to be didactic about men's infidelities (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 147-149).

While Monsieur Kaba insults and shuts Esther up unjustly, Monsieur Guillaume lusts after her sexually. As an indomitable woman, Esther reprimands him at once (*Maman a un*, p. 17). In Esther, Beyala creates a woman who despite her circumstances fights male oppression. By presenting Kaba's and Guillaume's maltreatment of Esther sequentially, she emphasises the intensity and progression of men's subjugation of women.

Right from her relationship with monsieur Kaba as her pimp in *Le petit prince de Belleville*, Esther accepts the Lordship of Kaba over her. Regardless his unjust insults and treatments, Esther remains in the management of Kaba. One would expect her to remain completely docile towards Kaba's verbal assaults, but she resists his and other men's verbal abuse at every turn. She even scolds the men that patronises her sometimes (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 16-17, 43, *Maman a un*, p. 17-18).

Contrary to the patriarchal portraiture of women who suffer in silence, having no choice but to bear their lot; Beyala employs Esther the prostitute as one of the unwilling victims of men. Esther is representative of women whose spirit is indomitable, women who resist men's maltreatments.

A common excuse for polygamy, especially in Africa, is for the purpose of free labour during farming. The men reason that it is more profitable for their loins and their purses if farm labour is kept in the family, instead of hiring help. Patriarchy sanctions multiple wives for men in the name of survival and industry. Beyala, subtly limelight this in the conversation between M'am and Soumana:

-Il a eu combien des gosses?
 -P't-êt' bien soixante.
 -Et comment elles vivent, les femmes,
 j'veux dire, comment elles font entre elles pour le supporter?
 -Elles travaillent, voilà tout. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 55)
 -He had kids?
 -Maybe up to sixty.
 -And how do they survive, the women,
 I mean to say, how do the women fend for themselves?
 They work, period. (Translation mine).

De Jager's translation specified farming as the type of work the women engaged in to fend for their multiple children:

How many kids did she have, your mother, 'Dunno. The wives there were thirty of them. And each one must have given birth six times at least. you figure it out.' And how were they together? 'They worked in the fields.' (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 34).

M'am slaves away and buries herself under domestic work in the home, despite the unpalatable situation with Abdou; she sings and cheers herself up (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 178-180). Most women like M'am, who are sympathetic towards patriarchal system and yet are oppressed, resign themselves to fate and accept their lot, albeit reluctantly. It is a different story for women like Soumana. Loukoum compares the sick Soumana on the bed, to her photograph of when she was twenty, and sees a huge depreciation. Beyala seems to say by that singular action and its revelations that men's maltreatments and oppression of women wear women out and make them old and wrinkled. She seems to tell women to beware of men (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 168-169).

The usual complaints of an unappreciative husband are seen when Abdou regrets following his wife M'am on her all expenses paid trip to the country. Regardless that M'am is the one paying for their holiday, a little difficulty settling down and Abdou complains about women as patriarchal men are wont to do:

C'est toi qui as eu l'idée de venir respirer l'air de la campagne. Quand Je pense que j'aurais pu rester à Paris et jouer tranquillement au tiercé, ça m'en font des boucles. Ça m'apprendra à écouter les gonzesses, putain de merde! (*Maman a un*, p. 40).

The idea of coming to breathe the country air is yours. When I think I could have remained in Paris peacefully betting on horses, it drives me mad. That will teach me not to listen to ladies, bloody hell! (Translation mine).

Rather than appreciating his wife's gesture of paying for a holiday for the family, Abdou is grumpy and complainant most of the journey to the country (*Maman a un*, p. 29-42). Regardless his fuss and antics against the resolve of his wife M'am, she is more than capable of subduing him every time. This is the newly emancipated, empowered, independent and powerful M'am, and also the newly enslaved, powerless, emasculated and weak Abdou. The table turns for the couple.

M'am's devotion to Abdou at the beginning of their marriage is evident in her soliloquy:

Pendant des années, j'ai essayé d'être une bonne épouse. Je célébrais mon époux comme l'autre mystère de la vie...J'étais à lui, bannie du monde, écartée de la lumière. Mais lui? Quels sentiments? Il savait être le centre de l'univers, la somme ou la totalité. J'étais l'image qui tapissait ses murs et éloignait le froid. (*Maman a un*, p. 91)
During the years, I tried to be a good spouse. I celebrated my spouse like another mystery of life...I was for him, banished from the world, excluded from the light. But him? What feelings? He knew how to be the centre of the universe, the sum and the totality. I was the image that painted his walls and drove away the cold? (Translation mine).

M'am's sacrifice for Abdou, because of her undying love for him, is not appreciated. While Abdou enjoys M'am's tender loving and care, he keeps her in obscurity and as an object "Nous vivions à deux, et j'étais seule. L'eau coulait dans mes veines et je lui donnais du sang" (*Maman a un*, p. 91), "We were living as two, and I was alone. Water ran in my veins and I gave him blood" (Translation mine). By contrast to her total dedication to Abdou, away from the limelight, he was full of himself and imposing. While M'am was hidden away for his pleasure, Abdou knows how to be in the centre stage of everything. She was no where to be found in his world. Even when he promised to take care of her in her pregnancy, she could not give him a child. Eventually Abdou gave excuses to be away from her and be with other women. Even while in bed with her, he thinks of them. \

Beyala exposes the shamelessness of men in the manner Monsieur Tichit chases Abdou's wife and still expects Abdou to acquiesce to it "Entre hommes, il a ajouté, on finit toujours par s'entendre, n'est-ce pas, mon vieux?" (*Maman a un*, p. 103), 'Between men, he added, we will always end up understanding ourselves, not so, my old man?' (Translation mine). Despite his heart condition, Monsieur Tichit tries to pick up Abdou's wife. M'am being a virtuous woman at first tells him off subtly and shuts him down:

- Heureux de faire votre connaissance, Madame. Mais... Il me semble vous avoir déjà vue quelque part...
- Moi, à vo'te place, je ferais attention à mon coeur, vieux père, glapit M'am. (*Maman a un*, p. 45)
- Happy to meet you, madam. But...it seems I have seen you somewhere...
- If I were you, I will pay attention to my [ailing] heart, old father, yelps M'am. (Translation mine)

Sometimes, suffering and oppressed women decide to leave their husband and make something of their lives, other than the doldrums of their slavish matrimonial lives. Before M'am, Soumana decides to be an actress. She fantasises and has vision of grandeur about it (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 61). Eventually she dies of a broken heart before realising this dream. M'am on the other hand runs the home since Abdou lost his job. Her newly discovered and successful trade puts the economic situation of the home in her charge. The family now wears customised well-tailored clothes. She plans an expensive holiday for the family to Cannes. She moved the social status of the family higher than most family in Belleville, but she is in charge of her life for a change. Abdou could only watch in submission, and allow her to live her life as she sees fit (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 237, 238-239, *Maman a un*, p. 9, 15). Since the vanquishment and subjection of men is the goal of radical feminists, this analogy of Beyala depicts M'am as a realisation of this goal.

Loukoum testifies of M'am's virtues and of her good soul and indomitable spirit. Beyala examines M'am's psyche and concludes that she has reached the limit of her pains, that she has become impervious to Abdou's unfaithfulness and callousness. To Loukoum's question of why she is always happy, M'am replies "Parce que le Bonheur, fiston, c'est comme la santé. C'est quand on sent plus rien." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 178), "Cause happiness, son, is like good health. It's when you don't feel anything any more" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 123).

This is a dangerous definition of happiness for a woman who is maritally unfulfilled, oppressed and cheated. It is indicative that she has reached the ends of her patriarchal tethers and has surpassed her threshold for pain. She could no longer be hurt by a man. She is past feeling.

Beyala exposes this vital aspect of the oppressed woman's psyche, and her psychological metamorphosis from a vulnerable and weak entity, to a cold and formidable woman. Beyala seems to trace the origin of how and why erstwhile loving and delicate women become cold and hardened individuals. It is all men's fault. Men did this. Men made women into heartless adulteresses, unfeeling and uncaring mothers. Something died in women and men killed it. Beyala appears to say that it is why we are where we are presently. The whole feminism and woman's emancipation affairs are all men's fault. Connell in his research on masculinity formation also fingers violence and excessive oppression of women as partly causative of the women movements and protests (Connell, 2005: p. 82-85, 191-192, 226-228, 257-262).

Through the following soliloquy of Abdou, Beyala throws light on the predicament of men whose wives become promiscuous as a result of their newly found liberty like those of feminists:

De toi à moi, l'ami, je ne sais pas comment tu fais avec ton épouse. La légende dit que ta femme a la cuisse aussi légère qu'une plume d'oiseau, dresse aux passants. La légende dit qu'elle plaide la liberté et qu'elle souffre devant toi à grands coups de caprices et de larmes intéressantes. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 170)

Between you and me, friend, I don't know how you manage with your wife. The story goes that your wife is an easy lay, a pushover as light as a bird's feather. Generous, she distributes long hours of tenderness to passers-by. The story goes that she pleads for liberty and that she makes a scene in front of you with great tantrums and most interesting tears. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 117).

Women have their share of sexual immoralities and extramarital affairs. The metaphor of the female dog "Bitch" ascribed pejoratively to women is usually for the tendency of being sexually immoral or callous. Loukoum sees M'am his foster mother in this light. The same

way it is of no consequence when dogs change their sex partners, he expects society to understand her abandoning his father for someone else. It is a popular metaphor that men are also dogs (*Maman a un*, p. 48-49). Due to sexual indiscretions and promiscuity in men, sexual infidelities are common in marriages. The pièce-de-resistance of sexual unfaithfulness in marriages usually comes from men. Beyala subtly paints the picture of a man's life as that of a dog, whose sexual faithfulness is conditional and fickle.

When Madame Trauchessec calls women nowadays bitches, Abdou defends M'am his wife and for the first time admits her value:

Ma Maryam est une femme convenable...Aussi belle et admirable qu'un lever de Soleil sur le derrière d'un bébé. Je pouvais pas trouver mieux. (*Maman a un*, p. 124)

My Maryam is a respectable woman...As beautiful and admirable as the rising sun on a baby's buttocks. I cannot find a better woman. (Translation mine)

If Abdou feels this way about his wife, why then does he treat her otherwise? Men appear to feel one way about their wives, then treat them another way. Patriarchy makes men appear weak when they get in touch with their femininity and their emotions. Men are not seen as masculine when they are lovey-dovey, or when they are emotional. This emotional restriction is part of what Adichie calls a cage where men are imprisoned, and freedom from which only femininity in men can grant according to Kent (Adichie, 2014, Kent, 2019). Abdou as an hegemonic man falls right into this category. He does not express his love for M'am in words or in actions, until she disappeared from his life. This myth of men being logical, while women being emotional is explored by Beyala in Abdou's portrayal as sorry for his actions, and realising the worth of his wife. He admits that he can never find a better woman than M'am. Yet, he treats her like dirt (*Maman a un*, p. 124).

There is a general claim that women are naturally cunning and crafty. The belief that women are cleverer than men is generally peddled by hegemonic men. Beyala gives a glimpse of this in Inspector Antoine's conversation with Abdou about how women are born geniuses. Inspector Antoine's wife Juliette and M'am are portrayed as women who are clever enough to outsmart their husbands (*Maman a un*, p. 137).

Feminists often argue that women also have the right to have as many sexual partners as the men. They see the system that frowns on women's promiscuity, while applauding the same thing in men, as patriarchal and masculinist. By being heady, unruly and sluttish, women protest men's exclusive right to unfaithfulness. Women mostly suffer heartbreaks and diseases from men's sexual indiscretion and irresponsibility. It becomes a more impactful vengeance of the woman on the man, when she sleeps willy-nilly with the man's friends, neighbours and even complete strangers. This she does in protest and as punishment for the man's sexual unfaithfulness, injustice and abuse.

Despite Soumana's failing health and the doctor's suggestion that she be taken to the hospital at once, she declines and opts for staying at home to get well, because of her children: "Oh non, docteur! J' veux pas aller à l'hôpital. J' veux pas abandonner mes enfants. J' vais guérir." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 164), "Oh, no, doctor! I don't want to go to the hospital. I don't want to leave my children. I 'll get better". (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 112). As recourse, women embrace their children when rejected by men. Children fill the vacuum left by men's paternal absence in the home. M'am admits this in her soliloquy:

-Les enfants étaient ma seule sagesse. Ils vivaient, agençaient l'inutile tas de chairs et me faisaient partager ce que je n'espérais plus. (*Maman a un*, p. 195)

-The children were my only wisdom. They lived, put together my pile of useless flesh and made me to share what I no longer hoped for. (Translation mine)

There is a general accusation that women transfer the love they have for their husband to their children over time. There is an argument that it is men's maltreatment and neglect of women, that make women to look unto their children for love and consolation, while ignoring and abandoning men to loneliness. Loneliness is a man's prime sickness, his allergy right from the genesis account in the Bible. Beyala desires to isolate the man, as he also ostracizes the woman. In Beyala's novels, we see elements of anti-masculinist submissions and portrayals of men. Men are the enemies, the sole problem of women in life. Women's children are their respite, their panacea and antidote against men's poisonous lies and deceptions, against men's wickedness and depravity. If not for the children, women would have ceased to exist (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 164). Soumana's confession on her sick bed testifies to this:

Elle a tourné la tête, elle a regardé le médecin avec un pauvre sourire, puis elle a ajouté:
-Si c'était pas mes mômes, il y aurait longtemps que je serais dans l'autre monde. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 164)

She turned her head, looked at the doctor with a weak little smile, then added: 'If it weren't for my kids, I would have been in the other world a long time ago.' (*Loukoum: The Little*, p.113)

When Soumana out of fear of leaving her children declines going to the hospital, one would expect Abdou to put his foot down and insist that she goes. As her husband, he could veto the decision out of love and concern, and take her there, without minding Soumana's ill-advised decision not to go. This is when his seat of reason as the man is suppose to kick in and where his male dominance and arrogance would have benefitted his wife, and counted for something for his traumatised wife. Yet, Abdou quickly rescind the doctor's recommendation that Soumana be taken to the hospital immediately, giving Soumana's illogical desire to stay at home as his reason. Abdou flops into his chair exhausted and detached from the situation. Perhaps sometimes, men also feel overstressed and overburdened by the demands of the home (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 165). One would think that Abdou would be more concerned and caring for Soumana, since it is his incessant women chasing and adultery that causes Soumana's psychological trauma, which in turn triggers her illness (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 42,57-58,60-62,79-80, see pages 84,99-100,112-116,141-142). In spite the Doctor he invites; he supports Soumana's decision not to get proper medical care. Beyala sets Abdou up as unrepentant of his callous and oppressive dispositions towards his wife, even sick Soumana. In Beyala's world, all men appear to be irresponsible, good for nothing. Not even good enough for sex; the only thing a woman truly desires from a man (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 4, 94, 138, 200-202).

In spite of all the authority, confidence and intelligence men claim to have over women, Beyala makes a point that women most times are the ones to bail men out of their troubles. We see this in Abdou's soliloquy where a woman rescues the man from a life of hatred, violence, indifference, work that robs life of every moment, crimes, raids and searches (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 97-98). According to Beyala man get respite and reprieve from crimes from women. This is one of the numerous uses of a woman, her influence and power over circumstances beyond the man in the home and in the society. So Mathilda, Kouam's wife

went to brave a confrontation with the commissioner of police for the release of all the men arrested in Monsieur Guillaume's bar. After all ruminations on possible ways to get them out after the men reached their wits end, it was a woman that saved the day (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 110-113).

Beyala's anti-masculinism is subtly presented as men being powerless, and women being powerful in dire circumstances. She presents the woman as the only possible redemption of the man. Man's only escape and repose comes from woman. After all, giving all the injustices and oppressions of women by men, men do not have the right to complain, even when women betray them. Betrayal from women should be welcomed by men as atonement for their sins against women. Abdou declares "Une seule et unique femme. Même ses trahisons te comblent" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 97), "One and only one woman. Even her betrayals gratify you" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 65). In de Jager's translation, Abdou declares sentenciously that Mathilda would be the one to seek for the arrested men's release. To her demand of why is she the choice, Abdou replies "Your papers are in order, you're a woman, you're white, so everything is in your favour" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 75).

When there is a need for a sacrifice in the home, in the society, the woman is always appropriate. She is always the perfect choice and yet the man does not accord her any recognition or respect for this role of "saviour" she performs for him. Even men know that what they could not get from their fellow men, a woman can easily and assuredly get it. Such is the power of women over the men that in ten minutes, Mathilda obtains the release of the arrested men (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 110-111).

As Beyala points out in Monsieur Guillaume's statement, men really owe women a great deal for their troubles over men (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 112). The author is suggestive of how Mathilda get the men released. The ordeal she has to go through; the favour she probably has to grant the commissioner for their release appears unmentionable. The toll exerted on her was visibly seen:

Deux heures plus tard, ma tante Mathilda revient. Elle est défraîchie. Ses lèvres sont blanches et pourtant elle s'était bien barbouillée de rouge à lèvres avant de partir. Après tout, si elle a tellement bavardé avec le commissaire... Elle respire

un grand coup et bredouille quelque chose...Le salaud! (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 112-113)

Two hours later, my aunt Mathilda comes back. She's seen better days. Her lips are white and yet she'd put on plenty of lipstick before leaving. After all, if she talked that much with the commissioner...She sighs deeply and mutters something.... The bastard! (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 76-77)

The price women pay for men's continual freedom is rather on the high side. Mathilda called the commissioner of police 'The bastard' probably because he kept her longer in his bed than necessary, when she went negotiating for the release of the arrested men. Calling the commissioner a bastard signifies his ruse and deceptive action, his exploitation of the woman's ignorance to defile her matrimony in adultery.

Beyala subjugates men and their pomp and pageantry to women absolutely. This is an anti-masculinist stance. Through the monologue of Abdou, Beyala seems to expose the inner turmoil of the silent man; the man that hides too much within. She appears to expose the inner workings and thoughts of men, as being totally about women and how women complete men. How women save men from their destructions, fears and worries (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 114-115). Beyala seems to say that men inwardly yearn for women and their ability to proffer solutions to all men's problems. Man in the world of Beyala is lost; a little boy seeking answers, seeking solace, seeking meaning and definition. Beyala seems to take all the potency in man away, only to give it to the woman.

For Beyala, woman give meaning to the confusion in man, she brings order to his chaos and madness, fulfillment to his emptiness. Abdou in his soliloquy confesses that women look after him, dotes after him, in his frustration and despondency, women watch over his well-being. Connell (2005:90) posits that "Hegemonic Masculinity is culturally linked to both authority and rationality, key themes in the legitimation of patriarchy". Beyala's portrayal of men is contrary to the Hegemonic Masculinity profile of men as being strong, dominant, authoritative, rational, powerful and resourceful (Connell, 2005: p. 42, 165, 190-195, 223).

Abdou confesses that sex with his wives lacks the luster it used to have. In his soliloquy, he describes a situation where woman deliberately denies him sex as a protest and a ploy to get him to abdicate his tyrannical throne and give up his selfish cling to power. Beyala lets us

into the private rumination of man, pretending to know and understand man's dilemma. She paints Abdou's unpalatable position through his musings. Women would not validate men thinking for them, or men pretending to know them so well that for centuries men spoke and wrote in their stead. In tandem, Beyala's revelations and notions about men using Abdou are subject to men's validation, since she is not a man.

Abdou is Beyala. Her exposé on his experience with his wives and her description of his psychology is suspect and possibly anti-masculinist. Being a woman herself, Beyala may not be capable of advocating for men and representing men in a balanced light and on equal terms as she does women.

Characters like Abdou are more common in Beyala's lore. Realising the torture he puts women through, Abdou now fears their reprisal. His wives on the other hand now shows themselves more hostile, bolder to confront him. They say the more he represses them, the more they come up. The longer he locks them up, the longer they form alliance against him. The more he tries to kill their spirit, the more alive they become. The more he makes them wretched, the more royal they become. The more unique and liberated they become. Beyala tells men outrightly that the more they oppress, repress and abuse women with their injustices, the more powerful, glorious and emancipated women become. This is an anti-masculinist warning. It is a sense of foreboding in Beyala that unpleasant and dangerous things will happen to man, if he does not desist from his oppression and exploitation of woman. If the man continues to rule alone, he will find himself all alone, when the woman leaves him to his tyranny and egoism.

Mes femmes m'en veulent. Leurs corps offerts ne se bousculent plus pour me donner la joie qui manque. Leurs visages sont tourmentés de rancoeurs, de haines accumulées. Elles dissent: << Chaque jour, tu nous enfermes, à chaque jour nous sommes libres, à chaque jour plus mortes et toujours plus vivantes, plus misérables et plus royales, éternelles condamnées mais encore sursitaires, absentes mal délivrées, opprimées mais uniques sous les plus hauts cieux, deux femmes. >> (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 163)

My wives are angry with me. The bodies they offer me no longer jostle each other to give me the joy I lack. Their faces are tortured with rancour, with accumulated hatred. They

say; ‘Every day you lock us in, and with every day we are free, with every day more dead and still more alive, more wretched and more royal, internally damned but still under a suspended sentence, absent ones badly released, oppressed, but unique under the highest heavens, we two women. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 111)

Abdou swallows his pride, so as not to appear reactionary against the onslaught of his feminist prostitute wife. Yet, by observing in silence and complicity, he encourages the new found madness of the woman called feminism:

Mais tu sais, l’ami, l’indépendance de la femme est une mauvaise graine que l’homme doit jeter dans la poubelle. S’il rate sa lancée, elle tombe et pousse n’importe où. Même entre ses jambes. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 171)

But you know, friend, woman’s wide independence is a bad seed which man must throw in the dustbin. If he misses the first throw, it will fall and grow no matter where. Even between her legs! (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 117)

In other words, if men fail to curb the excesses of women, in the name of their seeking independence and freedom, it will eventually turn around and swallow men whole. Despite Abdou’s desires to continue the patriarchal traditions of his proud ancestors, yet the immigrant culture of his environment challenges and subdues him. He makes an allusion to the feminist that plagues his traditional ways. The modern woman that questions and fights the old ways. Finally, Abdou surrenders to fate in the hands of modernisation. Beyala portrays the ruminations of Abdou as that of a repentant sinner. She paints him as a traditionalist with regrets of his old ways, as a man forgotten by time. Abdou is a symbol of the patriarchal man cum hegemonic masculinist; he never considers the opinions of women. He never sees them as intelligent beings, talk less as equals. He believes his ways are the only way and his thoughts only merit actions (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 223-224).

