

WOMEN'S ROLES AS NON-COMBATANTS IN OKPEWHO'S *THE LAST DUTY* AND EZEIGBO'S *ROSES AND BULLETS*

Odewumi, Joy O
&
Giwa, Omoh O.

Abstract

The paper entitled "Women's Roles as Non-Combatants in Okpewho's *The Last Duty* and Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* investigates the portrayal and roles of female characters in armed conflict. This paper interrogates the variety of depictions and how these depictions emphasize women's vulnerability and resilience. Through qualitative content analysis, the paper examines both narratives on the representation of women's experiences focusing on victimhood, fear, hope and resilience. The paper also considers authorial background, firstly from a masculine-author perspective as well as a feminine one and secondly from different ethnicities. Using psychoanalytical criticism, the paper exposes a dual portrait of women as both vulnerable victims and resilient survivors. The varying perspectives are found to shape women's experiences especially the psychological and social impacts of conflict. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of women's roles in a socially turbulent context while enhancing the discourse on gender, war and reconciliation in African literature.

Key words: Fear, Hope, Resilience, Victimhood, War, Women's Roles

Introduction

Before women suffrages movement, women across different ages and locations have been marginalised physically, economically, socially and psychologically. Ezeigbo in an essay on Inter and Intra Violence in Okpewho's *The Victims* insist that until human rights abuses against

women and children are stopped, sustainable human development cannot be achieved. This marginalisation can account for the description of women as weak and defenceless especially during times of war and conflict. Though the roles of women have been interrogated and explored especially in understanding the debilitating effects of war on women both physically and psychologically and attention has been given to the effects of war on women however, the experiences of women as non-combatants not just victims remain underexplored especially within the African literature context. Several African texts explore the roles of women especially their struggles and resilience during the chaos of war; thus, serving as powerful tools for the examination of women and offering insight into the broader socio-cultural and political dynamics at play.

The Last Duty and *Roses and Bullets* are fictional narratives set during the Nigerian civil war of July 6, 1966 – January 15, 1970 which is infamous for the blockade and eventual starvation of the people of the Eastern region. *The Last Duty* particularly is set in a border town caught between the rebels and the federal troops. Okpewho's text answers the question: what happens to a woman starved of attention, comfort and love in a hostile environment with no means of survival? He uses multiple perspectives in telling a story that transcends one geographical setting by disguising the major players in the armed conflict. He explores the hostility that a Simba woman, Aku receives amongst her Igabo husband's people while imprisoned during the conflict. On the other hand, Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* explores the experiences and effect of war on a young woman, Ginika and the strain it places on her relationships with the men in her life.

Despite the critical importance of understanding the varieties of women's experiences during armed conflict, there is a notable gap regarding the portrayal of women's roles as non-combatants. This gap limits our understanding and appreciation for their roles and contributions during and after conflict. In Nigerian literature, these portrayals are significant to the unique context of conflict in Nigeria

and the world at large. This research thus, explores the depictions of female non-combatants in Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty* and Akachi Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*.

This research investigates the depiction and roles of women as non-combatants in armed conflict within two Nigerian novels. It focuses on exploring the portrayal of female non-combatants compared to their male counterparts. It will also focus on exploring how these portrayals emphasize their resilience or vulnerability to the conflict.

Feminism and the Representation of the Woman

Feminism has evolved greatly from its inception. It seeks to dismantle the various forms of gender-based oppression while advocating for political, economic and social equality of the sexes. It is defined as a range of socio-political movements and ideologies that aim to establish political, personal, economic, and social equality of the sexes (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2010). As an ideology, it holds the belief that society is patriarchal – male-dominated and centred thereby, treating women as the lesser or inferior sex/gender. Feminism campaigns for women's rights including the right to vote and be voted for, earn equal pay, own property and more recently, protect women from sexual assault and domestic violence (Echols, 1989; Roberts, 2017).

The first wave of feminism focused on legal issues and women's suffrage. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) laid the philosophical framework for feminism as a theory and theoretical framework. The second wave of feminism emerged in the 1960s and 1970s expanding to address a wider range of social and cultural issues. An influential text of this era is Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) which critiqued the limited roles of women in society likewise Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). Various organisations played a crucial role in advocating gender equality in various aspects like the workplace, education and reproductive rights. The third wave of feminism embraced a broader range of issues and the

LGBTQ+ rights. The fourth wave is characterised by the use of digital platforms to promote activism like the #MeToo campaigns which brought an awareness of the prevalence of sexual harassment and rape against women.

From the above, one can see that the growth of feminism has come a long way from the days of women advocating for their right to vote and be voted for. It continuously addresses gender oppression with significant progress since its inception however; there is still a need for sensitisation and an inclusive approach to achieving gender equality.