Loukoum opines that Madame Saddock is without human feeling and this aggravates her mood (she is mostly in a sour mood). Claims that ‘feminists are emotionally frigid and unstable’ appear to find themselves in young Loukoum’s assertions about Madame Saddock. Yet, Soumana listens, responds and cooperates totally with Madame Saddock’s feminist views and instructions. M’am’s compliance on the other hand is wanting. Soumana confides in Madame Saddock about Abdou’s shameful acts. In her words, Abdou is “un

vaurien, un trousseur, un fossoyeur, et qu'il a mochement compromise ses jolis rêves" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 116), "a good-for-nothing, a skirt chaser, a grave-digger who has seriously dashed the family's vision of grandeur" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 79). In defense of his father, Loukoum reports Soumana's cry of oppression and maltreatments as untrue (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 116-117). By inference, sometimes women's cry of suffering and oppression from men appears exaggerated. There are good aspects of male-female relationships in homes and societies world over. In fairness to men, like Abdou, family upkeep such as feeding, payment of fees and bills in the home is not wanting or compromised.

Men in homes like Abdou's, where women sometimes feel neglected or cheated, often live up to their financial responsibilities and duties. It is usually the psycho-sexual relationship between the partners that is usually strained. M'am is aware that it is not entirely bad. She hopes for change. But Soumana, like most aggrieved women in such homes, sees only the negative incidences and indices in the home. According to Loukoum "A l'écouter, on dirait qu'elle est la championne des mauvais traitements et qu'elle mérite le prix Nobel de la femme la plus bafouée du monde" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 116-117), "Listening to her, you'd think she is a champion victim of ill treatment and deserves the Nobel prize for the most rejected woman in the world." (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 79-80).

Loukoum goes to a good school in the area (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 6-11, 49-52, 89, 98-103) and this is nothing to Soumana. Food is not lacking in the home and this is nothing to her. There is a worthy roof over her head, good clothing on her back and these are nothing to her. All the benefits of living in France with Abdou as a veteran infantry man are nothing to her. Yet, she is a full-time housewife.

Mathilda, like most women seeking freedom from matrimony sees her husband as a handicap and often becomes irritated, regardless how patient and understanding the man is (LE PETIT PRINCE, P.. 93-94, 136-138). She is an expression of a feminist spirit, seeking freedom to do as she pleases, though married. She dresses provocatively, which is not decent for a Muslim wife. She smokes and drinks. She uses language unbecoming of a chaste woman. Finally, she commits adultery with the police commissioner and still blames her husband for her infidelity. This is a woman who is heady, talks back at her husband, self-

willed, and skittish. Yet, she would not give her husband a child (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-81, 93-94, 136-138, and 200-202).

Beyala's portrayal of women in this light appears to say that women too have their lives to live and have the right to live it the same way, in the same place and at the same time as the men. Women who dress and behave in certain ways contrary to the tenets of patriarchy are stigmatised as prostitutes. This Beyala captures in Loukoum's observations of the adults around him:

-Ma tante Mathilda met des pantalons ou des jupes trop courtes, elle boit du cognac et elle fume. Quelquefois, quand mon papa parle d'elle, il dit des mots comme 'pute', 'roulure', 'trainée' et 'fille de joie'.

-Hormis le joli cul qu'elle tortille sur ses talons de luxe, ma tante a une jolie figure. Elle me raconte des belles histoires. Mais papa dit qu'elle se comporte pas comme une honorable femme de musulman. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-81)

-My aunt Mathilda wears trousers or skirts that are too short, she drinks cognac and she smokes. Sometimes when my father talks about her, he uses words like 'whore', 'slut', 'floozy' and 'tart'.

-Besides her cute ass, which she wriggles on her fancy high heels, my aunt has a pretty face. She tells me good stories. But dad says that she doesn't behave like a Muslim's honourable wife should. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 53-54).

But the men are honourable Muslims when they chase other women outside their wives, when they dress to impress the women and go to drinking in bars (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 57-59, 63-64, *Maman a un*, p. 162, 190). Beyala sees it as unfair and biased that men are more privileged and have more freedom than women, even in religion. So, in her world, she puts the women side by side with the men in places generally accepted as men's domain. She puts defiant and vulgar language in the mouth of her female characters and paints them as irresistibly beautiful rebels like Esther, Aminata, Mathilda, Aïssatou and Ateba among others. Beyala challenges the notion that women are only good for breeding children. She condemns the notion that a woman's usefulness is determined by whether she has a child or not (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-81, 145-149, 208-211, 229-230, *Maman a un*, p. 178-179, 187-193).

Beyala begins to interrogate the advent of feminism. In the soliloquy of Abdou, she acknowledges the fact that women used to be soft, happy, tender and sonorous. They were bringers of life and fulfillment; they banish loneliness and were great companions to men. They fill men with hope and meaning. But now, all that is in the past, theories now dominate the reasoning of women. What women were known for in relation to men is now in the past (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 150-151). Beyala in Abdou asks “Qui donc habite ces théories? La femme est l’égale de l’homme!” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 150), “Who then inhabits these theories? A woman is equal to a man!” (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 102). But then, she quickly affirms that women’s strength move the earth itself and their weaknesses bring sorrow to men. In this context, Beyala appears to put herself in men’s position in relation to contemporary changes in the image of women due to feminist activities worldwide. She seems to be a porte-parole for men, via Abdou’s monologue. Once upon a time, men wrote in place of women, back when women’s writings were not popular, and men were the thoughts and voices of women (Lange, 2008: p. 2).

M’am’s flashback justifies her present actions against Abdou. It appears she has decided to pay Abdou back for his oppressing her (*Maman a un*, p. 79). Her compromise with extramarital affair is a vengeance against Abdou’s years of marital unfaithfulness and callousness. The question here is if two wrongs ever make a right. M’am’s unfaithfulness is not justified by Abdou’s life of philandering. Ayeleru’s essay (2013) “Do me I do you: man no go vex...” condemns the retaliatory stance of radical feminism. Women are not to justify their ongoing injustices against men, by men’s former acts of unkindness and thoughtlessness. It is popularly said that the problem with ‘An eye for an eye’ and ‘A tooth for a tooth’ philosophy is that everyone ends up blind and toothless (Quote Investigator, 2019). Radical feminism should not seek vengeance or payback; rather it should explore avenues of rehabilitation of men. Through M’am’s forbearance, generosity and dutifulness, Abdou becomes rehabilitated of his callous and philandering lifestyle. He becomes a loving, dutiful and faithful husband. Yet radical feminism seems to say women are past that option of forgiveness and rehabilitation of men. The only option left is retribution for the trespasses of men against women and their children (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 46-47, 178-180, 245-248, *Maman a un*, p. 173-177, 225-228, 245-247, 251-253).

M'am encourages Monsieur Tichit's flirtation. She laughs loudly at his jokes and asks him questions about his conquests. Abdou is irritated. Since he could not stand another man wooing his wife in his presence, he stood up and left them. Loukoum observing the drama declares "Si M'am continue à se comprometre, on l'entertera à la sauvette par une nuit sans lune" (*Maman a un*, p. 60), "If M'am continues to compromise, she will be buried hastily on a moonless night" (Translation mine).

This statement of Loukoum is dangerously loaded. It implies possible consequence of M'am's flirtation with another man. M'am appears to be undaunted by possible patriarchal consequence of her actions. She continues to engage monsieur Tichit, who encouraged, goes through the motion of having sex with another man's wife. M'am's attitude suggests payback for Abdou's past infidelities to her. It appears M'am desires to punish Abdou for his past sins. This is a usual feminist stance; to punish male injustices to females. It is instructive that Loukoum concludes every chapter of the novel *Maman a un Amant* with the Islamic saying "Inch Allah!". It means "God's willing" or "By God's grace, power or desire". The religious hold on Loukoum ties him strongly to his patriarchal upbringing. Most of his philosophies, beliefs and education are Qur'anic. Loukoum subscribes entirely to Qur'anic injunction. So, the "Inch Allah" said after pronouncing the possible consequence of M'am's flirtation, suggests that her punishment could be religious.

Moreover, he had earlier declared that it is unlawful in the Qur'an, to look at a married woman. Now, Monsieur Tichit is not only looking at M'am, he is also trying to woo her into his arms (*Maman a un*, p. 60). While patriarchy is blind to the multiple adulteries of Abdou, yet it sets to punish his wife for attempting what he does freely. This is one of the reasons why feminists see religion as an agent of patriarchy. Feminists see religion as unfair and bias towards women. Severally in the chosen novels, through her oppressed female characters like Soumana, Aminata and M'am, Beyala challenges the existence of God. She challenges the existence of a God that is benevolent or fair towards women (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 84-85, *Maman a un*, p. 178-179). This supports the common construct of radical feminists that God is male, and not female.

M'am's soliloquy reveals that she is quite aware of Abdou's philandering even before he met her. She knows Abdou to be a great womaniser. She knows that Abdou does not attach

importance to her love for him. Yet, M'am follows him to France and marries him (*Maman a un*, p. 61). One would say her action speaks of naivety, recklessness and desperacy (probably to change her marital status and her economic condition in Africa). This same recklessness and desperacy to get a husband is seen in Aïssatou, the heroine of *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine*. Despite her knowledge of Sulemane Bolobolo's habitual womanising, still lures him into marrying her (Beyala, 2000: p. 37, 95-100, 124-127, and 135-136). Both women end up enduring and not enjoying their marriages.

Farrell (1971-1972) in Connell (2005: 208) shifts the blame of gender inequalities from men alone to include both genders. According to Farrell "Men should not feel guilty about what is wrong with the world since women were equally to blame. If women wanted men to change, women had to make that happen by changing their emotional expectations of men." It is not a balanced story to narrate only the injustices and infidelities of Beyalian men, without narrating the recklessness of Beyalian women. These women are also to blame. These women go into relationships with men that are bad marriage materials, and they expect the men to become loyal angels after marriage. They forget that hardly can a leopard change the spots on its skin. Beyalian women should share a part of these marital blames going to men. Yet, Beyala exonerates women from their mistakes of marrying these wrong types of men, even when they know these men as promiscuous and unfit for marriage. She depicts her women as trusting and blinded by great emotions of love for her male characters. Since love blinds them to the realities of life with these types of men, women are forgiven and excused. Men are the villains and the culprits.

Je l'aimais, mais je crois qu'il n'a jamais attaché beaucoup d'importance à ces détails sentimentaux. Il a un tour d'esprit plutôt froid en la matière. Il est passionné, certes. Mais passionné par sa généalogie et par son sexe de taureau...j'étais bonne pour la reproduction, non pour la caresse. (*Maman a un*, p. 61)

I loved him, but I believe he had never attached much importance to these sentimental details. He has a streak of a rather cold spirit in his being. Indeed, he is passionate. But passionate by his genealogy and by his bull's penis...I was good for reproduction, not for cuddling. (Translation mine).

Beyala appears to be paying men in kind, especially as men have so much doubts, fears and objections about radical feminist activities in the world today. She digs further into what would be the ruminations of men, and she concludes that without the former benevolence and the traditional disposition of women to men: men's goals, objectives and dreams in life would fall. In Abdou's soliloquy, Beyala submits that men's destinies are toppling down, alongside his patriarchal empire that so relegates women to the background. Men have now become very small; their visions or delusions of grandeur have been brought low. More personally, no more sex for men from women as they used to get. Women are taking over and men are busy trying to ascertain how all these came to be (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 150).

Beyala experiments with the probable lamentations men would entertain for their lot. She sees possible defense and excuses from men of how it all began. She sees men blaming work; the need to fend for their families. This is necessary. Men expect women to substitute their absence from home with the material provisions they make. Men expect laughter, dance and affection as well deserved reward for their incessant labour for the home. Rather, what men get is a total transformation of women into unrecognisable defiant personalities, different entirely from the submissive women they knew. There is a hypocrisy in Abdou, he appreciates the western ways of wearing trousers and short dresses and making up the face with cosmetics in prostitutes like Esther (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 58, 64), but he condemns it in his relatives and wives like Mathilda, Soumana and Aminata (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-81, 92-93, 145). One time he commends Aminata in her short and provocative dress (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 139). Another time he condemns her and orders her to take it off, like he earlier told Soumana (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 93, 145-146). In his soliloquy, we see a condemnation of the feminist western ways in African woman. We see a warring within against the transformation of traditional African women into unfamiliar, rebellious and lascivious western women (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 56-57, 133-134, 114-115, 150-151).

From Beyala's portrayals, one can see indecisiveness in man. He is undecided on what to do about the westernisation of his African Queen: woman. One can feel the confusion in his head and the conflict in his heart. Beyala seems to depict aptly, the inner turmoil of hegemonic men in matters bordering on feminism and the emancipation of women. Like Abdou, men love women in provocative and seductive attire, but they do not love such

attires on their mothers, wives or daughters. This is hypocrisy. They do not want African women to embrace radical feminist notions, but they encourage the individuality and the excitement women project in the bedroom.

Feminism inspired liberty is reflected in the increasingly daring and provocative attires of women, who in search of independence and expression dress in anti-patriarchal ways. Men love the show of skin, cleavages and curves these à la mode dresses afford, only they do not like it on their family or relatives. When their family and relatives wear such attires, they are immoral. But when other women wear them, they are kinky and sexy. This depiction of men's hypocrisy in the selected novels is anti-masculinist. Beyala gives an insight into why men have more than one wife. Men appear to keep more than one woman in their lives, probably because of that feeling of perplexity, when their wives become distant, foreign and too independent. There are feelings of emptiness and powerlessness in men, which comes with living with a woman whose dreams are separate. This is an indomitable woman whose existence takes dimensions different from that of the patriarchal man (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 150-151).

Abdou reminds M'am of how he brought her out of Africa to France. He reminds her of the need to be grateful to him for this salvation he gave her:

-Voilà c'que j'appelle de la reconnaissance! Je t' sauve la vie en te sortant de ce trou perdu de l'Afrique, et chaque fois que j'ai le malheur de demander un p'tit accompte, faut que tu la ramènes. J'en ai marre! (*Maman a un*, p. 65-66)

-There is what I call gratitude! I save your life by bringing you out of this lost hole of Africa, and each time I have the misfortune of asking for a little payback, you should pay me back. I am fed up! (Translation mine)

Abdou needs to remind M'am of her pedigree, of her hopeless state when he met her, for him to get a little respect or obeisance from M'am. This is the situation since M'am became the breadwinner and he lost his job. Towards the end of *Le petit prince de Belleville*, Abdou was humbled by his circumstances and could not talk back to his wife. Since *Maman a un Amant*, M'am has become more audacious, and taking Abdou's authority for granted. Abdou's past failures and irresponsibility had made him to cede his dominion to his wife

M'am. But, she goes beyond bounds with her behaviour. Abdou's outbursts are only in curtailing his wife's increasing audacity. M'am tries to pay Abdou back in his own coin, since the shoe is on the other foot, Abdou does not find it funny with M'am's open flirtations with Monsieur Tichit. He forgets his numerous philandering with women. He now experiences the hurt M'am felt when he was being unfaithful to her.

In fairness to Beyala's representations of male characters, she sometimes depicts men who are down on their luck like monsieur Laforêt (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 32-33), men who are in need of a meaningful companionship like Eric Friedman (Beyala, 2000: p. 69-71, 82-84). Laforêt's wife Caroline left him the moment he lost his job, despite his deep affection for her and the three children they had together. She went after a young lover and yet Laforêt continues to love her and blames the society instead of his wife Caroline. Despite the voice of patriarchy that comes to him to blame her in guise of Monsieur Guillaume, Laforêt continues to affirm his love for the wife that left him unjustly (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 32-33). Beyala's portrayal of these male characters appears in retrospect and contrast to the male characters in her earlier works such as *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée* (1987) and *Tu t'appelleras Tanga* (1988). The Author seems to acknowledge the exception of men with Complicit Masculinity, which breaks the rule of men as oppressors, abusers, exploiters and adulterers among other negative qualities. With these crop of characters that dots her works, she appears to say "Tous les hommes ne sont pas des salauds" (Beyala, 1995: p. 7), "Not all men are bastards" (Translation mine).

At ten years old, Loukoum found out about his abandonment and adoption as a baby. Abandonment of babies and single parenthood appears to be big problems among young Africans. Beyala succinctly presents it thus: "...en Afrique, il ya des tas de femmes qui font des mômes sans être mariées. Alors, elles voient pas d'autres moyens que de les abandonner." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 41-42). "...in Africa, there are loads of women who make babies without being married. Well, they see no other solutions than to abandon them." (Translation mine). Adichie, posits that boys were deceived during nurturing by a patriarchal society that they are stronger, more intelligent and better than girls. She submits that these deceptions and lies have put the boys under pressure and restricted them from

being capable of expressing natural emotions such as crying, loving, caring, being afraid and being sad without condemnation or having the feeling of being weak and exposed.

Boys are supposed to grow up as courageous, bold, assertive and dominant in all circumstances. They are expected always to be in control and never show their weaknesses, especially in the presence of women. Influences from such patriarchal teachings, feminists think has stifled the humanity in boys and has arrested their natural growth into healthy, responsive adult capable of effective communication with the opposite sex. It has also prevented boys from having a wholesome perspective of life and the world around them. According to Beyala 'It's not nice to lie to children' (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 24). Beyala often indicates in her works that the events of the childhood of all adults culminate into the circumstances and experiences they possess.

Beyala portrays Abdou's wife M'am as a product of patriarchy, who though at the receiving end of his incessant demands, yet is obedient and content with the patriarchal arrangement of the home (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 18, 47). Even when she suspects her husband may be on his way to visit his mistress, M'am still compliments him on how good he looks:

- J'en suis heureuse, elle lui dit.
- De quoi donc?
- Que tu sois bien habillé. Je suis fière. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 47)
- I am happy of it, she tells him.
- Of what then?
- That you are well dressed, I am proud. (Translation mine)

The same way she encourages him to sleep with her maid Soumana who eventually becomes his second wife. M'am is what feminists call a patriarchal woman. She is a product of patriarchal nurturing, who has not recognised or identified herself as a victim. A Stockholm syndrome case. She has been abducted by patriarchy for so long that she sympathises and identifies with it. She believes its operation is true and just. She believes it is the only probable and possible existence. She does not see any other reality outside patriarchy. She sees feminism as dubious and suspects its motives. Though in M'am's defence, her childlessness and Abdou's interest in the family benefits from the French government, has

led her to feign ignorance of her husband's affair with the maid Soumana (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 28-30).

Abdou hardly considers M'am a sexy or sexually attractive woman, by his declarations (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 182). M'am herself affirms that she is black and ugly (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 166). Beyala, in Abdou's soliloquy appears to finger this as one of the reasons men give for cheating on their faithful and dutiful wives. Beyala spotlights several of men's justifications for marital infidelity. Regardless M'am's efforts to satisfy and please Abdou her husband, he fantasises and dreams of other women outside his marriage. Beyala's juxtaposing such a saintly and perfect character in M'am with that of a dictatorial and sexually perverted Abdou, enhances the inequalities and injustices of the man against the woman. She makes it easier to see Abdou's personality as immoral and perverted. M'am on the other hand, who falls into Abdou's pile of rubbish, comes out smelling like a rose.

Beyala goes on further to expose the male-mentality and perspective on the enslavement and subjection of women in the following excerpt:

Voilées, protégées de l'extérieur, repliées et agenouillées sur elles-mêmes, je les ai libérées du mal des hommes. Les méchancetés subalternes, l'exclusion, même l'égoïsme ne les concernaient plus. Une sorte d'immunité. Et qui les mettait à l'abri du jugement des hommes. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 187)

Veiled, protected from the outside world, withdrawn and on their knees, I freed them from the evil of men. Minor unkindnesses, exclusion, even self-centeredness were of no concern to them any longer. A kind of immunity. Which sheltered them from the judgement of men. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 130).

Beyala attacks what men call protection of women. She subtly, through Abdou's soliloquy, exposes men's reasons for keeping the women veiled in Islam. Feminists see religion as an accomplice of men in subjecting women to bondage. Men see purdah, hijab and other veils as protection for the women from evil men and prying eyes, that may sexually violate them if they were otherwise exposed or scantily dressed. By putting women on their knees in submission, men give them immunity from pride, self-centeredness and extroversion that brings condemnation from men. So, these veil wearing and purdah keeping are minor

inconveniences for women, considering the immense benefits. In the soliloquy, Abdou even takes his wives to a local night club to see societal decadence for themselves. He allows them to see firsthand what they are shielded from. After their observations, his wives thanked him for keeping them veiled from the decadent world.

Beyala, presents Abdou's defense of his patriarchal existence and actions. He says "Que pouvais-je faire d'autre, l'ami? J'ai été un bon mari musulman." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 188), "What else could I do, I have been a good Muslim husband" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 131). It appears Beyala, though appearing neutral, arms women with a deeper insight of how the minds of men work. She arms them with opportunity for a superior argument. She exposes men's argument and gives women a fighting chance with a superior argument (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 114-115). This is an anti-masculinist attempt to quash men's biases and excuses for injustices against women. Adebayo (2015) emphasises the removal of this veil that render women invisible. To all these "benevolence" of men towards women, women say:

Tu [l'homme] es le bourreau de notre âme. Tu te crois charitable, mais tu es froid comme une lame. Tu ne tues pas, mais tu voles la vie de chaque instant. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 163)

You [man] are the executioner of our soul. You think you are charitable, but you're as cold as the blade of a knife. You don't kill, but you rob life of every moment. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 112).

The realisation that women have the right of association, right to dream, right to wear what they like, go where they want and do what they like, among such other actions of liberated women, came to Abdou as a shock. After ten years, Aminata his ex-wife shows up totally free of his control and dictates. The new woman whose destiny is in her hands and her decisions are unquestionable, appears foreign to Abdou. Aminata shows up in his New Year Eve's party all dressed up, in company of a male escort Monsieur Nkomo, and she refuses his order to take off her unpatriachal dress. Amina now prostitutes in the streets of France and sings in the night clubs, without the permission of Abdou. This amount of freedom in a woman perplexes him. This liberation from male dictates and gutsy initiatives of the woman confuse Abdou (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 20,35,65-66,78,91,102-103,108,111-112,117,126-127, 131). Pg.132 – Aminata expresses her views of the patriarchal system in her song:

Je suis la putain, c'est mon nom
 je suis la putain, c'est mon nom
 comme si la putain est un nom
 si la putain est un nom
 alors con c'est le nom d'un mec
 et si je lui dis pauv' con
 c'est sûr qu'il m'en foutra une... (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 189)
 I am whore, that's my name
 I am whore, that's my name
 as if whore were a name
 if whore is a name
 Then jerk is the name of a guy
 and if I call him you poor jerk
 he's sure to beat me up... (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 132).

This is the inequality in the patriarchal system. When a woman sleeps with many men, she is a prostitute. But when a man does so, he is masculine and a stud. This is the double standard Beyala attempts to expose in Aminata's song. Mathilda symbolises a rebellion against these stereotypes and patriarchal double standards (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-82). Stereotypification is rampant in the patriarchal system. It encourages biases and prejudices against women folk. Aminata accepts to be called a whore, but she dares not call a man a jerk, lest she gets a beating. This inequality, this prejudice and injustice in the patriarchal order of things, is what feminist antagonism is built on.