Asides the different waves are the brands of feminism depending on the approach to feminist related issues. These brands such as liberal, radical, Marxist and more recently transgender, digital feminism and ecofeminism are the various theoretical approaches to tackling gender-based inequality.

Shaw explores the representation of women in western literature especially the portrayal of heroines as deficient and hopeless. The paper focuses on Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and Flaubert's *Madam Bovary*. It concludes that narratives on female subservience suggest that individual freedom for women depends on the avoidance of commitment and intimacy as they are synonymous to enslavement (41). La Carriere's paper also investigates the portrayal of commitment and intimacy in American literatures. It also suggests that marriage is synonymous to enslavement especially as marriage views women as properties or tools for reproduction (544). The paper concludes that marriage is anti-feminist as it perpetuates gender inequality. Dugguh considers the dynamics in feminine resistance to subordination in Francophone literatures. The paper analyses the limitations of women in social and professional aspects compared to their male counterparts. Loken's paper on women and war interrogates the integration of women into armed groups to combat and curb wartime rape. The paper's closing argument disagrees that this form of inclusion mitigates gender-based violence during war (88). Karam argues that the perpetual representation of women as victims is a result

of patriarchal structures in that society (4). She points the numerous roles occupied by women as they create their own paths during conflict. She advocates the inclusion of women in peace negotiations which she claims is important for gender equality and balance. Webster et al study the impact of conflict on women's empowerment and the effect of militarisation on women. They interrogate military action and male dominance on societal structure (258). They conclude that war is disruptive of social institutions which influence a shift in gender roles (271).

As revealed by the above review of related scholarly works therefore, feminist criticisms interrogate representations of women as it tackles subjugation and male dominance especially in culturally patriarchal societies.

The Last Duty and Female Representations

Okpewho's *The Last Duty* has been explored by critics in analysing the symbiosis of war and women especially as regards interpersonal relationships with the male gender. Onwuka's explorations into the portrayal of the Nigerian soldier in the text utilises New Historicism and the persecution theory in understanding the Army as a group rather than individuals against their mob action towards the Igbos. The analysis identifies five-character types using the Nigerian army as a focal group; the privileged class who treats other soldiers and civilians with disdain, the poor or downtrodden, the idealistic who hopes that humanity will win in such social turmoil, the gullible that panders to the elite for the advancement of their career and the patriotic though prompted by ethnic bias. Palmer's analysis of the novel has her describing the text as exceptional in the representation of the Nigerian civil war. He notes that like war literatures, the novel presents the physical effects of war but this text emphasizes the havoc on human relationships and in particular, the mental and emotional trauma women are exposed to. The nucleus of his postulations is the language style and narrative technique employed in the text. He notes the

alternating use of multiple voices delivering in the first-person narrative voice which exposes the personality trait of the characters in the text. He points out that this method has been in use since the eighteenth century writer, Samuel Richardson but this is the first extensive use in African fiction.

Annin and Osei explore Okpewho's use of Juvenal satires in exposing the follies of society in particular, the war-torn Nigerian society. The duo notes the use of Juvenal mirrors in identifying and addressing societal concerns such as corruption, greed and injustice particularly in the studied text. Nwyanwu examines Okpewho's *The Last Duty* through a blending of Caruth's trauma and Freud's psychoanalysis in order to analyse the tensions and hopes accessible during wartime. He explores the anguished psyche of the characters. Emenike and Asuzu explore sexual exploitation in Okpewho's *The Last Duty* through a feminist lens. They examine the implication of non-consensual sex on the victim and the society at large. They note the effect on the collective psychology as victims and non-victims. They claim that victims are traumatised while non-victims like in the perpetual shadow of being victims (151). They do not consider that anxiety of being raped and molested is traumatic enough to classify both groups as victims.

Thus, explorations into Okpewho's *The Last Duty* rarely consider women through the lens of resilient survivors of the civil war but focus on their roles as mere victims of the war.

Representations of the Female in *Roses and Bullets*

Ekpo and Ojima examine the challenges of Black women; Africa and America as regards their uniqueness. Using Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*, they study women and their assertion of self. Their paper exposes the procedures adopted by the female characters in both texts as they combat hegemony especially in their nuclear family and in extension, their society. Using Ezeigbo's snail-sense feminism which advocates diplomacy in navigating a

patriarchal society and Freud's psychoanalysis, they investigate the motivation behind the studied characters' actions and inactions. Augustus studies the principles of guilt and innocence in Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*. Using a psychoanalytical approach, the paper examines human propensity to apportion blame to erring individuals.