In M'am's experience Beyala submits that the hatred oppressed women have for men runs so deep that it can never be detected easily anymore. This seems a dangerous level of women's contempt for men (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 55). There's a solidarity in women that share the same suffering. Women whose togetherness is found in the negative experiences and situations they share. It is this solidarity feminists like Beyala encourage women to exploit, and through it forge a united front to stand together against male aggression and biases. Despite the tension between M'am and Soumana as co-wives of Abdou, their contempt for his unfaithfulness and bossiness has drawn them together as friends, albeit victims (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 54-55). This truce between M'am and Soumana is typical of women in polygamous marriages, who become co-conspirators against their tyrannical husbands. Ayeleru (2013) in his study of Soneyin observes similar solidarity among Baba Segi's wives against his grotesque and self-important snobbish personality.

Throughout both selected novels, Beyala engages Abdou and M'am in soliloquies akin to an 'aside' in a play. These soliloquies often attempt to demystify complex aspects of her characters' psyche. She exposes aspects of her characters that are not commonly deduced or easily accessible from mere conversations or plots. In *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée*, an alter-ego personality of Ateba as the spirit of the heroine goddess was revealed in her soliloquies. This omniscient and omnipresent style of an aside affords Beyala the opportunity and the ease of access into the minds of her characters, even the males like Abdou and Loukoum. In *Aïssatou*, it was the spirit of a lonely maiden, desperate for true companionship and love. In *Tanga*, it was the lamentation of the violated and oppressed.

The unconventional style is her entering into a man's [Abdou's] mind and thinking in the stead of a male character. Though her use of a male character is unconventional, yet her intent to explain and define the mysterious being called woman is evident. Abdou in his epistolary soliloquies attempts to describe the woman, yet she eludes description. He tries to compare her to existing notions in nature, and he ends up discovering her in relation to his need of her, his desire to be with her and be comforted by her. In Abdou's soliloquies, Beyala tends to put herself in place of a man, in order to appreciate a woman (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 56-57). In his soliloquy, Abdou declares that even the woman's betrayal of the man is welcomed, and even does service to the man (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 97). He confesses that as a man he thinks with his oversized phallus, rather than with his brain. This is an age-long derogation of men's sexual instincts and weakness. Beyala did not only use Abdou to insult men, but also to limelight women's illustrious pedigree. She portrays how she suffers from patriarchal injustices, and how men are too absorbed with their own kind to notice how wondrous the woman is. As if to say patriarchy has blinded men to the true nature, purpose and beauty of the woman (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 97-98).

Interestingly, the same Abdou Traoré that is such a tyrant to his wife and a terror in his home, the same man whose unfaithfulness to his wives is legendary could not have written those words about women except Beyala proposes that he has an alter-ego, or a man with a dual personality. It is incredible how he can be so reverent of women in his soliloquy, and yet be so disrespectful and mean to his wives in the same breath. He claims to be one of those men who have escaped patriarchal mentality embedded in the nurturing of the male

child. He tries to convince those suspicious of his claim that he is feminine (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 97-98)

As a housewife, M'am is so domesticated that she has no time for herself, only chores after chores. Monsieur Kaba says this about M'am Abdou's wife. Abdou is the poorest in the group of men, yet he has two wives and concubines. This is ironical. It is Beyala's way of saying that a man should not bite more than he can chew. Abdou would do better with one wife and no concubines (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 57).

Abdou is a bad influence on his son Loukoum. He is a real womaniser. Beyala paints the scenario of a man that cannot be a role model to his child. A man who overtly lusts after a whore in front of his child. A shameless parent, a lecher (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 57-58). This is how Beyala portrays Abdou before his own child. Feminists like Beyala often paint the picture of a man who craves authority, who desires to lead-the man who wants to be obeyed and served as a Lord, yet does not have any morality or decency about him. Beyala objectifies men. She paints men as perverts, lechers, sexually undisciplined and promiscuous (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 43, 57-58). She criticizes men's sexual appetite, while praising the same tendencies in women.

Not all Beyalian women are great role models. Esther the whore, virtually stood naked in front of young Loukoum by the pool side, not really minding the effect of her nudity on the sensibilities of the young child. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 59-60). When Loukoum asked if they can come again to the pool sometime, Esther told the seven years old:

-Bien sûr! Pourquoi pas? Avec tous ces mecs qui te foutent leur truc, faire un peu d'exercice et s'aérer ne me fait pas de mal. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 61)

-Of course! why not? With all those guys sticking their things up you, a little exercise and some fresh air won't do me any harm. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 38).

Loukoum could not get the nuance in her comments. He thought "J'ai pas très bien compris c' qu'elle voulait dire" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 61), "I didn't really understand what she meant...." (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 38). He was that young and still a virgin, when she exposed him to pornography.

Abdou squanders his meager earnings as a sanitation worker in Paris on expensive clothes, that he might look good enough to woo a young woman: Esther the prostitute. Loukoum observes that his father's dressing is "not exactly in line with our level of family expenditure" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 40). He wonders where his father got the money to dress so expensively (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 63). Abdou was so busy wooing a whore, that he did not even pay attention to his son (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 63-65).

Beyala exposes another excuse men give for philandering or being polygamous in M'am's response to Soumana. When Soumana decides to give Abdou an ultimatum to choose between her and the prostitute Esther (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 67). The reality of Abdou's possible choice hits Soumana in this dialogue:

-Non. Il va choisir entre elle et moi. M'am secoue tristement la tête.

-Soumana, c'est un choix pénible que tu vas le pousser à faire. Tu vas nous manquer, tu sais.

-Il oserait pas.

-Si. P't-êt' bien que nous sommes trop vieilles pour lui.

-Non! Non et non! hurle Soumana. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 67)

-No. He's going to have to choose me or that slut.

-Sou, it's a painful choice that you're going to force him to make. We'll miss you, you know.

-He wouldn't dare!

-Yes, he would. Maybe we're just too old or too ugly for him.

- 'No! No, no, and no again!' Soumana shrieks (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 42-43).

Soumana could not endure the realisation that her husband would actually prefer a prostitute to her and send her away for a prostitute's sake: just because the prostitute is younger and more sexual. Abdou has grown tired of his wives, since both women have passed their prime. M'am's stomach rumbles all the time, and she has had a tumour of seven kilogrammes removed from her. Soumana is fat with several kids, they brawl a lot too (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 4, 16). Often times women in difficult marriages see their children as the only compensation for the pain of betrayals from their husbands "Voilà tout ton cadeau, qu'elle lui dit M'am en montrant du doigt Fatima" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 67), "There's God's gift to you,' M'am says, pointing at Fatima." (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 43). Most times women see children as the only bonus they get for being married

While men often refer to women as naïve and ignorant in the scheme of things; it is a taboo for a woman to call a man ignorant. Sometimes, women like Esther, keep quiet and allow men their reverent silence. Monsieur Kaba menaces and threatens Esther violently, each time she does the most ordinary and natural things. She cowers in fear, like most women under bondage of violent men (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 26, 48).

Beyala depicts the relentless efforts of Madame Saddock to win Abdou's wives into feminist cause (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 135, 213-214). This is symbolic of the enduring feminist activities across the world in contemporary times. Winning every woman to this cause and converting them into the doctrines and ideologies of feminism, in the latest preoccupation of feminist literary writers and activists across the globe. This anti-masculinist cum anti-patriarchal crusade spans all endeavours of the modern world (Cockburn 1983, Heward 1988, Phillips 1987, Messner and Don 1990, Connell 1992). Beyala in her works lends her voice to this crusade in characters like Madamae Saddock, Aïssatou, Ateba and Tanga among others.

Through the character Madame Saddock, one notices a feminist recruitment methodology employed on suffering women, just before recruiting them into feminist causes. Madame Saddock enlightened both women about the great revolution of women against men in 1968, and how since then women have the same rights as men and are free. They are free to work, free to realise their dreams and to compete with men and win. This scenario painted in Abdou's troubled home by Beyala, appears to be a sneak view into real life experiences and occurrences in actual homes. Madame Saddock, as most bra-burning Women's Liberation feminists of the 60s are wont to do, incites the women into rebellion and to fight Abdou's toxic Hegemonic Masculinity. Soumana's mental breakdown is expected in a woman that has suffered so many heart aches and rejection. With time her trauma becomes physical illness, eventually she starts to withdraw into her cocoon. Like a desperate salesman, Madame Saddock keeps prowling around Abdou's home, looking for a chance to propagate her doctrine of women's rights. She discovers that Soumana her disciple is sick and absent, the doors are closed. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 135).

After going on a philandering escapade with Esther, Abdou came back used and drawn out and gave no explanation for his disappearance. He orders the women around as if nothing happened and hits the baby of the house Fatima for crying (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 56-56).

Loukoum tries to find out the meaning of a liberated woman from his father Abdou. Abdou recognises that emigration from Africa and its cultures, traditions, has rendered his wife wide open for western doctrines and feminist theories, that spoils them so (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 162-163). So, he teaches Loukoum saying:

-Ecoute, Loukoum, t'es mon héritier. Tout c'que j'ai sera à toi un jour. Alors, écoute-moi bien. Ce genre de femme, c'est de la mauvaise herbe, ça ouvre les cuisses à n'importe qui. Faut jamais les écouter. Jamais! (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 88)
Listen, Loukoum, you're my heir. One day, all that I have will be yours. So listen carefully. That sort of woman is bad news, spreads her legs for anyone. Never listen to them. Never!
(*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 58).

Already before his father's response to the question of who was a liberated woman, young Loukoum already has an impression that:

-Personne y écoute c'que dit ces femmes-là. Elles bavardent comme une pie. Y a pas d'hommes que veulent d'elles. C'est pour ça qu'elles font des révolutions. (LLP, 88)
-Nobody listens to what those kind of women have to say. They just chatter like magpies. There's not a man around who wants anything to do with them. Which is why they're into revolutions. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 58).

It is hegemonic boys with patriarchal education and biases like Loukoum that feminists like Beyala and Adichie speak against in their literary works. Feminists pursue the project of changing men's mindset right from when they are young. Through nurturing and engendering of more feminist notions and mindset in young boys, feminists propose to eradicate patriarchal or hegemonic masculinist tendencies in the society.

Soumana, as a woman betrayed by her husband feel cheap and used. This feeling in such women usually precludes decisions to cheat on their husbands as reprisal. Sometimes they go into prostitution as revenge against their husbands' unfaithfulness. Soumana declares in despair "J' suis pas plus mal que celles qui montrent leur derrière au cinéma." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 91), "I'm no worse than those who show their ass in the films" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 60).

In *Le petit prince de Belleville*, we see three categories of women. The first category is women like M'am, who totally submit to patriarchy and the rule of men. The second category is women like Soumana and Esther, who recognises men's injustices and oppression and are trying to get out of it, or live in spite of it. The third category is that of women like Madame Saddock and Mathilda who has taken up arms against the male order and through their enlightenment and actions have decided to go against patriarchal norms and restrictions. This categorisation is not par hazard. Beyala through the portrayal of various characters-male and female in her works, has consistently depict the ongoing struggle between the male and the female in a clearly stratified society. Soumana cuts the image of a defeated woman. One who fought and lost completely. She becomes deflated and bitter (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 62). Soumana's mental breakdown is expected in a woman that has suffered so many heart aches and rejection. With time her trauma becomes physical illness, eventually she starts to withdraw into her cocoon. Like a desperate salesman, Madame Saddock keeps prowling around Abdou's home, looking for a chance to propagate her doctrine of women's rights. She discovers that Soumana her disciple is sick and absent, the doors are closed (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 135).

Beyala's anti-masculinist ethos persists in her negative portrayal of the only nearly perfect male specimen; the handsome and articulate Monsieur Ndongala. The well-read specimen of enlightenment is not free from patriarchal notions and stereotypical ideologies. Beyala through this character shows her anti-masculinist awareness that the most read and articulate of men can be patriarchal. Monsieur Ndongala's wife is a slob, who hates domestic work. Yet Ndongala's description of her filthiness reeks of patriarchal stereotyping and sex-role biases (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 94-96). Beyala preaches against sex-roles and proclaims gender-neutrality in roles of the sexes (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 2, 63). Feminists sees domestic roles as performable by both sexes. In *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine*, we see the male character Bolobolo as responsive towards doing the dishes (Beyala, 2000: p. 63, 91, 139). Abdou's soliloquy always exult the woman. He portrays the woman as the benefactor of the man. He sees woman as his true essence (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 97). Abdou sees woman as the only order on earth, man is only a chaos, just as Beyala claimed in *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée* (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 97-98, Beyala, 1987: 88).

There is a general assumption that without patriarchal influence, male children will be better positioned to appreciate the females. It is patriarchal nurturing that created prejudices between the male and the female. Adichie proposes that women apply themselves to raising the boys correctly, albeit as feminists. Beyala in *Le Petit Prince*, p. exhibits lots of this tendency with little Loukoum, who loves Lolita a girl from his class. Loukoum admires older women too like Esther and Mademoiselle Garnier his class teacher (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 6,9, 26,31,37,45-46,59,100-103). Beyala tries to look at the appreciation of a woman through a boy's eyes, hoping to find untainted and unprejudiced qualification of the woman, other than that of a fully grown man.

Beyala, severally through the eyes of young Loukoum, tries to glimpse the woman from an innocent child-like perspective. She seems to say that fully grown men's admiration or appreciation of women is suspect and insincere. It is born of gender malice and patriarchal disposition. But, the admiration of a woman by a child is free of biases and patriarchal restrictions. The child is bound to love the opposite sex warts and all (Beyala submits that even if she brings confusion sometimes, a woman is a wonderful being and should be treated thus).

M'am describes her first encounter with Abdou. She calls him a 'bull' who had sex with her in all places and in every position possible (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 122). The bull in this wise means a virile man with an uncontrollably high libido, who thinks he is God's sexual gift to all women. Here, the sexual attributes of the bull are metaphorically used to qualify the desire of men to always run after their sexual desires, thereby they philander. The description of the man as a bull is quite popular. Other times, it is an honour the man wears like a badge. It flatters him to know that he is considered sexually virile and potent enough to have sex with as many women as he desires. Yet, in this instance, feminist reference to the man as a bull is derogatory to mean that he is sexually undisciplined and perverted. The feminist's idea of the man as a bull is associated with the shamelessness with which men engage in acts of sexual unfaithfulness to their loyal wives. M'am's statement in De jager's translation sheds more light on Abdou's sexual exploits and unfaithfulness to his marital vows:

When I first knew Abdou, her needed six women a day. Different ones. And he'd do it anywhere. In the chicken coop, in the corn or millet fields, in a tree. You realise that? A real true cock. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p.83).

Immediately after this depiction of Abdou as unfaithful pervert, M'am goes on to narrate how much Abdou loves her and teaches her all she knows. How they have so much fun together (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 122-123). It is this kind of juxtaposing of the bad qualities of men with the good, that Beyala often use to depict the state of confusion in women found in problematic relationships, that often lead to women's indecision about leaving their oppressive or abusive partners. Memories of the good old days with their men, often tie women down to a life of suffering and loss. Consequently, Beyala paints the picture of the independent woman, who rules men. The woman who contends with men's economic power and freedom. The woman who decides whom she gives sexual favours to and when. The woman who like the man is sexually independent and unaccountable. In her younger days, M'am and her aunt were these types (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 122). This is the feminist anti-masculinist challenge; equality in sexual freedom of the woman. In De Jager's translation, Beyala asks this question 'But why isn't it acceptable that women, too, have themselves a good time?' (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 83)

For the feminist, the answer to that question is masculinist and hegemonic; thereby it is patriarchal. The argument is old. A man's freedom to have as many sexual partners as he desires is socially acceptable. This is even recommended sometimes by family, friends, communities and societies. Patriarchal societies allow men to express their virility via multiple sex partners. Unrelenting, Beyala portrays men as dogs on heat. She portrays men as sexual animals without any real feelings, honour or ethics. When it comes to sex, man has no code of conduct. Kouam who was recently left by his wife, is already nursing sexual intentions towards Aminata Loukoum's mother. Right before Loukoum's eyes, another love affair was developing between his uncle Kouam and his mother (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 145-148). Beyala portrays these men like farm animals, who without restrictions of morality or ethics, engage in sex perfunctorily everywhere on the farm

This struggle is one of the most primary and important in the feminist's struggle against inequality. Beyala, often in her works depicts this need for the woman to be sexually free.

To be as the man in his unbridled sexual activities and most times unfaithfulness. She tends to ask why female sexual unfaithfulness is unacceptable and frowned at in the society.

Women who love their husbands, despite abuses and unfaithfulness, could not bring themselves to cheating on them also. Beyala depicts virtuous women like M'am, who in spite of their negative marital conditions and social limitations, still find courage to be faithful, dutiful and caring towards their husbands. M'am is a virtuous woman through and through, until she decides to rebel against Abdou her husband (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 116-123). Then again, in De Jager's version, M'am ponders on the possibility of her being heavily indoctrinated and conditioned as a child to just lie down and lay low, while men dish it out and do it to her (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 124). In her dialogue with Soumana, she says:

And why didn't I manage to cheat on Abdou with everything he did to me? Perhaps because I love him. Maybe that's it, maybe. Unless it's my parents who filled my skull with crap I can't manage to forget. It's like gangrene! It eats away at you and then you find yourself dead without even being aware of it. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 83-84)

M'am, like most women under patriarchal indoctrination, is often in a perplexed state about her condition and what to do about it. Like M'am, most times these women conclude that they are just ignorant, then they resign their fate to the onslaught of men like Abdou. Men who are such incurable womanisers that even prostitutes pity their wives. M'am insists that Abdou is better than when they first met and that he has changed. Yet, she is nostalgic about their times together in Mali, before they came to France. She remembers how he used to laugh, goes for walks with her. She wonders why Abdou no longer does these things with her; neither does he even try to (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 65-67, 122-123).

The unnecessary rivalry Abdou introduces into M'am's life by impregnating women about and bringing them to the home as concubines or as wife (in the case of Esther and Soumana), traumatises M'am greatly. Despite her care for Soumana's children and for her, when she is sick, Soumana only sees M'am's love and care for her as pretense to have Abdou all to herself (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 165, 179-180).

Beyala paints the picture of a woman plagued by her memories of good times with her erstwhile lover. A woman who is haunted by the ghosts of the past, and the nostalgia for a

man she once knew. She misses his compassion and companionship. She talks of her husband as if in another world, another time. One could feel M'am dying inside slowly and assuredly. Beyala paints the picture of a woman pining away for what would no longer exist, what she could no longer have. This is the sentiment in oppressed and abused women. A sentiment that engenders retaliatory and fatal hatred, and desire for vengeance against men.

Aminata, Loukoum's mother who abandoned him as a child is a tart who already works the streets and sings in the clubs (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 124-132). Beyala does service to feminist ideals, by portraying most female characters in her novels as either frustrated and oppressed single women, or marginalised and enslaved housewives. There are occasional breaks from these stereotypes; such as Madame Saddock, Mademoiselle Garnier, Madame Trauchessec and Grand-mère Balbine. These portrayals of women by the author is an attempt to narrate women's stories of oppression and abuse.

As much as most hegemonic men patronise prostitutes; they do not want one as a wife, sister or mother. Abdou would not even allow Soumana his wife to wear trousers (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 93-94). Loukoum denies his prostitute mother on seeing her for the first time:

Allah! Ça peut pas être ça, ma maman. J'ai pas envie de chanter les mères pleines de grâce, saintes sentinelles... Non, cette femme peut pas être ma tendre maman, cette traînée qui montre ses nichons comme ça.... Non.... (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 128)

Allah! That can't possibly be my mum. I don't feel like singing about mothers full of grace, holy shit... No, this woman just cannot be my gentle mum, this slut who shows her tits like that.... No! (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 87).

Feminists like to think that every oppressed and abused woman on the street, every prostitute and female destitute is someone's mother, sister or daughter. In Loukoum's reaction to his prostitute mother, Beyala seems to be saying that men easily abuse and use women, yet they do not want others to do so to their mothers, sisters and daughters. The idea of a sluttish mother is an aberration to a man. The idea of a tartly sister or an outright prostitute daughter is unfathomable. Yet, men enjoy patronising prostitutes like Esther, Rosette, Tatiana, Aminata, Ateba and Irene among other Beyalian female characters.

This is hypocritical of men. Aminata and M'am speak of the tragedy of teenage pregnancies and the experiences of young African girls. Soumana herself came as a maid to M'am, until Abdou impregnated her in his home severally and she became his wife. Loukoum's mother and M'am were also victims (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 28, 42, 122, 126-127). Beyala lays this accusation on the threshold of men, without blaming the girls for their indiscretion of engaging in sexual intercourse outside marriage and at such young age. Consequently, the waywardness of these girls attract predators that prey on their naivety and carelessness. It also appears girls goad men on and subsequently get pregnant for men intentionally.

Underlying the theme of men's irresponsibility is that of women also. Often times, feminist works like Beyala's depict men as grossly irresponsible towards their wives and homes. Yet, there are accounts like that of Loukoum's mother Aminata Kouradiom, where women abandon their children at a tender age, only to resurface sometime in the life of the child as their mothers (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 126-130).

Children like Alex (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 36-38), Timothy (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 38-41) and Loukoum (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 7, 29-30, 126-132) are psychologically traumatised by the irresponsibility of their mothers. Many of these women like Caroline-Monsieur Laforêt's wife (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 33) and Sonya-Monsieur Ndongala's wife (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 95-96) left their husbands without consideration for their young ones. The children are condemned to being raised by a single parent-their fathers. These women become either prostitutes like Aminata, slothful and filthy like Sonya or heartless like Caroline. They are not role models; neither are they worthy to be around the children they abandon. They jeopardise their children's future in the bid to get back at their husbands, for injustices done to them.

Beyala's women like Esther the prostitute teach and expose children to vices such as bad language, pornography and indecent exposures of a sexual nature that could rot the child's mind and deceive his heart (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 59-61, 64-67). Esther invites twelve-year-old Loukoum to the swimming pool, with the intention to seduce and expose him to pornography. She dances in front of him wearing no underpants under her transparent skimpy skirt, and caressing her breasts in the presence of a twelve-year-old. Monsieur Makossa rebukes her thus "Hé, doucement! Crie Monsieur Makossa. Ce même ne connaît

rien. Faudrait pas lui apprendre le vice.” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 43), “Hey, gently! Shouts Monsieur Makossa. This kid knows nothing. You should not teach him vices.” Monsieur Makossa is unaware that Loukoum is already sexually immoral.

Loukoum’s sexual immorality is learnt from the adults around him. Sometimes, Loukoum looks between the legs of women to glimpse at their private parts (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 120). As this dialogue testifies, Loukoum is no longer a child, he knows more than the adults around him gives him credit for:

-Ça te plaît de coucher avec lui? J’ai demandé encore.

-Quelle idée! D’ailleurs, t’es trop jeune pour comprendre certaines choses.

-J’ai pas osé lui dire que j’en savais déjà tellement que j’ai perdu ma jeunesse. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 229)

-You like sleeping with him? I ask again.

-At your age, Loukoum, you ought not to be asking questions like that.

-I didn’t dare tell her I knew so many things already, my childhood is long gone. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 162).

The detachment and indifference that Loukoum employs when describing his mother’s sluttish attires and behavior is alarming. For a ten-year-old, calling his mother ‘the tart’ is shocking. He describes his mother’s whorish attires the same way he describes that of Esther and other prostitutes, without feeling or respect. This clinical and unaffected attitude Loukoum employs while describing something that would usually shame or shock a child is alarming and disturbing. It is a telltale sign that something has horribly gone wrong with the child’s upbringing in Abdou’s troubled home (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 6,9,25-26,36-38,40,42,80-81,72,84-89,95,98,145-148,159).

According to the author, abandoned babies and single parents are prevalent in Africa (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 42). Aminata was irresponsible and cold hearted by abandoning her baby Loukoum and shirking her duties as mother. Describing the psychology of an abandoned child meeting his mother for the first time, Beyala expresses Loukoum’s disappointment and dissociation. He is in constant denial of Aminata as his mother and refers to her only as “La creature” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 126-132), “The creature” (Translation mine). De Jager also translates the reference as “The tart” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 84-90). Loukoum could not

bring himself to respect his mother let alone love her. Moreso, when she admits that she never loved his father and only sleeps with him for fun, and that Loukoum's pregnancy was a mistake (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 128-132, 146-147).

One common theme in Beyala's writing is the solidarity of women suffering under mean and callous men. M'am sees Aminata for the first time in ten years and they are already sympathetic towards each other's lot in the hands of Abdou. From Aminata's confession, Beyala corroborates M'am's story about Abdou's womanizing and unfaithfulness. All was revealed right in front of Loukoum, how his father screws his ex (his biological mother), while being married to his foster mother. Aminata is a real home wrecker. She sleeps around with the husband of her peers and lives scandalously with those adulterous men. Now, she sees her redemption in finding her son and making amends to him. In all these throes of reunion Aminata expresses and goes through, M'am was not impressed nor convinced for a minute. She is rather torn apart by Aminata's sudden appearance and desire to take away Loukoum her adopted son of ten years (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 127-132).

Abdou does not care about spending quality or quantity time with his children. But, when his ex-wife Aminata showed up, all dolled up and looking sexually provocative, he stands ogling her body. Subsequently, he obliged to take her and the children to see Santa Claus. This is in order to spend time with her, and not with his children (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 139-142). M'am saw through his charade of trying to have sex with his ex-wife and Abdou becomes defensive. The trauma of a failing or a failed marriage on the child is unimaginable. This is more vivid in De Jager's version of the text, where amidst all the toys and gifts possible, Loukoum asks Santa Claus "...but I'd like a little happiness...can't you bring me that?" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 96). Unlike other children in the store, who wanted shiny and beautiful toys from Santa Claus, all Loukoum could think of that is dear to his heart, is the gift of happiness which is missing from his home.

Abdou is still M'am's choice for a husband. She confesses that there are things about him that she likes, and there are those too she dislikes. Monsieur Tichit laughs at Abdou's sexual failure with his wife. He has been engaging in conversations with M'am to discover the cracks in her marriage. Monsieur Tichit's agenda is to have sex with M'am right under her husband's nose. He tells M'am that since Abdou has not been doing the right thing sexually

to M'am, he still considers her a virgin. Monsieur Tichit goes through an erotic motion of describing a proper sexual intercourse to M'am. In the process he started touching and arousing her (*Maman a un*, p. 96).

Feedback is essential in any relationship, talk less a marital one. it would have been better for M'am to tell Abdou the truth, when during sex he asks "T'aimes?" Instead of saying "Oui", she has a genuine opportunity to tell Abdou that she is not satisfied with his method of performing sex. Rather she tells a total stranger about her sex life. She gives Monsieur Tichit the edge he needs to commit adultery with her. Although, Abdou is wrong to have extramarital affairs, M'am's inactivity during intercourse could be partly the reason Abdou gets bored with sex with her. She cannot hear a child. She is not good in bed. Both reasons are enough for a patriarchal man to search elsewhere for marital fulfillment.

Right there before her family, M'am damns the consequences and reveals a part of her that is otherwise unknown to her household. Loukoum her son, seeing her shamelessness and her lack of consideration for the family, also abandons her. He declares with tears that his mother is free to have sex outside marriage with anyone if she so desires (*Maman a un*, p. 96-97).

The idiom "What's good for the goose is good for the gander" is often seen from gendered perspectives in modern language use. Equality of the genders is implicated in its meaning. Human and women rights activists often allude the idiom to gender equality (Hefer Monique, 2014, Crawford Bridget, 2007). M'am's brazen flirtations, as against Abdou's former life of adultery testify to this payback gender equality. She does not see her flirtations with Monsieur Tichit as marital unfaithfulness. This is seen in her declaration "La fidélité, quelle blague! Longtemps, j'ai banni ce mot de mon langage. Coupable de stérilité, je devais me taire." (*Maman a un*, p. 101), "Faithfulness, what a joke! Long ago, I have banished this word from my vocabulary. Being guilty of sterility, I had to be quiet. (Translation mine). Infertility or barrenness in a woman is an excuse for men to be unfaithful to women. Beyala makes this clear in M'am's statements. A barren woman seems to have lost her right to object to her husband's philandering the moment she is confirmed barren.

The anti-masculinity tendencies in Beyala is clearly seen in the cold militant and annihilistic approach of Soumana. The same Soumana that wants to slit Abdou's throat, also wants her

father's wives to stop fighting themselves, and rather unite and beat up her father until he dies. De Jager's translation captures this more vividly:

...they would fight with each other all the time and bully each other's children just to get back at my dad. Me, I used to think they should have united against him and beat him up until they killed him. But instead they allowed him to reign over them like a Lord. Little did I know then I would be living the same dog's life. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 34).

With the last statement, Soumana finds herself in a vicious circle. This appears to be a radical feminist's clarion call, a nihilistic approach to solving the problems of women in bondage. Beyala's anti-masculinist voice here is very strong and very precise since man is the problem, then man must go. In *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée* the same annihilistic streak is observed. When Ateba the heroine suggests the total annihilation of man as the solution to women's problems. In order for the woman to find her true identity, the chaos around her, which is caused by man, must be annihilated:

REGLE NO. 1 RETROUVER LA FEMME.
REGLE NO. 2 RETROUVER LA FEMME.
REGLE NO. 3 RETROUVER LA FEMME
ET ANÉANTIR LE CHAOS. (Beyala, 1987: 88)

RULE NO. 1 FIND THE WOMAN.
RULE NO. 2 FIND THE WOMAN.
RULE NO. 3 FIND THE WOMAN
AND ANNIHILATE THE CHAOS. (Translation mine)

This solution, she spells out in capital letters; the woman must be found and rediscovered amidst her unpalatable circumstances for the chaos (man) around her to cease. Radical feminists like Beyala see men as a farmers see locusts; pests that must be eradicated. This feminist's call overrides and condemns all excuses given by patriarchy to perpetrate men in power. The chaos such as polygamy, philandering and all unfaithfulness towards the oppression of women must be annihilated. Hegemonic Masculinity should no longer hold sway over women.

5.1.1 Emphasised femininity: patriarchal Stockholm syndrome

This constant tussling and struggling for superiority between patriarchal men and feminist women, compromises the masculinist objectives of the man. In Connell's concept of Emphasised Femininity, women are raised to be subservient to men. They are raised such that there should not be any question about who the authority in the home is or whose final decision is acted upon. Women are to submit naturally to men, not just physically, but also intellectually (Purushu Arie, 2016). Beyala rather presents women who give men headaches; women who say 'No' and fight back. Abdou finds these types of women fascinating and problematic at the same time.

The Hegemonic position of authority of Abdou over his wives affords him the power to treat them as he sees fit. From M'am's perspective as his first wife, Abdou treats his wives as slaves, while he enjoys the privileges of masculinity as an agency of patriarchy:

Deux femmes, que dis-je? Deux esclaves nuancées comme
un langage de captive. Deux esclaves dressées, bloc
appareillés pour bâtir un Château dont l'homme était roi.
(*Maman a un*, p. 145)

Two women, what say I? Two slaves subtle like a captive's
language. Two slaves straightened up, entirely fitted for
building a castle where man was king. (Translation mine).

M'am accuses the man of being a king and the woman of being the palace built for the king. This sense of commodifying women is expressed by M'am. She sees herself and Soumana as Abdou's properties. Emphasised Femininity raises submissive women who do not contest authority with men. Women who find aberration in men that treat women as equals. Emphasised Femininity as a coefficient aspect of masculinity is necessary for Hegemonic Masculinity to thrive. Women must be totally submissive for men to be totally hegemonic. M'am recounts in her soliloquy how Abdou was her all in all when they newly came to France. How she foregoes her dreams and buried them in Africa, to pursue a future with Abdou in France. She was totally dependent, submissive and obedient to Abdou. She never opposes or questions his desires. She lived only to please him.

Sometimes, in order to keep their cheating unfaithful husbands, women try to look differently. They change their physical looks to compete with the often younger and prettier mistresses their husbands keep. Emphasised Femininity requires that women appeal

sexually to men always by submitting to men's desires and putting in efforts to look sexually attractive and pleasing for men. Soumana tries to emphasise her femininity by trying to look sexually attractive to Abdou. This dialogue between her and M'am reveals a contrary effect of her efforts;

-Tu ferais mieux d'enlever ça avant qu'il arrive.
-Jamais! Abdou m'aime bien en pantalon. A l'époque, j'en avais un rouge. Ça l'excitait drôlement. Comme un taureau, si tu vois de quoi j' veux parler. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 92)
-You'd better take that off before he gets here.
-Never! Abdou likes me a lot in trousers. When we first met I had red ones that really turned him on. Like a bull, if you see what I mean. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 60-61).

Often times, wives' changing their appearances and dress sense to get their husbands' attention, often have the opposite effect:

-Quand ils voient la Soumana habillée comme ça, mon oncle met sa main sur sa bouche pour pas rigoler. Mon papa la regarde comme ci elle était, un tas de boue. Avec des yeux qui disent: 'Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'ce monstre?'
-Va m'enlever ça! dit mon papa.
-La Soumana a baissé la tête. Elle est partie se changer. Mais avant de disparaître, j'ai vu ses yeux. C'était pas regardable. Il y avait là tous les démons d'Afrique. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 93)
-When they see Soumana dresses like that, my uncle covers his mouth with his hand so as not to laugh. Dad looks at her as if she were a pile of dirt. With eyes that say: 'What is this monstrosity?'
-Take that off my dad says...
-Soumana lowers her head. She left to get changed. But before she disappeared, I saw her eyes. It wasn't pleasant. All of Africa's demons were there. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 61).

Most times, like with Soumana, when women are past their prime and have gained weight, the clothes that formally pleased their husbands now looks grotesque on women. M'am as the voice of patriarchy that knows this had earlier warned Soumana of this negative outcome "I no be talk!" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 93).

Emphasised Femininity as an appendage to Hegemonic Masculinity also describes women's sole purpose as pleasure-toys for men. It describes women as created only to give men

sexual pleasure, bear his children and keep his home (Purushu, 2015). This is akin to the treatment of women as the “second sex” or the “privileged other” as identified by the French Existentialist Simone de Beauvoir (1949) in her book *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Across history women are seen only in relation to men, and only as appendages to men.

In her soliloquy, M'am goes on to describe the patriarchal privileges of men. She sees men's global position over women as predetermined. The patriarchal system favours men, because they created the system. They service this system via agencies such as culture, religion and social order. Men use social tools such as Hegemonic Masculinity to keep this system in place and dominate over women:

Il [l'homme] saviat être le centre du monde, ou la totalité, un point d'intersection où tout lui était ramené, agencé dans l'ordre qu'il aurait prévu. Il ordonnait. Il était plus grand que les ténèbres. En dessous de lui, c'était le désordre de son ordre. Nous étions un décor pour ses splendeurs, ses fêtes. Prisonnières de nos rêves... (*Maman a un*, p. 145).

He [Man] knows how to be the centre of the world, or the totality, a point of intersection where all is brought back to him, arranged in an order he had foreseen. He commanded. He was bigger than the darkness. Underneath him, was the disorder of his order. We were decorations for his splendour, his parties. Prisoners of our dreams... (Translation mine)

Monsieur Kaba treats women as commodities. He brings in girls from Africa to become prostitutes in France. He is into “Sex-slave” trafficking of women. He is violent towards the girls and threatens them at the least sign of their being impolite or defiant to the clients [men] (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 13-18, 44, 105-108, *Maman a un*, p. 191-193). Kaba exhibits hegemonic control and power over the lives of the prostitutes under him. He sometimes sustains this via violence and threats towards them. Yet, his fear and hypocrisies towards the police knows no bound. His hegemonic Masculinity is subservient to the higher authority of the police (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 107-113, *Maman a un*, p. 165-169, 264-268). Connell recognises these power relations between men and women and describes them as the crises that underline feminist confrontations of the legitimacy of the patriarchal order. He argues that the excessive violence of the patriarchal order gave birth to women protestations and movements. (Connell, 2005: p. 84-85).

Beyala makes references to what women do to please men. Aïssatou spends all her money buying lingerie and cooking to seduce Bolobolo into marrying her (Beyala, 2000: p. 6, 14, 98-99, 136-138, 146). The black women of Belleville bleach their skins to become fairer and more pleasing to men (*Maman a un*, p. 153).

The ongoing is exactly the stance of Emphasised Femininity: the more submissive the woman becomes, the more masculine the man feels. Men (hegemonic) need femininity in women to be emphasised for them to feel like the men they ought to be, otherwise they become emasculated. This was the case when the table turned and M'am gained her freedom from Abdou's domineering rule over her household. She became utterly disobedient and confrontational towards her husband Abdou. Since she became economically liberated, and at the helm of the household, M'am puts Abdou where she used to be: at the background of life. M'am's rebellion towards his authority emasculated Abdou. Her actions were directly antithetical to the principles and expectations of Emphasised Femininity. Her narrative and soliloquy changed from that of the despondent, helpless, weak hopeless and oppressed woman. She became the champion of her life and desires. Abdou her husband became her prey; her plaything. Hegemonic Masculinity nurtures women into looking presentable and acceptable to men. These women are products of Emphasised Femininity's grooming. These stereotypes are found in the media and pop culture of patriarchal communities (Purushu, 2015).

M'am's open flirtations with Tichit in the country encourage him to trace her to Paris. M'am remembers her obligations as a Muslim woman with family responsibilities, and says no to his advances at Belleville. She draws Tichit's attention to gossip. The patriarchal education of M'am responded appropriately to Monsieur Tichit's male chauvinism. Tichit exhibits a male devil-may-care nonchalant attitude towards the possible scandal from an affair with a married woman. Tichit's confidence of getting away with an affair with a married woman is reflective of society's permissive nature towards men, due to patriarchal privileges men enjoy. As for M'am "Pour moi, une femme qui se moque de c'que peuvent penser les autres, c'est un mystère ou une putain!" (*Maman a un*, p. 156-157), "For me, a woman that mocks what others could think about her, is a mystery or a whore!" (Translation mine). Feminism

posits that society has a double standard when it comes to the rights and privileges of the sexes. The psychological effect of M'am's affair on her son is disturbing. The boy himself testifies (*Maman a un*, p. 157-158).

(*Maman a un*, p. 156). Abdou and other men in Belleville openly and publicly engage in extramarital affairs. M'am as a woman is not allowed to. She remembers her religious and cultural pedigree. For M'am, women that engage in such are called prostitutes by patriarchal societies. Such are women like Mademoiselle Esther, Marguerite, Tatiana, Aminata among others that cut across the chosen novels. Patriarchal societies privilege the men to get away with what is often frowned upon in women. M'am no longer loves her husband as a wife, but sees him as a brother. Yet society does not permit her to have extramarital affairs. She considers her children (*Maman a un*, p. 156-157).

Masculinity right from the Victorian age is associated with heterosexuality and family. A man is deemed masculine when he has a family he is responsible for. This notion of masculinity has transcended that era into the modern society. (Connell, 2005: p. 68-70, 186-191). For Monsieur Tichit to say that marriage is not everything in life, and tries to convince a married woman to leave her husband and family to have a sexual relationship with him suggest he is not masculine by this standard (*Maman a un*, p. 156-157). Monsieur Tichit's masculinity is traced back to the era of individuality, where sexual independence and freedom characterise gender identity (Connell, 2005: p. 186-187). The impact on the psyche of the twelve-year-old boy, seeing his mother in the arms of his father's rival is devastating for Loukoum (*Maman a un*, p. 157-158). Women also use men and dump them like old shoes (*Maman a un*, p. 160).

Emphasised Femininity encourages women to exist solely for men's desire. In patriarchal societies, women appear more feminine when they please men and submit to their demands. A man is perceived as more masculine when women fall over themselves to please him or attract his attention. In *Maman a un Amant*, a negress, in trying to become white complexioned, in order to appear more appealing to black men, ended up being duped by Monsieur Cérif le marabout. In her defence of why she wanted to become light skinned, she said "O.k. c'est quand même vous les mecs qui poussez les femmes à se blanchir..."

(*Maman a un*, p. 164), “O.k. it is even men like you that push women to bleach their skin...”
(Translation mine)

The women attached her desirability to men as necessary to her sustenance and that of her children. So, she pleases men to survive.

Abdou’s heartbreaks and maltreatments of his wives eventually killed one of them; Soumana. From the soliloquy of M’am, soumana died with her dreams unrealized. Beyala, in this soliloquy of M’am reveals the negative impact of the toxic masculinity that Abdou practices and exacts upon his wives. Beyala is antagonistic of Hegemonic Masculinity. Through M’am’s soliloquies that dots *Le petit prince de Belleville* and *Maman a un Amant*, Beyala was able to spotlight the negative effects of toxic masculinity to the women folk. (*Maman a un*, p. 171-172).

The fear of exposing the home front to embarrassment and ridicule has made many suffering women silent about their oppressive husbands. They rather remain silent in unhealthy relationships, than wash the family’s dirty linen outside the home. Beyala caught this in the following statement of M’am:

Écoute, a commencé M’am en roulant les yeux. Il y a des choses qu’il faut répéter à personne. A personne, tu m’entends? Chez les Blancs, le linge sale se lave en famille. On peut en faire autant et sauver les apparences-Tu comprends? (*Maman a un*, p. 142)

Listen, began M’am rolling her eyes. There are things you should not repeat to anyone. Anyone, do you understand me? Among the whites, dirty linen is washed at home. One can do the same and save one’s face-Do you understand?
(Translation mine)

M’am accepts her lot and the nature of her husband. She knows that he is a womaniser, and she remains in the relationship. She negotiates the terms of Abdou’s continuance as her husband. She and Abdou decide to keep secret what happened during the holiday at Pompidou in France. They make the children also keep the secret of M’am’s infidelity and Abdou’s jealousy.

Abdou’s making up with his comeback wife M’am, and her accepting to make up illustrates the complexities of male-female relationships. The mystery of the oppressed woman that

gives her oppressor a second chance is depicted in the way Abdou and M'am settled their differences and came back together again. Even little Loukoum could not understand it (*Maman a un*, p. 140-141, 292-298). Some have called it the Stockholm syndrome, where the abducted, oppressed or imprisoned identifies and sympathise with the abductors. While the radical feminists like Madame Saddock (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 84-85) would recommend that M'am leaves Abdou, complementarists argue that men complement women and both are meant for each other. The womanists' complementarity proffers solution to the male-female conflict in relationships. For the complementarist, reconciliation is the best course of action (Adebayo, 2015:1).

Beyala pursues the challenge of patriarchy further on the girl-woman's right to education.

M'am asks Aminata a pertinent question:

-Alors pourquoi que j'aurais pas le droit d'apprendre à lire et à écrire comme tout le monde?

-C'est dégoûtant, dit Aminata

-Dieu, il pense pas pareil, fait M'am.

-Suis pas si sûre! Ce qu'il veut, çui-là, c'est que tu l'admires... M'est avis qu'il est prétentieux.

-T'es idiote, fait M'am. C'est l'homme qui se met partout et pourrit tout, voilà c'que j'pense.

-Alors, envoie Abdou au diable. Et va apprendre à lire et à écrire si ça te chante. (*Maman a un*, p. 178-179)

-Well, why don't I have the right to learn how to read and write like everyone else?

-It is disgusting, says Aminata. God does not share your view, says M'am.

-I am not so sure! What God wants is for you to admire him.... My opinion is that God is pretentious.

-You are an idiot, says M'am. It is men that impose themselves everywhere and destroys everything, which is my opinion.

-Then, damn Abdou, and go to learn how to read and write if that will make you happy. (Translation mine).

Regardless that Abdou's loss of his job has made him to lose his authority in the home, the last vestige of patriarchal authority left in him, makes him to oppose his wife's literacy. To him, this is the masculine thing to do. He would not watch as M'am strips him totally off the last vestige of power he has over her. Yet, Abdou could not really forbid M'am from getting literate: since she is economically in charge of the home, and sustains it. According

to M'am "Je suis ici chez moi, elle dit. C'est moi qui paye, voilà." (*Maman a un*, p. 178), "I am at home here, she says. I am the one that pays, that is it." (Translation mine)

Beyala criticises men's emotionality, through Aminata, she exposes men's feelings towards women as primordially sexual. Love and romance for men essentially mean sex. She portrays men's emotionality as sham, and lacking depth and genuineness. Aminata perceives that M'am is falling in love with another man, but she suspects the genuineness of the man's emotions towards M'am:

-Pasque première chose: quand un homme veut coucher avec toi, il est capable d'aller chercher les fleurs sur la lune rien que pour toi. Et çui-là m'en a tout l'air. Et deuxième chose; quand une femme change sa façon de s'habiller, c'est qu'y a un homme là-dessous. Me dis pas que t'es retombée amoureuse d'Abdou! (*Maman a un*, p. 179)

-Because foremost: when a man wants to have sex with you, he is capable of going to search for flowers on the moon only for you. This man [Monsieur Tichit] seems the type. Secondly: when a woman changes her manner of dressing, it is because it involves a man. Do not tell me you are falling in love with Abdou again! (Translation mine).

M'am rejects the idea of falling in love with her husband again. She confesses that since she met Monsieur Tichit, she has become a sinner, and asks God for forgiveness. Despite the justification for M'am's adulterous thoughts and actions, she could not easily bring herself to have sex with another man aside her husband Abdou. The patriarchal religious conditioning prevents her. This conditioning favours the man by ensuring that his wife remains faithful, regardless his unfaithfulness to her. This situation in turn frustrates the woman and creates deadness in her towards her husband. M'am admits to Aminata that she has since lost all sexual feelings towards Abdou her husband. Even when he plays with her clitoris (*Maman a un*, p. 180).

Beyala paints a picture of a masculinity permitted to search for love (sex) everywhere, while the woman's femininity is forbidden to search for love, aside that assigned to her in her husband. Her desire is only to her husband, while he is allowed to have desires towards other women. This is one of the privileges attached to the virility of masculinity, as defined

by patriarchy. M'am in her soliloquy laments Abdou's treating her as an object without value. He judges her, forbids her, condemns and insults her at will (*Maman a un*, p. 183-184). It is quite evident in M'am's soliloquies that she searches for true love. She desires earth-moving passion from Abdou. The elusiveness of this passion, despite her incessant efforts perplexes her. M'am's sexuality appears undermined, even scorned by Abdou. Patriarchy forbids her from experiencing such love and sexuality from other men aside her husband. Abdou her husband does not desire her sexually. This is M'am's dilemma. This is the frustration in M'am's emotional trauma. Beyala paints the picture of Abdou, and then juxtaposes this with that of the loving, passionate and sexual Monsieur Tichit his rival. In this, the restriction of femininity by masculinity is purely marginal. Since Abdou no longer caters for his wife's emotional and sexual needs, then it is expected that she searches elsewhere for fulfillment. Yet, patriarchy restricts women from polyandry or adultery; while it is masculine for men to be polygamists and philanderers. Among other prohibitions, adultery is greatly frowned upon in women. Patriarchy conditions women, according to Loukoum "Les femmes doivent rester dignement à la maison, et faire bouillir la marmite." (*Maman a un*, p. 185), "Women must remain dignifiably at home, and make the pot boil." (Translation mine).

M'am's escapades make the round in Belleville, and the rumours of her having a lover circulates the Islamic community (*Maman a un*, p. 185). The patriarchal community of Belleville condemns M'am for her extramarital affair. The men took sides with Abdou her husband. They call M'am Jezebel and Lucifer and accuse her of infecting the womenfolk and girls with her sin of adultery (*Maman a un*, p. 186). This is the same society that is blind to Abdou's philandering with prostitutes and other women. The same society that permits Kouam's adultery against his wife Mathilda. The same society that allows married men to patronise Monsieur Kaba's prostitutes publicly. Yet, the mere rumour that M'am has a lover brings down severe condemnation and judgement upon her, because she is a woman. The hegemony of patriarchy is quite evident in Beyala's illustration.

Feminists in their attempt to fight for the equality of the sexes, encourage women to take the same liberties and privileges men take in the society. This often meets with stiff

opposition and condemnation from patriarchal people. Such opposition and condemnation is shown against M'am's effrontery and rebellion against patriarchal norms. There is a solidarity in patriarchy which is seen in the manner the men of Belleville rallied around Abdou. Monsieur Kaba offered a prayer:

- Seigneur, aidez notre frère Abdou Traoré à sortir de cette épreuve.
- Inch Allah! répond en chœur l'assistance.
- Aidez-le à retrouver sa dignité perdue.
- Inch Allah!
- Aidez cette femme à retrouver son mari, afin qu'elle vive selon vos lois.
- Inch Allah!
- Protégez tous les Nègres de Belleville qui ont des problèmes avec leurs femmes. (*Maman a un*, p. 186)
- Lord, help our brother Abdou Traoré to come out of this trial.
- Inch Allah! answers the audience in chorus.
- Help him to recover his lost dignity.
- Inch Allah!
- Help this woman to recover her husband, in order to live according to your laws.
- Inch Allah!
- Protect all the Negroes of Belleville that have problems with their wives. (Translation mine).

When M'am has an affair, her husband is perceived as losing dignity as a man. His masculinity is threatened, and he is seen as going through trials. When Abdou cheats on his wife M'am, society approves and watches. In patriarchy, a man is allowed as many lovers as possible. This is attached to the validity of his masculinity. It is a test of sort of his true masculinity. Yet, a good woman stays faithful to her husband. She is not allowed to seek lovers like her husband. It is this double standard of masculinity, supported by patriarchy that feminists protest. Feminists like Beyala combats what is seen as patriarchal hypocrisies. Men commit the same crime they punish in women. So, Belleville as a patriarchal and hegemonic community shows solidarity towards Abdou against his wife's love affair with Monsieur Tichit (*Maman a un*, p. 185-193). The men of Belleville even went as far as declaring all women to be prostitutes and without dignity (*Maman a un*, p. 188).

5.1.2 Feminist activism against Hegemonic Masculinity

In the English translation of *Le petit prince de Belleville*, Marjolijn de Jager describes Madame Saddock as a 'ballbreaker': a sexually violent woman who shatters the confidence of men (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 79). Madame Saddock is a protégé of the first order of the women liberation groups. She is an activist for women's emancipation and proclaims women revolution movements. Feminism as observed in Abdou's and young Loukoum's assessments in both novels, is a successful ideology among the whites. Blacks generally finds some of the tenets of radical feminism suspicious and impracticable among the more communal and patriarchal African populace (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 84-86, 104,115-118, *Maman a un*, p. 186-191). Even some African women see radical feminism as an attempt to destroy the notion of marriage and the home. They do not see it as African. M'am at first contended with the feminist views of Madame Saddock and Soumana. She believes in an all-wise God who apportions his creatures their lot as he sees fit. She stood her ground on the importance of patriarchal traditions and observed them. Loukoum's comments about Madame Saddock's attempts at recruiting his foster mothers affirm the attitude of Africans towards feminism:

Madame Saddock, comme indiqué rien qu'à la voir, on sent que c'est une casse-couilles de premier plan et que d'ailleurs elle sent pas la rose quoiqu'elle soye la femme la plus parfumée de Belleville. C'est vrai, quoi! Ou'est-c' qu'elle a à vouloir prophétiser la bonne révolution féminine qui a fait beaucoup de bien ici en France et qui est une catastrophe naturelle chez les immigrés. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 115).

Eventually, M'am abandons faith and traditions, defies her husband and choses a white man lover. Most of Belleville including the women rejected her and treated her as invisible. Even Abdou her husband was shocked that she abandoned traditions (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 84-86, 116-118, 165-168, *Maman a un*, p. 185-186, 245, 268-269, 280).

M'am's soliloquies give insight to what she is going through. In them she shares with women her most intimate pain, confusion, anger, frustration and resolutions. She intimates women about her strength, her coping skills and perceptions. Beyala employs this powerful heroine of *Le petit prince de Belleville* and *Maman a un Amant* to project her feminist views

and persuasions. Though, M'am appears a victim of patriarchal indoctrination and oppression in the first novel, yet towards the end of that novel and the sequel, she appears a very strong feminist voice against women's oppression and inequalities against women. She single-handedly becomes economically empowered, and desires to be literate to her husband's chagrin and fear (*Maman a un*, p. 9, 15, 173-176, 194).

The gender experiences of black women are different from that of European or American women. Response to the general feminist ideals is somewhat slow, since African women's situation of injustices and oppressions from men differs somewhat to that of white women. These differences have given birth to the varieties of feminism we see among the blacks in diaspora and in Africa. Crenshaw (1989) identifies sex, class and race as peculiarities of black women that necessitate a different gender construct. These in turn theorise their feminism differently. Loukoum compares the realities of oppression of French women with that of his father's wives, and he submits his father's usual quip "Enfin, comme il dit mon papa, avec les femmes, on sait jamais..." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 115), "Well, as my dad says, with women you never know..." (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 79). The saying is a popular one about women. It is commonly used in conversations and employed in various literary works such as those of James Hadley Chase. This saying for Loukoum suggests the mysterious and enigmatic nature of women, rather than a sexist assertion about women.

Madame Saddock entices the women with gifts. Since she would be considered a bad influence on Abdou's wives; she comes to the house only when Abdou is away from home. She avoids unpleasant confrontations with Abdou. As a true feminist crusader and activist, she is determined to recruit Abdou's wives into her feminist organisations.

The very representation of the character of Madame Saddock is symbolical. She lurks around the house to woo the women, like a rival to Abdou, she whistles in a man's fashion (with two fingers in the mouth) to signal the women, when she comes in, she sits on Abdou's armchair of all the chairs in the house. This is significant of how feminist ideologies steps into the home and takes over the man's position, albeit defiantly and completely. According to Loukoum, Madame Saddock "explique aux femmes leurs droits et tout le-tartouine-bidune-pour-femme-mal-baisée" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 116), "explains to the women what

rights they have, and the whole great tale-for-women-who-don't-get-laid-enough" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 79). This appears a sexist assumption about feminists. The general assumption that when a woman turns feminist, it means sex for her is not good enough. The man in her life is not manly enough to satisfy her sexual desires and fantasies.

As payback for his infidelities and cruelty towards her in *Le petit prince de Belleville*, Abdou's wife Maryam Traoré, commonly called M'am engages in a scandalous extramarital affair (*Maman a un*, p. 8). Here Beyala depicts the classic women's payback to men as encouraged in radical feminist writings. M'am also expresses her sexual liberty by having a lover beside her husband. This action stirs up sensations among the black tribes living in Belleville. It was not expected of an African woman, talk less an honourable Muslim wife. M'am's action was unbelievable and audacious. For a woman to have the guts in such patriarchal communities to defy traditions and religion was an aberration. Aside their exclamations of *Khaie! Khaie! Khaie! Walaie!* (*Maman a un*, p. 9) and surprised gestures, the society has to understand and move on without any dire consequence to M'am's infidelity. This appears to be Beyala's prescription in such instances of women's infidelity to men. Men would have to understand and move on.

In M'am's soliloquy, it is evident that patriarchy is the only thing that stands between her happiness in the arms of her lover and her life of regret with Abdou. She explains how her adventure with her lover into eroticism opens her to a new found life of joy and rebirth. Yet, her voice of patriarchal indoctrination tells her it is wrong for her to cheat on her husband (even if he was the first to cheat on her);

-Que faire, l'Amie? Ces voies du praticable me sont interdites. J'ai des responsabilités, j'ai des enfants. Que faire, l'Amie? J'ai des questions, comment concilier ma vie avec Abdou et celle de mon amour? (*Maman a un*, p. 224)

-What should I do, friend? I am forbidden from practicing these ways. I have children. What should I do, friend? I have questions, how do I reconcile my life with Abdou and that of my love? (Translation mine)

Finally, she describes her relationship with her lover Monsieur Tichit as 'Rencontre interdite' which is 'Forbidden love affair'. Patriarchy puts the woman in emotional

dilemma. She can not stay with her abusive husband and she cannot leave with her new found lover (*Maman a un*, p. 223-224). It is unmasculine of a man to lose a woman to another man. This is the mentality in the patriarchal society of Abdou. Already he is being mocked by the populace of Belleville (*Maman a un*, p. 185-194). The same way Kouam is being mocked when his wife left him to be with another woman (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 211, *Maman a un*, p. 187). Patriarchy is rigged in such a way that it protects the masculinity of the man. A man's dignity, respect and honour are tied to his masculinity. While Hegemonic Masculinity exists to service and maintain patriarchy, patriarchy in turn protects Hegemonic Masculinity. This is why the men of Belleville rallied round Abdou, and condemn his wife M'am.

What M'am is not able to do in reaction to Abdou's infidelities, Madame Gisèle Vieilledent succeeded in doing to curb her husband Monsieur Bernard Vieilledent. She assaulted her husband physically right before his mistress. She called his mistress "Putain! Cretine!", "Whore! Moron!" and called him "Salaud! Vaurien! Ordures!", "Bastard! Good-for-nothing! Garbage!" She causes a scene, and attracted the intervention of a policeman (*Maman a un*, p. 106-107). Prior to her arrival, Marguerite her husband's mistress was already demanding that Monsieur Vieilledent divorces his wife and marries her "Bon, dans ce cas, t'as qu'à dire à ta bonne femme, que tu veux divorcer. Voilà!" (*Maman a un*, p. 106). "Good, in this case, all you have to do is to tell your kind wife, that you want to divorce. There you are!" (Translation mine).

Women are usually accomplices to men's infidelities. It takes two it is said to tango. Beyala depicts another scenario and reaction to marital unfaithfulness. In this case; the man is arrested in the act. In this case, the mistress goads the philanderer on. In all these, Abdou encourages the women's public fight. He told Monsieur Vieilledent that he should be proud that women are fighting over him "Vous devez être fier!" (*Maman a un*, p. 107), "You should be proud!" (Translation mine). Hegemonic society supports men's sexual infidelities as evidence of masculinity and male virility. This mentality is seen in the way the men encouraged both women to fight over Monsieur Vieilledent.

Les hommes au comptoir lèvent les yeux au ciel, excédés.
Des spectateurs rient et encouragent les combattantes.
Caresses-y-lui la chatte! Crie papa. (*Maman a un*, p. 106)
The men at the counter lift their eyes to the sky exasperated.
The spectators laugh and encourage the brawlers. Give her
one! Cries father. (Translation mine).

Women are no angels in Beyala's description. Marco the Barman narrates how his Cousin Michel's wife sleeps with his superior (*Maman a un*, p. 108). Beyala in fairness sometimes balances the narratives. Despite her exoneration of women from men's marital unfaithfulness, she shifts her literary lense to focus also on the imperfections of the womenfolk. These impefections are not enough excuses for men's philandering, but the masculinist society expects women to be subservient nevertheless. Women too have their share of the bad and the ugly, not just the good part in their relationships that turn sour. In the bid to protest men's unfaithfulness, women have become shameless prostitutes, often outdoing the men in marital infidelity and gaining widespread popularity for their adultery. Since Abdou lost his job and his power in the home, M'am has been more audacious and overt in her defiance. Her lover Monsieur Tichit follows her around, right before her husband (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 244-248, *Maman a un*, p. 71-72, 86, 94, and 109). As retaliatory of his wife's defiance, Abdou begins to flirt with Marguerite the prostitute. This is a form of compromise between the radical feminism of M'am and Abdou's hegemonic masculinist tendencies.

Abdou could no longer pretend that his wife's open flirtation with another man is nothing to him. In the night, while the children slept, he makes this known to M'am his wife: "Parfaitement! Tu penses que je suis aveugle, que j'vois rien, c'est ça? J'ai tout vu! Je vois tout! Tout! (*Maman a un*, p. 117), "Absolutely! You think that I am blind, that I see nothing, is that it? I have seen it all! I see it all! All! (Translation mine). In her defense, M'am accuses Abdou of being responsible for whatever she has become. She reminds him of his mal-treatments:

Tu l'as fait pendant des années, elle dit. Plus de vingt ans ça a duré. Aujourd'hui, c'est fini! D'ailleurs, la prison où tu veux m'enfermer, c'est toi qui pourriras dedans. (*Maman a un*, p. 118)

You did it [adultery] for years, she said. It lasted for more than twenty years. Today, it is finished! Besides, the prison that you want to lock me in, you are the one who will rot inside. (Translation mine)

The operation of Hegemonic Masculinity does not allow for emotional or sexual freedom of women; as this could jeopardize societal order and balance. Beyala in her male representations illustrates this well. Yet, she juxtaposes this tyranny of Hegemonic Masculinity with rebellious femininity bordering on extreme feminism. Such as is seen in Aminata, Soumana, Esther and eventually M'am. Already, the white female characters like Madame Saddock, Madame Trauchessec, Madame Vieilledent and Madame Laforêt rule their home and their husbands without opposition (*Le Petit Prince*, p. *Maman a un*, p. 106-107, 131, 83-85, 36).

Enlightening simple, uneducated women like M'am and Soumana is not an easy task for feminists. Madame Saddock sometimes gets angry out of frustration (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 117). This is symbolic of the challenges often faced by feminists during drives to enlighten or recruit members for their causes.

Madame Saddock incites Abdou's wives to rebel against his oppression. Little did she know that African marriages are founded on patriarchal notions so deep, its difficult to shake off. Madame Saddock, like most white extreme feminists that preach total and absolute rejection of men by women, do not understand the psychology of the Africans. This is where womanism differs. This is the turning point between the tolerant complementarity of womanism and absolute male rejection of radical feminism (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 116-118). Madame Saddock should have informed herself about African male-female relationships before being agitated misguidedly:

Et Madame Saddock se chagrine. Elle crie: -A votre place, j'irais là, je ferais ci, je ferais ça. Et justement, elle n'est pas à leur place, elle n'a pas à s'occuper de c'qui la regarde pas. Les mariages en Afrique, elle sait pas c'que c'est. Elle comprend rien à notre système de vie. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 117)

And Madame Saddock frets. She yells: 'In your place I'd go here, I'd do this, I'd do that'. That's just it, though, she isn't

in their place, she has no business sticking her nose in what's theirs. African marriages-she doesn't have a clue what they're all about. She doesn't understand the first thing about the way we live. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 80).

Aside his unfaithfulness to his wives, there was no real evidence of domestic violence or physical aggression against his wives. Loukoum's account of his father's behaviour towards his wives is a positive one. He testifies before Madame Saddock that it is well with the women in Abdou's home and there was no reason for feminist actions against him (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 115-118,135,152-153). Loukoum has been an unbiased, innocent, neutral and truthful voice of the narrative. Beyala uses him to express a pure and child-like perspective, untainted with the adult and patriarchal coloration. If Abdou is bad outrightly and mean towards his wives Loukoum would have with the same voice he narrates his father's unfaithfulness, narrates his aggressive actions if any.

Abdou, it seems was a man of peace, though patriarchal. He brokers peace in his community and in his home (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 116-117,146-148). Yet, he advises Kouam to beat his wife back to her senses. He claims the only thing that works with women is to beat them, then have sex with them (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 94). But again, when Aminata gets pregnant, Abdou gives her a house and a lavish sum of hundred thousand French Francs for her upkeep. Yet, Aminata abandoned Loukoum, who Abdou cares for with M'am (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 127). Sometimes, Beyala shows aspects of men that appear noble, yet against the sheer weight of the negatives, these good aspects are merely drops in the ocean of the negatives.

Loukoum's voice of patriarchal education assesses madame Saddock's manner of talking to a woman, her attitude in balancing a stick of cigarette in her mouth at the same time, and he condemns the act as embarrassing and not obtainable among the more patriarchal black societies. Mathilda is branded a whore for the same mannerism (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-81, 93, 104). Women smoking is rife in Beyala's literatures. It is her brand of liberality, an emblem of the emancipated woman, especially among Africans who frown at such. Aïssatou in *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine* also smokes.

Sometimes womanist streaks are noticed in Beyala's writings. Often, she appears not to be a radical feminist after all. As a feminist character, Soumana's desire for freedom and

liberality is so much that it permeates her whole essence and shakes even her traditional beliefs. She reveals to Madame Saddock that her husband Abdou possesses pornographic magazines. Against Abdou's restrictions she uses the vulgar word 'merde' (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 118) translated 'shit' or 'fuck'. Abdou prohibits the use of such vulgar words in the home. He bans them from using such words because it is not befitting of good Muslim women. In this analogy, Beyala's illustration of the extent of patriarchal power even in the use of women's language is vivid. While men have freedom to employ whatever vocabulary they please, women could not.

Beyala's activism against men and all that makes them feel like men is total. Her post-modernist use of language is legendary. Her books often employ words that are termed indecent and transgressive (Adesanmi, 2015: p.203-219).

M'am excuses Loukoum's indignance before Madame Saddock, thereby affirming her religious patriarchal beliefs and faith in an all-knowing God (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 115-118). Loukoum keeps these confrontations and visitations of Madame Saddock away from his father Abdou, with the premonition of a dread to come upon the household eventually when Abdou finds out. M'am is always conscious of Abdou's timing and her absence from the home wherever she is (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 18), she does not want her husband to come home and meet her absent. Beyala reveals this mentality in patriarchal women subtly. She exposes the need of patriarchal women to always please their husbands and avoid incurring their wrath (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 27-28, 32-33, 42-43, 52, 54, 60-62, 79-81). It is a kind of enslavement. Patriarchy places restrictions on the woman's movement, language, desire, thoughts, and all her senses and faculties are under strict monitoring by the man. She portrays, this as a kind of bondage for the woman.

Madame Saddock typifies the ever troublesome militant feminist activist, who is always rearing for a fight with patriarchal systems and masculine order of things. She threatens to be problematic for Abdou. Madame Saddock delivers on her threat and Abdou is arrested and taken away from false registration of births. As symbolic of the radical feminist ideologies, Madame Saddock, in her militant approach owns up to reporting Abdou's false registration of births. In her words, she says she does this for Abdou's wives, because Abdou is a mean man (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 165-168).

Madame Saddock uses the word bastard to describe Abdou and qualify his behavior towards his wives. This is an admission by Beyala that indeed men could be bastards in the connotative sense of the word. Ironically, M'am did not appreciate what Madame Saddock did. She throws her out of her home. Being symbolical of the patriarchal system, M'am acts in accordance to the anti-male rejection policy of the more liberal womanism.

Faced with the problem of feminist rebellion, Beyala represents men as perplexed. She represents men's efforts to fight back as futile. It is a lampoon of a sort that men are incapable of quashing the feminist fire burning in their wives and mistresses. She presents men as weak against the new woman; who has become the new Sheriff in town. She asks men "Où es-tu?" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 170), "Where are you?" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 117). Men are confused and lost in the midst of these feminist battles and attacks against their hegemonic supremacy and authority.

M'am begins to leave the home at will. She begins to dress indecently. She also starts to tell her husband that his underpants and feet smell badly, that his nails are black. Abdou says nothing to all these affronts; rather he does as she commands for peace to reign in the home (*Maman a un*, p. 225). Loukoum begins to see his father become a ghost of his former self under the reign of his foster mother M'am:

-Il s'est transformé en maîtresse de maison pour faire régner la bonne humeur. Il lave la vaisselle, il torche les mômes. Il fait la cuisine et c'est tellement sa nature que la cuisine est vraiment bonne. Et puis il n'arrête plus de manger. (*Maman a un*, p. 225)

-He turned himself into a housewife to allow peace to reign. He washes the dishes, cleans the kids. He cooks and his cooking is by his nature really good. And then, he no longer stops eating. (Translation mine)

Beyala represents men as dependent on employment for empowerment. She depicts men as powerless without their jobs. By exposing Abdou's vulnerability due to his job loss, and M'am's rise to ascendancy via her economic empowerment, Beyala reveals to the women folk that men would possess no authority over women, if women are independent and empowered. This is the glaring didactic of Beyala's portrayal of a vanquished hegemonic masculinist. From Beyala's illustration, she makes it evident that the most domineering and oppressive Hegemonic Masculinity is nothing without economic backing. Therefore,

women should use this knowledge to defeat every toxic and oppressive masculinity in their lives.

Beyala, like most feminists, know this for a fact that men are not ready to fold their arms and allow radical feminists to unseat them from their position of patriarchal authority. Men will not easily cede their patriarchal dominion to feminists. They will not go down without a fight. This is why the self-examinations and interrogations of the soliloquist is almost endless. Abdou in his musings challenges the authority of women to behave so treacherously against men. He queries man's docility and passivity in such dangerous and crucial matters. He warns men of the danger of allowing too much independence and freedom in the woman. He reveals hidden rage, jealousy and grudges that man bears against his errant wife. He swallows his pride (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 170-171).

The study reveals also that although Hegemonic Masculinity is the most dominant gender identity in any given society, yet empowered femininity, through feminism can overthrow and even defeat Hegemonic Masculinity. In the same vein, toxic masculinity is better engaged through women's empowerment. The study shows that male-female relationships thrive when there is consideration and mutual love between the sexes.

In *Maman a un Amant*, M'am like Abdou in *Le petit prince de Beleville* also engages in soliloquies that exposes and engages the patriarchal order of things. Beyala uses this character to interrogate the rights of men over women. She challenges the Lordship of men over women. In the same breath, she narrates the dynamics of women's inferiority to men:

Et dans cet ordre préétabli que dispense l'infériorité, je revois: les hommes avancer oet reculer, les femmes s'entasser dans des fosses communes, la mort élargir son royaume, le mâle proclamer sa vérité haut et fort. (*Maman a un*, p. 27)

And in this pre-established order [patriarchy] that excuses inferiority, I see again: Men advance and regress, women pile up in common graves, death enlarges his kingdom, and Male proclaims his truth loud and clear. (Translation mine).

From this excerpt, Beyala as usual blames men for the lot of women. Men build and enlarge their kingdom on the corpses of women. Men's advancement and regression are at women's

expense. Women are the victims of men's civilisation. She went on through the character M'am to interrogate the creation of the system that enslaves. She concludes that "L'égalité des sexes, c'est du domaine de l'abstrait" (*Maman a un*, p. 28), "The equality of the sexes, is from the abstract domain" (Translation mine). For Beyala, gender equality is an abstraction. Yet women continue to suffer in the hands of oppressive patriarchal men (*Maman a un*, p. 27-29).

Beyala ascribes that it is a man's world, but her methodology of presentation of her heroines suggests that this man's world is ruled by women. Her heroines like M'am, Ateba, Aïssatou, Mégri and Tanga overturn the patriarchal order. They vanquished their male antagonists and subsist, if not thrive under patriarchal injustices. The antagonist male characters Beyala creates as villains that battle her protagonist female characters, are also victims of paybacks and sweet feminist vengeance. Aïssatou lures Bolobolo into an unwanted relationship (Beyala, 2000: 95-100, 124-127, 135-136). M'am also transforms Abdou into her lap dog (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 245-246, *Maman a un*, p. 173-176, 220-221). Beyala's female characters are not helpless against hegemonic show of masculinity by severely patriarchal men.

Aminata's testimony that M'am is actually happy and successful, though not married challenges the very foundation of Loukoum's patriarchal teachings (*Maman a un*, p. 293-285). Beyala's feminist persuasion is visible in this illustration. Radical feminist principles do not necessarily associate a woman's happiness with being married. The argument is that a woman can be happy outside marriage. Extreme or radical feminism is anti-marriage and anti-masculinity. It preaches absolute rejection of men (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 54-55, 116-118, and 122-123). It does not emphasise patriarchal institutions such as marriage and religion. It undermines institutions that enslave women through oppressive rules or laws. Aminata's reportage of M'am's happiness outside her oppressive marriage is to correct and discard the patriarchal notion, that a woman is nothing if not married. Beyala faults the restrictive principles of tradition and religion, which limits women. She seems to tell women to go in search of whatever makes them happy. It is an encouragement of women to get out of toxic relationships with men, and find happiness in whatever their heart desires.

Often times in the selected novels, Beyala portrays broken homes with men as the malefactors. Men's masculinity is expressed in their superiority complexes, their egocentrism, their highhandedness and plain wickedness in oppressing the weaker vessels: women. Feminist works, such as those of Beyala, are rife with this narrative of men's show of toxic and tyrannical masculinity. Yet, a closer look at the female characters in feminist works reveals that women are no angels either, and that men are not always the cause of these conflicts in the home. Sometimes women like Aminata, Caroline and Esther give up their children and their homes without the men being culpable. These women abandon their children and go in search of careers, fortune and personal ambitions. Beyala's finger pointing appears more on the side of the men, while women are equally problematic in male-female relationships.

The author's portrayal of men as the usual suspect and perpetual devils and criminals is biased. Since there exist in her novels women worse than some male characters she depicts. A balance of culpability of the sexes is largely missing in her male representations. Her heroines are vengeful and merciless in their vengeance. Abdou's ex-wife Aminata forms an alliance with M'am his current wife. They inspire each other to rebel against Abdou. Meanwhile, Abdou has become penitent, realising his faults. He has become more loving, supportive and understanding with M'am his wife. His actions were waved aside as merely results of his falling from grace and losing power via his job loss.

5.2 Masculine protest: female masculinity of Beyala's Heroines

Brainyquote (2019) quoted Corita Kent as saying that "Women's liberation is the liberation of the feminine in the man and the masculine in the woman." This quote supports Freudian psychoanalysis on sexuality and the parallelism of both masculinity and femininity: the dynamics of which produces Oedipus and Electra complexes. The quote also affirms Complicit Masculinity's tendencies towards the female, and the feminisation of Subordinate Masculinity of homosexuals by Connell. Equally the concepts of masculine protests and the theory of female masculinity support Kent (Sumner, 1920: p. 5-7, Connell, 2005: p. 39-42, 79-80, 109-112, 210-211).

The hegemonic masculinist perceives male-female relationships from the power and dominance perspective. The man is said to be masculine when he is dominating, and the woman is feminine when she is submitting to the man in the relationship. Abdou could not assert his dominance as easily as he used to, since he lost his job and lost his authority. M'am develops a masculine protest tendency since she became breadwinner in the home. This in turn makes her more defiant and more independent of her husband Abdou. She plans the trip to the country to relax and have fun enjoying some of her hard earned money. Now that she makes her own money. She can improve her quality of life. She decides that religious or traditional limitations would not stop her from enjoying her life. So, she dances with her lover before her husband with impunity. Abdou gets angry and leaves the party, not able to watch or bear her impudence (*Maman a un*, p. 86).

Patriarchal men find it an aberration for women to act as men. Women are not allowed to do what men do, neither are men allowed to behave like women. M'am and other women are not allowed to rebel against or disobey patriarchal laws. Monsieur Kaba's lamentation on this is clear:

-Seigneur, nos femmes travaillent! Elles nous larguent! Elles vont apprendre à lire! Elles laissent les mômes seuls! Elles se peignent le visage comme c'est pas permis! Où va-t-on?
(*Maman a un*, p. 191).

-Lord, our wives work. They get rid of us! They go to learn how to read! They leave the children unattended! They paint their faces like it is not permitted! Where are we heading to?
(Translation mine)

To this lamentation, Esther the prostitute replies that all men are the same. She accuses men of being capable of putting chastity belts on women, if permitted. Monsieur Kaba shuts her up viciously and accused women of being responsible for all the vices in the society (*Maman a un*, p. 191). This exchange between pimp and prostitute portrays the total disregard of Hegemonic men for women, especially those like Esther the prostitute. Police brutality on women also is part of the hegemonic violence women are subject to. Rosette was beaten up. Monsieur Kaba justifies it. Rosette merits been beaten, because she slapped a cop. Kaba could not even protect the prostitutes under him from being molested (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 108). Monsieur Mohammed ben Sallah is Aminata's pimp who handles a prostitution racket.

He is a typical Beyalian representation of men as grotesque, ugly and villainous. A dirty and violent troublemaker. He is portrayed as an odiously evil man, who points a gun at a woman and a child (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 217-220).

Masculine protest is seen boldly in the way M'am comports herself in the home since her transformation. Traits of masculinity such as dominion, authority and confidence is seen in her direction and ruling of her home. Her utter show of power over her destiny and circumstances, suppresses her husband. She dictates where the family would have its vacation, and starts an affair in the presence of her husband. She Mets out the same treatment to Abdou that he metted to her. Her acquired female masculinity appears to be hegemonic too in its viciousness and callousness.

M'am's decision to become literate perplexed Abdou. Since he is without a job, and authority in the home, there was nothing he could do but to protest mildly. Since Abdou's emasculation, M'am calls the shot in the home. She announces to the children that Abdou would do the cooking while she is away in school. Unlike Abdou, who would have rained brimstone and hail and put M'am in her place immediately, he could do nothing but plead with his wife (*Maman a un*, p. 173-174). Abdou, having no power over his wife any longer, discouraged her from getting literate and empowered. He told her that she is black and old, therefore unemployable even as a prostitute.

Since M'am became financially empowered, she becomes the breadwinner of the home. She also becomes more audacious, confrontational and assertive. She talks back to Abdou and tells him to shut up. She is confident nothing would dissuade her from being literate. Abdou is jittery and scared of the implications of his wife being literate, seeing she is already financially independent.

-Boucle-la, dit M'am, je suis pas ta mère. Là-dessus, papa pousse un drôle de gémissement. On dirait la mort qui approche, et que même Allah ne pourrait pas l'arrêter.
-Dire que j'ai vécu pendant vingt-deux ans avec une folle, il murmure.
-T'as qu'à divorcer, fait M'am sans se démonter. (*Maman a un*, p. 175)

-Shut up, says M'am, I am not your mother. With that, papa groans funnily. One would say that death approaches, and that not even Allah could stop it.
-To say that I have been living for twenty-two years with a mad woman, he murmurs.
-All you have to do is to divorce, says M'am without being moved (Translation mine)

M'am exhibited female masculinity by usurping her husband to take over his position as the man in the home. This is seen plainly in the way Abdou submits to his wife's audacity before his nephew Kouam. This same nephew he advised to beat some sense into his wife Mathilda (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 94). Abdou has become so subdued by M'am that he could not even cry out for help when she oppresses and defies him brazenly. He now sings the praise of the wife he scorned and battered. He tells Kouam that M'am is the best thing that ever happened to him and she could not hurt a fly. He admits that he was immature in not seeing these qualities in his wife from the beginning, but now he acknowledges freely that his wife's authority in the home must increase, while his decreases (*Maman a un*, p. 177).

The dialogue between Abdou and Kouam is testatorial to the desired transformation feminists expects from men, who have been whipped into their proper place by vicistitudes and Karma. Abdou is reaping what he sows and he could not even complain. He could only accept the fact that he has lost totally to the woman he once oppressed and scorned. This is the feminists' Holy Grail; that men come to a realisation of their sins against women, and submit humbly in penitence to women's rule and lordship. That women rise to a level of dominion over men. Beyala often come to this retributive ending in her male-female conflict resolutions.

Marriage is a fate that joins men with women (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 54-55). But Beyala's women like Soumana, Mathilda, Aminata and Ateba are stubborn against the onslaught of negative relationships. Unlike M'am and Aïssatou, the former are activist and militant in nature. They stand against the insolence and oppression of women by men. This anti-masculinist tendency to fight back, control their own lives and determine their fate, has

made these particular heroines of Beyala, some of the most popular feminist voices against women's subjugation.

Women are not considered real people by arrogant masculinist like Abdou. Women are like non-existent spineless ghosts, with nothing to say about their lot (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 208). Patriarchy sees prostitutes like Aminata as worthless and without a voice to be heard or considered. The hypocrisy of Hegemonic Masculinity is the way it condemns prostitutes, and yet its hegemonic adherents patronize prostitutes. Abdou and all the men of Belleville are clients of Monsieur Kaba's prostitutes. Abdou desires to sleep with his ex-girlfriend of ten years ago. Despite his two wives and Esther the prostitute that is pregnant for him, Abdou still lusts after Aminata Loukoum's biological mother.

Despite her being his girlfriend cum lover of ten years ago, who abandons their child for him and leaves, Abdou's authoritative nature still sees her as if she is his wife. He relates to her as if a husband to a wife. He desires her and attempts to order her around, as he does both of his wives. Aminata is too independent to comply or submit to his demands or obey his rules. This surprises patriarchal men present and appears an abomination to them. After all, a woman that gets pregnant for one is as good as one's wife. In the following dialogue with Aminata, all is revealed:

Il y a des comportements que j' tolère pas sous mon toit. Et le voilà reparti: <<ma femme ne doit pas faire ci, ma femme ne doit pas faire ça...Je laisse jamais ma femme faire ça. >>

Aminata pouffe, puis elle edit avec un large sourire: Eh ben, tant mieux pour toi que je suis pas ta femme. Tout le monde la regarde encore, on dirait qu'elle menace le monde avec des éclairs, des inondations, des tremblements de terre.

Excusez-moi, elle dit toujours en pouffant. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 208-209)

There's some conduct I do not tolerate under my roof.' And off he goes:

'My wife shall not do this, my wife must not do that.... I never let my wife do this...Aminata snorts, then she says with a big smile.

'Well then, lucky for you I'm not your wife. Everyone looks at her again, you'd think she was threatening the world with

lighting, floods and earthquakes. 'Excuse me', she says, still sniggering with laughter'. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 145)

Aminata like Esther is defiant of Abdou's hegemonic masculinist and patriarchal dispositions towards women. She rebuffs his commands (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 145, 208-209). This defiance is overlooked by the men present and subsequently both men and women sit down together to eat. In the following statement Loukoum sees this as an aberration, which only is circumstantial: "The women sat down with us [to eat]. It is because of the misfortune. Things are upside down and no one knows who is who any longer" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 146)

In other words, the sitting of the women to eat with the men at the same table usually is a great sign of disrespect to the men. It is seen as an abomination from African patriarchal perspectives. In Achebe's *Things fall apart*, we see a strong depiction of this. Where men sit to eat, women are customarily not allowed to sit and eat with them (Achebe, 1996: p. 50-53, 70-73).

Beyala portrays Aminata as a mannerless, shameless whore, who abandons her child. She is so defiant of men that she does not even bother with etiquettes when she is around them. This is usually the behavior of men and not that of women. Beyala presents her as an indomitable woman, who challenges the patriarchal system at every turn. She upsets the cart by not only dipping her hand into the plate of the oldest male in the whole immigrant community, she takes the biggest piece of fish right off the plate. Monsieur Cérif is not only the oldest, but the spiritual head of the community. Yet, Aminata defies him, Abdou the father of her child and the whole patriarchal African community. All these Loukoum observes and judges as not only mannerless, but odious. Aminata is not a role model, neither is she like M'am, a patriarchal subservient woman. Characters like Aminata dots Beyala's writing. Defiant, shameless and aggressively assertive women, who champions the freedom cause of the feminists. Aminata is a type used often by feminist as a counter to the overbearing males in their narratives. She is disrespectful to the male ego, and contends with patriarchal norms of the society (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 209-210).

Aminata is so confident and defiant that she announces her intentions to take Loukoum away, without consulting any of the men, not even the boy's father Abdou. To this audacity,

Abdou retorts angrily “Faudra d’abord me passer sur le corps.” (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 210), “Over my dead body” (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 146). Ironically, men would often do this in a patriarchal society, yet she does it as a challenge to the authority of the men of Belleville. She assumes the attitude of a man.

Beyala’s women test the strength of their patriarchal tethers. They test to know the reach, strength and extent of their men-imposed limitations. Often times, men remind women that they are at their tether’s end. Abdou invokes the power of paternity bestowed by patriarchy, and forbids Aminata from spending time with her son Loukoum (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 210).

Every oppressed and abused woman has her limit. M’am who has been nothing but angelic and saintly from inception, speaks her mind for the first time. She insults and derides her husband for the very first time. She reaches her limit of the sorrows and sufferings at Abdou’s house and she explodes before all the men:

Et pour c’ qui est de te passer sur le corps, j’ai justement besoin d’un paillason à l’entrée.

-Hein, quoi? Ou’est-ce que tu dis? Les autres restent bouche bée autour du piquenique.

-Que t’es un égoïste, un minable, et qu’il est temps que tu regardes un peu autour de toi, voilà c’que j’dis. Le père bafouille.

-Mais...

-Il n’ya pas de mais. Aminata peut emmener le gosse pour quelques jours. C’est vrai qu’il va me manquer, mais j’ai ma part de malheur dans ce monde pour rire le restant de mes jours.

-L’emmener! Mais tu dérailles!

-Hé là, minute! Fait l’ oncle Kouam.

-Toi, d’abord, la ferme! Si t’avais pas voulu jouer au petit patron avec ta femme, elle t’aurait pas quitté pour une femme.

-C’est pas une vraie femme. Une femme qui se fout de c’que peuvent bien penser les autres...

-Elle est son propre chef, voilà tout, qu’elle dit M’am.

-Ensuite, il baisse, la tête. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 211)

-And as for your [Abdou's] dead body, I actually need a doormat by the front door.
 -What? What's that you're saying? the others remain seated around the picnic, their mouths wide open.
 -That you're self-centered, a washout, and that it's high time you paid attention to what's happening around you, that's what I'm saying.
 Father Splutters.-But...
 -No buts...I've had my share of misery in this world, enough to keep me laughing for the rest of my days.
 -Take him away then! You're talking rubbish.
 -Hey there, just a minute! goes uncle Kouam.
 -You, shut up! If you hadn't been so eager to boss your wife around, she wouldn't have left you for a woman.
 -That's not a true wife. A woman [Mathilda] who doesn't give a shit about what other people might think...
 -She's her own boss, that's all, M'am says. Then he [Kouam] lowers his head (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 147).

M'am has never spoken to her husband or his brother that way in all her life. Now she bares it all out. Beyala supports this kind of lashing out outburst from oppressed women such as M'am. Like other feminists, she sees it as a necessary cry-out against injustices, oppression, suffering and marginalisation of women by men. All the so-called macho-men cower at the tone of an otherwise soft spoken M'am. It is as if the author tells women to let it all out; their pains, anguish and disappointments. She suggests in M'am's outburst, that rather than literally die in silence from heartaches and heartbreaks from men, women should rather speak out against men's atrocities and wickedness.

M'am laughing out in frustration and anger shocks the men present, and Kouam her brother in-law lowers his head in defeat as M'am derides him. M'am wins the bout and loses herself from the bonds of patriarchy and bondage. This is an incitement of women to rebel against the men. Beyala is the author of this incitement. She tells women that men are not so tough; that men can be conquered. She encourages the timid and the patriarchal women to get over their Stockholm syndrome and emancipate themselves from slavery. The following statement of M'am is a direct defiance of all patriarchal men present at the gathering: "Toi, d'abord, la ferme! Si t'avais pas voulu jouer au petit patron avec ta femme, elle t'aurait pas quitté pour une femme." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 211), "You, shut up! If you hadn't been so eager to boss your wife around, she wouldn't have left you for a woman."

(*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 147). The statement is indicting on the male folk, who think they have been men enough for women, just because they provide women with the basic necessities of life. Kouam thinks he has been man enough for Mathilda. He has been patient with her girly tantrums, her indecent dressings and friends, her bad habits and unfaithfulness, yet she leaves him (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 80-81, 93-94, 136-138, and 200-202).

It is embarrassing enough for his wife to leave him, but to leave him for a woman is an outright humiliation of his manhood and masculinity. In essence, Beyala is saying that some women are more masculine in traits than some men. M'am's attack on Kouam was probably borne out of her heartfelt tête-à-tête with Mathilda (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 136-138). Kouam works so hard and so far away from home that he hardly has time for Mathilda's psycho-sexual needs. Eventually, Mathilda sees him as nothing but a millstone around her neck, rather than as a husband. She feels treated as a slave. When she was nominated among the immigrant community of Belleville to seek for the release of the arrested men, Mathilda expects her husband to protect her by objecting to her being exposed. Eventually, she sleeps with the police commissioner as a term of the men's release. Her sexual desire or arousal for her husband dies. Even M'am sees herself more like Abdou's sister or mother, rather than as a wife. This is the extent of the sexual morbidity and frigidity in the marital relationships of these women. Beyala, with these illustrations points out a gaping lacuna in the sexual experiences of these women.

According to Mathilda, Kouam does not give her any pleasure when they engage in sexual activities. In her proper words "J'suis toujours fatiguée et ça m'intéresse plus" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 137), "I'm always tired and that [sex] no longer interests me" (Translation mine). She does not feel anything when Kouam performs sex with her. This incident appears an exhibition of the radical feminists' total rejection of men. The reasons listed here are some of the most common for such rejections, which end up in separations and divorces as seen all over the chosen novels. Characters like Lolita's parents, Monsieur Laforêt, Monsieur Ndongala, L'Inspecteur Antoine, Kouam and Mathilda, and eventually Abdou and M'am. Like M'am and Soumana, Mathilda also feels like killing her husband sometimes. Like Abdou, Kouam hardly touches his wife, yet he sleeps around with other women (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 137-138, 200-203).

Beyala goes on to paint Monsieur Cérif, the oldest and the most spiritual man in the community, as a patriarchal glutton and parasite, who loves money excessively (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 212, Maa, 162-165). From the oldest (Cérif) to the youngest (Loukoum) in the male order, Beyala depicts degenerates, perverts and abusers of women. She portrays men as immoral, arrogant, opinionated and egosttistic, among other anti-masculinist nouns and adjectives.

Abdou got arrested by the French welfare services for lying about the number of his children, and defrauding the government. Hence, the economic situation of the home becomes bad (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 237, 238-239). Abdou is the breadwinner; his arrest exposes his home to hunger. Loukoum and M'am now make bracelets for a living. In a way, Beyala's depiction of this incident is also an admonition to women. Through her portrayal of what becomes of Abdou's family after his arrest, Beyala seems to send a signal to women in such condition. The message in the signal is clear: 'Be up and doing. Do not depend on a man for survival. Get empowered to survive'. This message is seen in the way young girls such as Esther, Aminata, Tatiana, Rosette, Irène and Ateba fend for themselves through prostitution. She appears to mobilise the womenfolk towards total independence from men. Her novels are filled with examples of women fending for themselves however they can, without any male dependence. Women can also be breadwinners. Women can be economically independent of men.

M'am becomes independent and strong. Her business with Loukoum succeeds. When a white man tries to be chauvinistic with her, she puts him in his place nicely. Also, Madame Trauchessec, a white woman accords her the respect of being an entrepreneur (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 239, *Maman a un*, p. 45). M'am as a character finishes off strong and determined. Her metamorphosis from the timid, subservient and obedient woman to the assertive, dominant and no-nonsense woman is complete. She no longer allows men to trample on her or take her for granted. Something in M'am broke. She reaches her elastic limit of torture, suffering and silence and she snaps (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 211, 240-242). Beyala portrays this phenomenon of snapping after reaching the elastic limit of suffering in silence as good, even encourageable. Her illustrations are rife with such situations. Aïssatou reaches her elastic limit with Bolobolo and something in her dies. She no longer loves him nor bothers herself

again about his insufferable male chauvinism and egoism. She declares "...il arrive toujours un moment où la femme doit aimer le mariage plus que le mari." (Beyala, 2000: p. 146), "... there always comes a point when a woman must love the marriage more than the man" (Beyala, 2013: p. 103). Ateba also got to a point where she declares that the only solution to the men problem: is to annihilate all men (Beyala, 1987: p. 88).

Beyala appears to be telling women under male oppression to reach their tethers' end and break free. She encourages them to reach the limit of their suffering and silence. She proffers fighting back as an anti-masculinist strategy to women's freedom. In the character M'am, the author is telling women that the strategy works; rebellion works. Beyala successfully portrays Abdou, Kouam, Monsieur Kaba and almost all the men in the immigrant community of Belleville as pimps, lechers, adulterers, cheats, callous, oppressors and irresponsible fathers and husbands. Through the character Madame Saddock she declares Abdou sentenciously as a bastard. So, he deserves what comes to him at the end. Through Madame Saddock, feminists have successfully punished a 'Male chauvinist pig' like Abdou (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 238-239).

Beyala develops further the anti-patriarchal cum anti-masculinist tendency in the character M'am. She has been accepting and nursing babies from her husband's sexual escapades and adulterous relationships. Abdou gets his mistresses pregnant and the mistresses bring their babies to M'am the legitimate wife, to nurse for them. Aminata as one of them shows up after ten years to claim Loukoum as her child. Soumana, her housemaid turned second wife even accused M'am of hating her children and being jealous of her (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 29, 128-132, 165-166, 178-180).

All these were exacerbated by one of Abdou's mistresses, Esther the prostitute, showing up at M'am's doorstep with Abdou's child. She is audacious enough to bring the responsibility of nursing and nurturing her child to M'am. What Esther did not know of M'am is that she has reached her limit of enduring Abdou's injustices and maltreatment. She has gone through a metamorphosis. She thought M'am was the same weak, insecure and passive woman she was before. Esther did not know that M'am has risen above Abdou's oppression and broken her chains of patriarchal bondage. Soon enough, Esther announces the baby's name to be Abdou junior. At that point, all the anger of the past and the present of Abdou's

maltreatment and unfaithfulness well up inside M'am. She vents her suffering and frustrations on Abdou's mistress Esther, who suggests that M'am adopts her baby (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 240-242).

With this encounter with Esther, M'am rids herself of Abdou's mistresses and his responsibilities, while Abdou remains in custody of the police. She refuses to be anybody's stooge anymore. Beyala brings M'am as a character into a complete metamorphosis. It is like the author gives a privileged insight into the rare processes of the conversion of a patriarchal woman into a feminist fighter. The emancipation of erstwhile docile and obedient M'am from mental slavery and physical bondage is a triumph for feminism. Beyala's incitement of women into such rebellion as illustrated here is definitely an anti-masculinist one.

Abdou gets his freedom from the government but loses his job. He becomes reformed and attempts to reconstruct his Hegemonic Masculinity to become more benign. He joins M'am and Loukoum in their trade. He becomes a broken and penitent man. His patriarchal compatriot on noticing Abdou's unusual submission to his wife asked if it does not disturb him that his wife M'am is now in charge of the home. Abdou replied "Pourquoi que tu veux que ça me dérange? Ça a l'air de lui faire plaisir. Elle a du métier et elle est une bonne maîtresse. J'apprends vite à gérer" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 245), "Why should that bother me? It seems to please her. She knows the business and she's a good teacher. I'm learning to manage quickly" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 172).

Abdou becomes truly humbled and submissive. His experiences teach him the hard way that M'am is worthy of his submission and his love. This is a feminist ending for a story that starts out as masculinist lore. Beyala's moral is clear: it does not pay to be patriarchal. It pays rather to be feminist. Abdou is an example of what happens to men that practice toxic masculinity. Abdou becomes nice, even Loukouam his son testifies to it that he is truly not the same anymore. His pride and arrogance is all gone. He is subdued and his dreams of grandeur are all gone. Abdou becomes a shell of his old self. Abdou even cooks, helps his wife now to do everything and takes her for walks in the park, but the woman is no longer interested. She becomes mechanical, possibly because Abdou is doing lastly what he should have done at first. M'am is not happy that it is calamity that humbles Abdou and

brings him back to her side. After all, he has wasted his prime years, his strength and resources on women of easy virtues. She feels like the one eating the left-overs (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 245-248). M'am becomes the modern woman, emancipated, independent, self-willed and full of life and initiatives. Hegemonic Masculinity becomes powerless over her. According to Loukoum:

M'am, ça l'intéresse pas. On dirait que c'est elle qui le voit plus. Il fait tout. Il aide M'am à cuisine le dimanche. Ensuite, il l'emmène promener au jardin. M'am n'a plus la même allure. Elle met des pantalons, des bleus, des jaunes, des rouges avec des sandales assorties. Elle paraît plus jeune, plus insouciant. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 245)

It doesn't interest M'am at all. You'd think it is she who no longer sees him. He does everything. He helps M'am with the cooking on Sundays. Then he takes her for walks in the park. M'am no longer has the same appearance. She wears trousers, blue, yellow, red ones with matching sandals. She looks younger, more carefree. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 172).

Loukoum's observation about M'am's new found freedom is the end result of all feminist recommendations for all suffering women under oppressive men. Beyala appears to say to women 'Take care of yourself, look good, eat good food, develop yourself and take care of your kids. Worry less about men, forget about men. They are not the centre of your universe'. M'am is the one that wears the sociological trousers in the house now. Abdou her husband wears the symbolical skirt. M'am becomes the breadwinner of the home and becomes not only economically free from Abdou's oppression, she becomes mentally free also. She portrays traits of female masculinity, while Abdou becomes emasculated and vanquished. This is the concluding didactic of Beyala's narrative.

The death of Soumana and his imprisonment took their toll on Abdou. Loukoum testifies to the great humbling of his father. He sees benevolent aspects of his personalities that were otherwise absent before his fall and disgrace. Abdou's rehabilitation heralds a profound and comprehensive transformation that feminists hope for when men are finally dethroned and humbled. Abdou becomes gentle and loving towards his household. He does everything to atone for his sins towards M'am. His reminiscence of how he started with his wife, led him

to discover how much he loved the same woman he had oppressed all these years. So, he plans to renew his wedding vows by remarrying M'am.

Contrariwise, M'am becomes distant, unfeeling, indifferent and almost vengeful of Abdou's maltreatments. She knew Abdou's fall is his epiphany; therefore, she doubts his sincerity and could care less about his sudden lovey-dovey attitude towards her. Abdou's efforts at winning her over become meaningless and detestable. Beyala's moral at this juncture, is for men to repent of their evils towards women, before they become unforgivable. Abdou shows M'am the moon as a romantic sight and compares it in perfection to a woman. M'am tells him that she prefers birds. Beyala in this dialogue makes allusion to the moon as the oppressed woman that is subjective, weak and patriarchally pliable. Little wonder that M'am rejects this image and told Abdou she prefers birds, which are symbolic of freedom in all its ramifications. To Abdou's question of how M'am is able to cope with his maltreatments all these years, she could only breakdown in tears (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 245-248).

5.2.1 Lesbianism as a rejection of Masculinity

In her representations, Beyala sponsors issues on society's disposition towards lesbians and gays. In the Hegemonic Masculinity theory, Connell refers to homosexuals and queers as seen as inferior.

As alternative to men and as solution to the sexual desires and needs of women, radical femiists prescribe lesbianism. They recommend that women keep psycho-sexual relationships with other women. This is a form of total rejection of men, their injustices and oppressions of women. For those who cannot abstain totally from sex with men, bisexuality is recommended (Yekini, 2008: p. 44-45). Beyala's anti-phallic stance as a feminist is notorious. We see it in the way Ateba the heroine of *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée* prefers to masturbate rather than having sex with a man. She lusted sexually after Irene her best friend (Beyala, 1987: p. 22, 138). She makes this visible also in Mathilda's rejection of her husband to be with a woman lover.

Men like Monsieur Kaba who leave their families in Africa to manage prostitutes in Europe, know the value of a woman in a home as opposed to a woman in the street. Radical feminism promotes sexual promiscuity, prostitution and lesbianism as the right of the woman (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 14-18). It says if the men can do it, so also can the women. Beyala exposes the

hypocrisy of men who appreciate faithfulness and dutifulness in wives, while patronising women of easy virtues and working as pimps for prostitutes. Mr. Kaba abandons his wife and children in Africa, while serving as a pimp to young girls like Esther and Tatiana in France. Monsieur Kaba speaks of sexual gratification as being good for a hard working man, and promotes sexual immorality in Belleville (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 106).

Beyala portrays M'am as a patriarchal woman, a product of male dominated culture. She refuses to accept prostitution as appropriate for women when she says "Oh, que non! C'est pas un lieu pour une f...J'veux dire pour..." (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 15), "Oh, no, no! This is no place for a w [woman]...I mean for..." (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 7). In contrast with the girls that accompany Mr. Kaba, who think M'am's ideologies about women is obsolete and laughed her to scorn. Feminists do not buy into patriarchal notions of what women are, talk less what women want. Feminists prefer women to define themselves and what they want from life.

There is a homosexual attraction bordering on lesbianism in the way Mathilda looks at and appreciates Aminata. Her compliments to Aminata appear as sexual advances and unusual between women, even Loukoum a seven-year-old could see this (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 145). Little wonder she came out of the closet when she left her husband Kouam for another woman (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 200, 211). Connell posits that the masculinity of the gay is seen as inferior to the traditional Hegemonic Masculinity, in authority and assertion of commands, rights and privileges. Homosexuals are placed in the same pedestals as 'Emphasised femininity', which is subjugated to the Hegemonic Masculinity (Connell, 2005: p. 24, 38-42, 78).

5.2.2 Masculinity and the body of women

Researches into the portraiture of women's bodies in the media have come to define women's bodies as beautiful or ugly, thin or fat. Beyala treats this theme often in her works. From a literary angle, she exposes how society represents women's bodies. In relation to what men desire in women, body types are often labelled good or bad. This poses a dilemma to the womenfolk that are routinely shifting from one size to the other in order to please men and conform to societal demands of the women in relation to their body. In *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine*, we see a clear illustration of this society induced

predicament of the heroine of the book *Aïssatou*, who halts between the opinions of either being slim or getting fat to attract a suitor. Beyala often brings the body into her portrayals of gender. She employs imageries of the male and female bodies as socio-cultural representations of male and female in the society. She weaves nuances and popular notions surrounding the body into her illustrations of sexuality and sexual identity in her characters.

Feminists posit that a woman has the final authority over her body, including her sex organs. She can use her body how she deems fit, even if she is married. It is Hegemonic Masculinity stance that women must submit to sexual demands from the man whenever he so desires it, and however he so desires it. This brings to mind also the patriarchal expectation on the initiation of sex by women. In patriarchal society, a woman that solicits for sex (even from her husband) is suspected of being promiscuous. On the other hand, if she refuses her husband sex for whatever reason, she is unfair and rebellious. There is an ongoing debate on rape being inclusive of men's coercing their wives to have sex, or sexually penetrating their wives forcefully. There are on-going debates on where the man's rights stop and rape begins in his sexual relations with his wife. This delineation appears an anti-Hegemonic Masculinity exercise, even when regulations say that sex without consent is rape. Abdou wonders about this new woman who take the initiative by taking the man and making love to him without his consent or wilful participation. As is seen in his soliloquy, men also could be raped by women:

Et elles prennent l'initiative. Ells me font l'amour et j'ai honte. Elles empalent d'amour et de volupté ce petit corps tourmenté. Depuis quand. l'ami, dans quel pays gouvernent les femmes?

Dis-moi, l'ami, explique-moi. Dis-moi, toi don't l'épouse de démesure s'ouvre à la fureur de vivre sa vie. Dis-moi, toi qui sublimes les continents de sa folie, à en oublier le cri du doute, Dis-moi si les jambes épilées, le sexe rasé est celui d'une femme ou d'un homme. Et toi, que deviens-tu? Moi, je me perds. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 133-134)

And they take the initiative. They make love to me and I'm ashamed. They're impaling this little tortured body with love and pleasure. Since when, friend, and in what country do women govern?

Tell me, friend, explain it to me. Tell me, you whose intemperate spouse opens herself up to the furious desire to live her own life. Tell me if the plucked legs, the shaved sexual parts are those of a woman or a man. And you, what has become of you? Me, I am lost. (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 91)

This is a conversation between two men, in a dilemma, following the feminist tendencies in their women. They are lost and confused like most patriarchal men, when they engage proponents of feminism. Abdou in his soliloquy, exposes the signs and traits of feminism in erstwhile traditional and subjugated women. He ponders on the changes feminism brings to women and gets lost in the process. He discovers that the “new improved” women are innovative, bold and frightful. Beyala’s depiction of men’s reaction to this ‘new change’ in women, this ‘new madness’ is an anti-masculinist revelations of the sexual emancipation of women and the downfall of men’s authority over the body of women. The woman’s body becomes her exclusive domaine, free of patriarchal codifications and dominion.

Through Abdou’s soliloquy, Beyala engages the place of the body in gender identity. She graphically describes some of the earliest changes in African women, after their encounter with the western world and feminism. She begins with the physical changes on the women. According to her, traditional African women under patriarchy dress in pagne. They leave the hairs on their private parts to grow free, as signs of being domesticated and natural. This natural essence in the women could be seen in the way they allow their hair and physique to grow unbridled. Unlike present day women, who have encountered western education and brought into western life style (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 181-182). Present day women under western influence now shave their legs, armpits and pubic hairs. They dye their hairs, bleach their skin, and work on their flesh through piercings, tattoos and cosmetic surgeries among others. Unlike the fat African women with robust buttocks and ample bosom, they develop muscle tone and keep a lean figure.

Traditional African men find these changes strange and distant. They find these new improved women and their bodies foreign and different. The absence of pubic hairs and the lean buttocks are an abomination to traditional African men. The discourse on the body of women in Beyala’s writing is very rich and common. Beyala addresses the domain of the body where women struggle with patriarchy for control and authority. Women’s private

parts are their arsenal, with array of weapons with which to subdue the man and overpower men's advances (Beyala, 2000: p. 37, 45-53). There is anti-masculinist malice in Beyala's manner of perceiving the exclusivity of women's bodies. She sees women's bodies as their property, their office, their prerogative and exclusive preserve. In her manner of portrayal, she submits that men have no dictate over the nature of women's bodies. Neither do they have power over the functions women's bodies perform, nor for whom they perform, the manner they perform and for how long they perform. This used to be the decision of the man, but no more.

In recent times, feminist activism moved its site from external focus to the position of the body in the oppression of women. Various feminist slogans such as "My body, my choice", "Real men get consent" and "My pussy bites" among others, protest patriarchal control and devaluation of the body of women by men (Bust Magazine, 2017, Shefer, 1990: p.37-54). Beyala depicts the representation of the body in patriarchal culture often through the use of prostitutes who cater for the sexual desires of men in the society. Often these prostitutes in search of economic means of survival are led into the occupation against their will.

Most Beyalian prostitutes are made as a result of one patriarchally imposed vicissitude or the other. In the example of Aminata, Beyala paints the picture of a struggling woman, doing what she has to survive. Aminata has dreams of a better life for her and her child Loukoum. This is why she is into prostitution. Beyala tactfully excuses Aminata's choice of prostitution, by juxtaposing it with her dreams of grandeur and with her son's future. This way, she excuses prostitution by building it around necessity and adversity that befalls women (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 219-222). Beyala tells the other side of Aminata's story, she is not all that bad. Just a victim of circumstance, pushed on her when she got pregnant for Abdou as a teenager (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 122, 126-127). This, it appears was responsible for her early state as an adult. This it seems pushes her into the cold, hard life she finds herself in.

Aminata is only trying to survive after making a mistake as a teenager and having had to abandon her child Loukoum. Beyala subtly presents her story in this narrative, as that of an unfortunate teenager who falling on hard times, does what she could to survive. There is always a good reason why the women are less than the expectations of the society. The men

on the other hand, have no reason, nor justification for their own shortcomings in the society. It is almost a double standard of assessment of who is right or wrong in her feminist novels. Through the eyes of Loukoum, Aminata becomes almost a saint. Loukoum found some measure of happiness with her (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 216-230). This solidarity of a son with his mother who abandoned him ten years ago, is symbolic. The norm of single parenting is fathers that return after years of abandoning their children. Au contraire in the selected novels, it is women who abandon their children.

The new independent black woman is not ignorant, weak or dependent. Rather she is more aware, takes care of herself and she is independent of any man. This is the new improved Aminata, not the one that gets pregnant ten years ago and did not know what to do, so she abandons the child. This Aminata sleeps with countless men without the fear of pregnancy. According to her she says “yeah, but I’m on the pill” (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 162). These are the modern, civilised and free women in the society today. These women are pushing all societal boundaries of patriarchy and herald an emancipation from all forms of masculine oppression or limitations of men against women. They subvert men’s authority and dominion. They overthrow men in the homes and work places.

In *Tu t’appelleras Tanga, C’est le Soleil qui m’a Brûlée* and the chosen novels, there is a commercialisation of the body of women. The body though commercialised in *Tu t’appelleras Tanga*, yet communicates pain, torture and fragmentation of women. Men are generally represented as the manipulators of women’s body. Ateba the heroine of *C’est le Soleil qui m’a Brûlée* is a daughter of a prostitute who abandoned her as a child. She also lost her best friend Irene to the cruel realities of prostitution (Arenberg, 1998: p. 111-120, Yekini, 2008: p. 2, 31). Often, heterosexual hegemonic men patronise them for their body.

Rubin (1975) and Rich (1980) in Connell (2005:104) finger cultural and social pressures on women to make themselves sexually available to men, on whatever terms they can get, as causative of the sexual abasement of women. According to Connell (2005:226) “Heterosexual men of all classes are in position to command sexual services from women, through purchase, custom, force or pressure.” Historically, men’s patriarchal dividends from their positions of power and authority at elite, corporate and state levels make the sexual subjugation of women and the control of their bodies possible.

The place of the body in gender identity is often seen in Beyalian novels. Even in *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine* Aïssatou struggles with her body image. Wondering if being thin à la western style, or fat as most African women are, would eventually afford her a much sought after husband: Souleymane Bolobolo (Beyala, 2000: p. 12-13, 21). The dilemma of the body in gender extends even to masculinity. The biological-reductionist position of defining masculinity through natural differences in the bodies of humans pushes arguments of gender recognition through the human body (Connell, 2015: p. 46-48).

Aminata comes into the New Year's Eve party at Abdou's house, looking like a queen, she looks so good that everyone is astonished. Even Loukoum her abandoned child says "seeing her like that, you'd never know she had a kid my age" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 98). Despite teenage pregnancy, abandonment, neglect, and rejection by the men they call father, lover or husband, these women of Beyala always come out with great bodies like Aminata. This is probably because of M'am's revelation to Soumana about coping with male oppression, as seen in De Jager's translation "Seems to me it's too much of a thrill for men when women fall apart on account of them. On the contrary, you should live." (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 33).

It is generally believed that the best form of vengeance is to appear unscathed by your oppressor. Hence, Beyala's advise to suffering women is that being happy rather than being bitter, is the best revenge against men's oppression and injustices. This is a direct spite of the men who are responsible for their lot. This is Beyala's way of telling men that the more they put women down, the better women become. Many hit songs, award winning books and films have been inspired by women's glorious emancipation from oppressive relationships with men. Beyala is contributive to this lore of men regretting their maltreatment of women, when they see how beautiful women have become regardless their maltreatments.

Seeing how sexually attractive Aminata is, Abdou becomes jealous of Aminata's escort monsieur Nkomo. He tries to make a scene, he ended up dancing with Aminata his ex-wife. There is a glimpse of a bi-sexual tendency in Mathilda in the way she looks and compliments Aminata's sexually provocative body. Loukoum notices this and puts it thus:

-Qu'est-ce que vous en jetez du jus, ma chère! Votre robe est très belle.

C'est là que ça me frappe comment ma tante Mathilda se conduit comme un homme. Parce que c'est vrai, il n'y a que les hommes pour parler comme ça. Les femmes entre elles, elles parlent des mômes, des saloperies des mecs, de leurs coiffures. Mais elles disent jamais à une autre femme qu'elle en jette du jus. (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 145)

'How lovely you are, my dear!' And she looks at her as if she were about to give herself a treat. And it really strikes me, the way she is looking at her. Not like a woman. But like a man. Because women always watch each other with a bit of jealous, never any tenderness, and even less so looking as if they were about to treat themselves to something nice. Besides, they never say: 'how lovely you are, my dear!' 'in that way' (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 98).

There is a hypocrisy about Beyala's female characters, though they appear to abhor men, yet they enjoy flatteries from men. They love compliments about how beautiful and sexually attractive they are (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 13-18, 63-65, 144-145). Beyala paints her women as though maltreated by men, yet they are on their feet. She makes them into a star on the rebound. Aminata, Ateba, Aïssatou, all look like women who despite all that life has thrown at them, still remain on their feet glowing and smiling.

Beyala paints an all too familiar scene; that of a man, who while driving, is distracted by a woman's bosom or buttocks, then hits the lamp post. Kouam is distracted by Aminata's body as she rides shotgun besides him in the car. He almost hit a truck because he was busy staring at Aminata's gigantic breasts and buttocks. The unusual proportion of Aminata's private parts kept Kouam repeating and muttering under his breath "Nom d'une pipe!" (*Le Petit Prince*, p. 215), "For heaven's sake!" (*Loukoum: The Little*, p. 150). This is a feminist and anti-masculinist scenario Beyala describes. The classic scenario of a womaniser who looks at a woman for too long on the street and runs into a ditch, or hits a culvert with his car. Beyala hits men with every anti-masculinist analogy in her literary arsenal. She hits men with everything except the kitchen sink, in her attempt to discredit the masculinist and patriarchal mentality in them.

Beyala, through this situation in Abdou's home, warns men to be careful how they treat their wives. She wants men to realise that their wives have alternatives, that they could be

replaced by men better than they are. Abdou's home spirals into an emotional dereliction. He loses control over his wife, children and his future. He goes gradually into depression, and becomes quieter. He is no longer the roaring lion in his home. This is exactly the warning feminists like Dangarembga tout in their writings. Radical feminists are wont to depict an ending where an hegemonic man eventually falls and becomes a pawn in the hands of a woman (Moyana, 1996: p. 25-34).

Beyala in the same vein, through Loukoum's thoughts exposes one of the reasons why men keep more than one woman as a lover "C'est vrai qu'il faut toujours de la concurrence en amour, sans ça les gonzesses vous chient sur la tête." (*Maman a un*, p. 221), "It is true that one should have women compete for one's love, without that, girls would shit on one's head." (Translation mine).

For Beyala, the verdict is in. Men think keeping more than one female partner or wife; make women more attentive, submissive and eager to please. In the twelve-year-old's thoughts, Soumana's death exposes his father to M'am's monopoly and disrespect. If his father's second wife had been alive, M'am would not have been able to feel so important and indispensable to the home. Even little Loukoum, in his patriarchal education sees malice and excess in M'am's maltreatment of her husband Abdou.

Though Abdou's behaviour towards his wife was Odious and oppressive, yet there should be room for forgiveness when he shows remorse, and transforms in penitence for the better. M'am ought to forgive her husband, and embrace his newly found change for the better. Rather, she is ready to throw Abdou away, not minding the effect on his psyche. Even the children suffer, albeit without her intending this. Loukoum and the little girls already suffer psychologically for M'am's decision to have another lover besides their father.

In conclusion, it is very illustrative in this study that Beyala is not a masculinist writer, but a feminist writer. The parametres and principles presented in the research point to Beyala as a writer with a feminist persuasion in her portrayal of male-female relationships. The male characters depicted in both novels are not good models or exemplars of positive values. As husbands, most of the men are ridden with vices, and are bad fathers. Majority of the

male characters are divorcees with issues of abuse against women. Although, from the perspective of Hegemonic Masculinity, several of the attributes exhibited by the male characters are expected of Hegemonic Masculinity type, therefore the actions of the male characters are not strange to patriarchy and the theory of masculinity, yet feminist assessment of these same actions are seen as negative and toxic for a viable male-female relationship.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The use of the masculinity theory has made it possible to ascertain the types of masculinities and their construction in the male characters of the selected novels of Calixthe Beyala. It has been possible to identify the masculinity types in relation to the Hegemonic Masculinity traits exhibited by the male characters in the selected novels. From Beyala's illustrations, the negative tendencies of the dominant Hegemonic Masculinity are quite visible. Her presentations of the male-female relationships in the selected novels, reveal the conflicts and the issues of female oppression in the patriarchal societies. Beyala's treatment of the theme of toxic masculinity in the novels portrays it as causative of ruptures and divorces in the marriages depicted in the novels.

The female characters suffer physically and psychologically for the irresponsibilities of the males towards family life. The female characters are cast into patriarchally imposed moulds of maladjusted full-time housewives, prostitutes, divorces, rebels, activists with sparsely a few functional well-adjusted characters. The male characters are habitually represented as adulterers, drunks, abusers of the women folk, religious hypocrites, malefactors, cowards, hegemonic masculinists and patriarchal men. The interaction of both sexes in the community of Belleville in France, produces the feeling of marginalisation and abuse for the women, while the men are happy with the favourable masculinist order. Since Hegemonic Masculinity is specifically for the protection and maintenance of patriarchy, it becomes tantamount to patriarchy in principles, objectives and operation.

Hegemonic Masculinity is about dominance, power and authority. Beyala's male characters exhibit these traits commonly in the selected novels. The male characters provide for their oppressed wives and children, in return they get reverence from their families, and they live licentiously. Where such privileges are not forthcoming, there are always conflicts in the

home. Soumana tried to change this order by defying Abdou she lost her life in the process. As dominant characters by the graces of patriarchy, men reign in the community of Belleville as alpha dogs; they who must be obeyed. The women in Belleville kow-tow to their husbands or they face the wrath of hegemony. The male characters wield their power and authority with impunity and viciousness, not considering the effects on the women or children. The women like M'am and Esther have no choice but to submit, seeing that Soumana died of frustration and depression in her attempt to break free of hegemonic oppression. Even Esther could not break away from prostitution. Despite her being pregnant for Abdou, she remains a prostitute in the employ of the vicious Monsieur Kaba. She could only give up her child to Mam for adoption when he was born. Abdou would not accept the baby, neither would he pay child support to a prostitute. M'am's refusal to accept the child born out of her husband's adultery, puts Esther in a dilemma. Patriarchy would not allow a prostitute to force a man to father his child.

The theme of marital unfaithfulness by the male characters is recurrent and dominant in both novels. As antagonists empowered by patriarchy, the men in Belleville and beyond engage in overt acts of adultery. This cuts across the white male characters like Monsieur Vieilledent and Monsieur Laforêt, also the black male characters such as Abdou, Kouam and Kaba. No one derides the men for their adultery. The few women like Madame Vieilledent, Mathilda, Soumana and M'am that dared ended up divorced or dead. This goes to illustrate the Hegemonic Masculinity power men wields in patriarchal society. On the other hand, women as protagonists in the selected novels, rally round themselves to muster the courage to be free from male hegemonic oppression.

As a character, Madame Saddock is the first to introduce the women to activism against female oppression. She opens the eyes of M'am and Soumana to the possibility of rebelling against Abdou. She lays the foundation for M'am's eventual rebellion and emancipation from Abdou's tyranny. Madame Saddock is symbolic of the feminist education and assistance available to oppressed and exploited women. She is the author's voice to all women on the need to break free from male subjugation and bondage. Beyala through Madame Saddock recommends to women a breaking away from the Stockholm syndrome

situation men put women in. she prescribes empowerment, then rebellion and finally freedom in that order. Soumana rebelled before getting empowered. She had dreams of grandeur in the film industry, but she did not wait to get independent of her oppressive husband Abdou, before defying him and questioning his wicked ways. M'am learnt from Soumana's mistake that led to her death. M'am waited to get empowered economically before rebelling against Abdou's authority. She capped her efforts to be free with her acquisition of literacy. The didactic of Beyala to women becomes clear in the method of both wives of Abdou.

The study of both novels also reveals the construction of Hegemonic Masculinity in relation to not just women, but to other subordinated masculinity. This is another core feature of Hegemonic Masculinity. Complicit Masculinity as defined in chapter three, is the masculinity that profits from the proceeds of patriarchy, without enforcing or operating in its tenets. Patriarchy establishes an order that dominates women. This order mandates women to be subservient to men. Where necessary, men are expected to enforce the subordination and subjugation of women. Unlike Hegemonic Masculinity, Complicit Masculinity compromises and negotiates with the womenfolk. Complicit men understand women's disadvantage position, and tend to consider and co-operate with women. They allow women certain liberties and take part in sharing sex-roles with women. Complicit men could do the dishes, clean the apartment and care for the kids. They even cook for the family, and allow their wives to have their ways from time to time. In the novels studied, we noticed this masculinity type in Monsieur Laforêt whose wife left him for another man, just because he lost his job.

Laforêt continues to love Caroline. He will not have anyone desecrate her memory or talk bad about her, even when it is obvious to everyone that she is a gold digger and an adulteress. Even when Monsieur Guillaume tries to make him see reason, Monsieur Laforêt rather blames the society for creating conditions that made his wife to leave him with three kids. Laforêt Wallows in misery, drinking away his sorrow in the bar. Rather than take plaint against his wife he bursts into tears that he misses and loves her despite all she has done. Monsieur Guillaume the barman could only conclude that men like Laforêt are in short

supply. As an alternative to Hegemonic Masculinity, Beyala provides the example of Complicit Masculinity using Laforêt as analogy. She recognises that amidst toxic or oppressive masculinity, there are men who construct a different kind of masculinity that is relatively benign to women. Another of such complicit men is Kouam Traoré, Abdou's nephew.

Mathilda, Kouam's wife, is one of the most rebellious women against patriarchal restrictions. As a Muslim woman she smokes, drinks, dresses immorally, oppresses her husband, keeps bad companies, parties regularly, leaves her husband unattended to, denies her husband sex and refuses to give him a child, even when she could. In all these provocative and defiant anti-patriarchal attitudes and actions, Kouam allows her to live as she pleases. He only pleads with her to amend her ways. Even when Abdou advises him to beat some senses into her, Kouam tells Abdou that he is not that type of man. Kouam is so complicit that his wife interprets it to be weakness. She complains to M'am about how unmasculine Kouam is. She says Kouam is too soft to be a man. Eventually Mathilda left Kouam to be with a woman in a lesbian relationship. In this analogy, we see a conflict between Complicit Masculinity and masculine protest. Mathilda is revealed eventually as a lesbian. Her disposition suggests her to be the male in the lesbian relationship, the butch. Her character type shows her masculine disposition and tendencies. In living with her, Kouam might as well be living with a man. Female masculinity and masculine protests is quite evident in Mathilda's behaviour. She rejects everything feminine, even child birth. She observes everything masculine, even marrying another woman as herself as a wife. Beyala presents these masculinity types in her novels in recognition of the diversities in gender identity, and current trends in the world.

Also, inspector Antoine's wife Juliette left him for her boyfriend. Yet he still has a soft spot for her and pays her three thousand Francs every month for her upkeep. Rather than express anger and vengeance against such anti-patriarchal aberration, he prefers to blame the world. The Complicit Masculinity of these men allowed them to interface with the problems of their male-female relationships. This disposition and philosophy of Complicit Masculinity permit these men to cope with their marital challenges. Antithetically, Abdou whose wife M'am has been submissive and dutiful, goes into a fit and eventually sent his wife away

from the home for doing less. Abdou's masculinity is hegemonic, and less tolerant of women's audacities. Beyala's illustrations are instructive also in recognising the difficulty in shifting from one masculinity type to another.

When Abdou lost his job and his authority in the home, he attempts a reconstruction of his masculinity type from the negative hegemonic tendencies, to the compliant complicit idiosyncrasies. Abdou who would only wait for his food watching the television, now cooks for the whole family for the duration of a year. Abdou whose prolong absence in the home undermines his concerns for his children, now bathes the children and clean them up everyday. Abdou whose philandering escapades takes him away from the home for weeks, now spends most of his time seeking the attention of is wife and helping her in her trade. Abdou appears to have successfully reconstructed his masculinity from the dictatorial and tyrannical hegemonic to the compromising and negotiating complicit. Contrarily, Abdou's gender identity reconstruction backfires and he goes back to his default masculinity type. He has a mental break down due to his wife's defiance and indifference to him. He sends his wife out of the house, abuses his children and fell into manic depression. From the study, one gathers that once a masculinity type is constructed, it becomes quite difficult to deconstruct it. While Abdou was supportive of Kouam beating his wife, Kouam on the other hand was responsible for the community's intervention in reconciling Abdou and his wife. All Abdou did to reconstruct Kouam's Complicit Masculinity into Hegemonic Masculinity fails. Also, all Abdou does to become complicit himself, in order for peace to reign in his home, eventually fails. He remains hegemonic.

Immediately after his wife came back to him and they were reconciled by the Belleville clan, Abdou leaves his wife to go into adultery with Marguerite, Monsieur Vieilledent's girlfriend from Pompidou. Another point the study reveals is that all the masculinity types exist in any given society. Beyala's setting of Belleville as a black quarter in France, and that of the white areas like Pompidou and Seizième, supply the collection of the masculinity types exhibited in both novels.

The Subordinate Masculinity of the homosexual allows its construction along conflicting lines of compulsory heterosexuality of the predominant Hegemonic Masculinity. Heterosexual men oppress homosexual men. Homophobic discrimination is evident in the interaction between both masculinity types. Monsieur Nkomo was verbally assaulted at Abdou's party because he was rumored to be gay. The hatred for him in the party generated a tension between him and the hegemonic men in the gathering. Since hegemonic men are compulsorily heterosexual, their relations with subordinate homosexual masculinity is always tensed. Nkomo was called a bastard, who rose to the ranks in the banking industry by selling his buttocks to his fellow men. The tension was almost as if the crowd at the party would lynch him. Eventually he left before the end of the party.

The study of Beyala's reaction to this incident in the novel, shows that Beyala has no objection towards homosexuality. Other than her wondering how homosexual acts are enjoyed by men, Beyala's opinion on Subordinate Masculinity is almost indifferent. Subordinate Masculinity is seen also from the female perspective. Mathilda is lesbian, she left her husband to marry a woman like herself. The study reveals that as a feminist, Beyala supports lesbianism. The analogy of lesbianism in the novels does not draw any negative criticism to the lesbian characters like Mathilda. Rather it was the man Kouam that was mocked and condemned for losing his wife to another woman. In this, Beyala mirrors a general tolerance for lesbianism than gayness among hegemonic heterosexual men. In the same vein, even when Mathilda openly makes sexual gestures towards Aminata at the party, no one seemed to notice, talk less of commenting on her affront on patriarchal norms.

On the other hand, when Tatianna the prostitute decides to give inspector Harry a lap dance, to curry his favour; he rains blows on her and nearly kills her. This is because inspector Harry is convinced that she is actually a transgender. There have been criticisms about Beyala's depiction of homosexuality in her novels. Even the relationship between Ateba the heroine of *C'est le Soleil qui m'a Brûlée* and her close friend Irene is suspected to be homosexual relationship between the two women. Although Beyala dismisses these allegations and criticisms as critics lack of understanding of traditional African

relationships, yet her subsequent publications indicated otherwise. (Hitchcott, 2006: p. 27-28).

The study reveals an absolute rejection of hegemonic order, and preference for feminist lifestyle. Mathilda's rejection of heterosexuality by rejecting her husband Kouam, and embracing lesbianism is indicative of the radical feminist solution to the men malaise.

M'am rejects the marriage institution as ordained by patriarchy, in embrace of a sexual relationship outside marriage. This Beyalian feminist tendency is also seen in Aïssatou's relationship with Eric Friedman in *Comment Cuisiner son Mari à l'Africaine*. Without being married, she conducts herself as a wife to Eric. Live-in-lover relationships such as that of Saïda and Marcel Pignon in *Les Honneurs Perdus* are prescriptive of Beyala, as escape from the enslavement of marriage. Tichit tells M'am that marriage is overrated and not everything in life. Extreme feminism's principles undermine nuptial tenets as presented by patriarchy. Another discovery from the study is that of the presence of Connell's masculine protest among Beyala's women who rebels against patriarchal stereotypes in gender identity and sex-role. As a rule, masculine protest encourages female rejection of patriarchal over-investment in gender identity and behavior. Women and girls rebel against societally assigned stereotypes about living. They reject dressing as females, working at jobs assigned to females, choosing leisure or activities ascribed to females.

Beyalian women like Mathilda, Madame Saddock and subsequently M'am reject genderised patriarchal limitations. They would not acquiesce to any form of gender restrictions from their men and communities. Mathilda does everything a man does from drinking Cognac and smoking among men. She wears trousers instead of the customary pagne or skirt worn by her female compatriots from Africa. Eventually, she boldly identifies as a lesbian. Madame Saddock is already described as a ballbreaker of a woman; a woman that terrifies men. She smokes, comes to Abdou's home and challenge his hegemonic authority. She conducts herself like a man in the way she confidently leads a rebellion against male superiority and the oppression of women. She does not believe in patriarchal limitations, and she taught Abdou's wife about Women's Liberation Movements and feminist activism.

M'am was a reluctant feminist at first. Abdou's incessant maltreatments made her into a champion of the feminist cause. She also started expressing her freedom by keeping a lover besides her husband. Her controversial dress sense and increased absence from the home herald her feminist transformation. She rejects societal limitations by going against Abdou's restrictions to become literate. She refuses to accept her patriarchally imposed position, and she becomes the breadwinner of the home by getting economically empowered. She now looks at her oppressive husband in the face and tells him to go to hell. These women protest against the exclusivity of masculine traits. For them, a woman also can do what men men do.

Beyala castrates whatever represents manhood or masculinity. She invests much of her analogies in dethroning men from their exalted positions. She emphasises, the fall of the antagonist male characters and celebrates their demise in the hands of their female protagonists.

The use of Grand-mère Balbine as the voice of order and wisdom in a patriarchal community instead of the traditional oldest male Monsieur Cérif, is indicative of Beyala's tendency to place female characters in exalted positions. Most of the female characters in the selected novels are not only in control of their own lives but also head of their homes, this is not par hasard, but an intentional plot to demonstrate women's capacity to be better and more humane leaders than men. While Monsieur Trauchessec is presented as a madman who runs around the compound without purpose, Madame Trauchessec runs his estate confidently and easily. This goes for Madame Vieilledent also, and eventually M'am joins this rank of women who dictate to men and rule their homes.

Beyala's 'scrotophobia' (fear of the phallus) informs her literary representations of men in her novels. This scrotophobia is wielded as a weapon to scuttle patriarchal structures and principles (Adesanmi, 2015: p. 201-204, Olayinka, 2014: p. 274). In her thesis "Patriarchal oppression and neurotic individuals in selected novels of Calixthe Beyala and Buchi Emecheta" Olayinka (2014:275) submits that "Glossing over Calixthe Beyala's texts, it is easy to assume that she is a man hater". A close reading of the novels used in this framework reveals that as much as Beyala projects an absolute rejection of men's oppressive actions

against women, yet she situates men in their usual patriarchal functionality of sexual responsibilities towards women. Even in this, Beyala's grouse and malice towards menfolk is seen in the way she mocks men's sexual impotence and selfishness. Abdou is sexually impotent at home, but highly active with prostitutes like Esther. M'am detest sex with Abdou, but enjoys it with her lover Monsieur Tichit. These are marital paradoxes and ironies exposed in this research as contribution to arguments on gender relations and male-female relationship dilemma. Beyala treats sex as a matter of preference for womenfolk. She removes the patriarchal restrictions around women's enjoyment of sex, or choosing to enjoy it with whomsoever they will.

This study in purpose contributes to the ongoing theorisation of African masculinity and assists in the charting of the masculinity types among black men. It also affords critics the ability to perceive the masculinity theory as evident in feminist novels, and represented in its varieties in feminists' male characters. It also limelights women's identity from the position of the masculinity theory. It helps to see women in feminist works from an angle other than that of feminist arguments.

The research suggests that further studies on African masculinity as a variant of the masculinity theory should be carried out in order to fully understand how African masculinities are constructed and to provide clear understanding of masculinity in relation to Africans and their realities.

This research in its framework provides an alternate perception of male-female relationships as represented in feminist writings. Since the notorious male bashing by feminists since the 1970s, men's oppression by women has become increasingly a theme among masculinist or patriarchal writers. The study showcases instances of male oppression which subsequently lead to the emasculation of men. This perspective though rare in gender studies, exists in writings depicting men as victims of women.

This study suggests that the masculinity theory includes aspects that engage ongoing feminist activities, especially in the media. There are trending issues concerning the determination of masculinity and manhood among the subordinate masculinities. Issues of

homosexuality, transgender and gender neutrality are contemporary and trending even in Africa. The masculinity theory needs to accommodate African realities vis-à-vis these issues.

Studies of the selected novels reveal that a co-existence approach is more productive in male-female relationship. Beyalian women end up respecting patriarchal rules and accepting their fates, albeit after violent alterations and ruptures in their relationships with men. Indeed, patriarchy's highhandedness and absolute position of dominion could be renegotiated by feminism. Rather than deconstructing patriarchy to construct a female version of the same rot, feminism should consider a complementary approach to male-female relationships.

Abdou, Kouam, Laforet among other Beyalian male characters are stereotypes that feminists present as argument for the rebellion of women against patriarchal order. Yet in this study, one discovers that the wives of each of these characters were no angels. Women also have their failings, viciousness and selfishness. This study suggests that in feminists' portrayals, a balance which represent the failings of both genders should be adequately created. This is to avoid the danger of a single story as cautioned by Achebe and cited by Adichie.

Failure to produce a balance in feminist narrative would perpetuate a vicious circle of cause and reprisal between feminism and persuasions that protect and maintain patriarchy. A rethinking cum rebranding of radical feminist principles is suggested by this study. The great divide between the sexes needs to be bridged in order to allow for a healthy man and woman coexistence on the planet. The constant pressure and tension between the sexes should be eliminated for proper nurturing of children. Instances from the selected novels reveal the psychological trauma children from problematic homes suffer from. In order to raise healthy individuals who are fully functional in the society, the family as a unit must comprise of mentally balanced men and women.

In the light of ongoing discuss on equality and equity, women should be afforded equal opportunities and rights to prosper in the society. Hegemonic Masculinity does not have to

be toxic or negative. Both genders could share responsibilities and powers without the superiority or inferiority models imposed by patriarchy.

Connell in his theorising of masculinity recognises current global trends that suggest gender construction along harmonious lines. He suggests that through education of the sexes about gender and political power play, the sexes could coexist equally via changes in feminist and patriarchal agenda. Gender politics at a global scale could change via constant education and modification in human behaviour (Connell, 2005: p. 244-266).

In conclusion, the images of masculinity represented by Beyala in the novels do not flatter the menfolk. Rather the representation of men in her novels are largely negative. Her presentations of masculinity as an offshoot of patriarchy equate men as oppressive of women, and tyrannical in their male-female relationships. This is not to deny that there are sparse male characters that constructed alternative masculinities which are benevolent towards women. Rather, it is to acknowledge that regardless of their masculinity types, for Beyala, men are men. Her portrayals of women as victorious of their numerous battles against subordination and abuse, indicate her support of women against men's dominion. Beyala's depiction of both black and white men, as capable of moral vices against women, reveals the irrelevance of race when it comes to the oppression of women. Ultimately, by not lauding or encouraging any of the masculinity traits in her male characters, Beyala appears condemnatory of masculine traits as found in men and supported by patriarchy. In this, it is evident that Beyala is not a masculinist writer, but a feminist writer. Her persuasion is evident in the robust and detailed description of the destruction and failure of her male characters. It is evident in her soliloquies from the lips of her famous female protagonists such as Ateba, Tanga, Mégri, Aïssatou and M'am. Although the theory of masculinity is used in analysing her selected novels, in the quest of conformity and balance in her gender representations, yet the findings strongly submit that Calixthe Beyala is not a masculinist, but a feminist in her convictions and writings.

Contribution to knowledge:

This research work contributes to the global scholarship on gender studies, aiming to alleviate the dearth of literature specifically on masculinity, and especially from the perspective of masculinity among black Africans in diaspora. It exposes different masculinity types as related to Africans and their traditional patriarchal peculiarities; which will help to better understand masculinity among Africans. The research provides insight into possible outcomes of hegemonic masculinity versus subordinate, complicit and marginalized masculinity types among Africans, specifically in diaspora where white supremacist masculinity reigns supreme. The research contributes also to scholarship in the construction of the dominant hegemonic masculinity: Feminist novels often portray toxic masculinity in male characters, without necessarily tracing the source of such masculinity formation. This research work identifies in a feminist novel, the rare illustration of the formation of masculinity as a trajectory from childhood to adulthood in male characters. This research work contributes to the perspective of a balanced feminist literature in male-female relationship, where the male character is not always a malefactor. This research contributes to the rare reading and study of feminist literatures from a masculinist viewpoint, specifically the feminist novels of Calixthe Beyala.

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