The paper begins on the premise of accusing Ginika, the protagonist of infidelity without consideration that she was drugged and raped. In its analysis of guilt, the paper considers the turbulence of war time and advocates for stronger family ties, forgiveness and compassion. In studying the angst of war, the duo of Onyeachulam and Ikeji examine Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* and Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* in a bid to understand the prevailing spirit of that era. Their analysis explores the text using trauma theory and concludes that both texts present adequately the experiences of the victim-group especially their fear and reactions to the war. Adam and Egboh investigate the narration of women's woes during wartime. They examine the survivalist tendencies presented in Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* using feminist criticism with emphasis on the various methods employed by women in coping with the trauma of war. Ajala examines the text from a feminist perspective in a bid to reveal feminist convergences or divergences in the text's representation of women and war. The paper reveals that war is not the only issue plaguing the female characters in Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*. It explores other contemporary issues such as marriage, sexual harassment, infidelity amongst others. The paper concludes that female writers through their texts advocate peace first among the smallest unit of society and construct women as indispensable to socio-economic and political developments.

Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* is often viewed through patriarchal lenses hence the desire to apportion blame to female characters like Ginika and Janet as though to soothe the ruffled feathers of patriarchy. This analysis views the female characters as victims of patriarchal societies though determined to take charge of their lives despite unfortunate circumstances.

Women as Vulnerable Victims

Armed conflict is characterised by societal unrest and acts of violence in a geographical location which breeds fear and turmoil. With conflict comes physical and cultural displacement as non-combatants flee attacks and violence as a form of self-preservation. Women are often portrayed as fragile and unable to survive the chaos. The two female protagonists of the texts are presented as navigating the chaos of armed conflict. Aku speaks of learning means of surviving bombs and air raids. Ginika mentions the effect of armed conflicts on social activities such as marriage and funeral rites and reactions to the change.

I hear the sound of gunshots from somewhere not far away... following the civil defence instructions, Oghenovo and I dive quickly under the bed and lie flat on our bellies... I remember that the doors and windows are still open. (*TLD*, 13)

...church activities, students' gathering and parties, local festivals of all sorts... there were lots of activities to keep one busy but the war has changed things. People are not as cheerful as before. (*R&B*, 24)

The traditional aspect had been greatly played down because of the war and the terror, the anxiety and the sadness it generated in the community and in the communal life. (*R&B*, 193)

Conflict and societal unrest disrupts societal structures which in turn causes uncertainty for the future. In *TLD*, a curfew is imposed by the ruling military officer, Major Ali, which causes the opposite reaction desired. Instead of peace and calm, the people are encased in fear and terror. It is often presented that this feeling of fear and hopelessness is greater for women than men.

It's growing dark now... It's almost curfew time, but if you step outside there a soldier can shoot you for breaking the curfew... even if they had caught me they could have had mercy on me... you may not be so lucky. (*TLD*, 75; 159)

Her fear had become so obsessive that she only came out of her room at night and left the preparation of meals solely to her housemaid and Amaka... she entered her prison, as Ginika referred to Mrs Ndefo's room. (R&B, 151; 177)

This accounts for Aku's reaction to Odibo leaving her house shortly before curfew begins. It also accounts for the portrayal of Mrs Ndefo as physically unable to leave her room out of fear.

Women are considered weaker thus portrayed as more frightened than men. Okpewho's text therefore presents the female characters as weak and fragile as in Aku and the young woman who is murdered by the jealous Private boyfriend. Aku is presented and interpreted as woman incapable of taking charge of her life. Though she lives in perpetual fear amidst the hostility and animosity from her neighbours, she is analysed as weak and indecisive. Yet one must admit that it takes guts to live in such an environment. The soldier, Okumagba charged with her protection and defence from both civilians and rebel attacks, fantasizes about venting his anger and revenge on her for the death of his friends and kinsmen at the hands of the rebels. Toje also uses this presupposition of her helplessness in taking advantage of the situation for his carnal benefit. Besides the physical, he psychologically exploits her situation by pretending to facilitate the release of her husband. Thus, this promise also makes her suppliant to his advances besides the constant supply of food and conversation. This damsel-in-distress role expected of the female leaves the men to play the role of defender and saviour. Ironically, the women are to be saved from their saviours as in Aku who believes Toje then Odibo, to be her defenders. Then, there is Ginika whose father distrusts her because of his past with the women in his life, her husband who stops loving her after she is raped and impregnated and is hated by her father-in-law who believes she ratted him out to his wife about his infidelity. Janet attracts the attention of three military men who use her for sexual pleasures instead of protecting her like they have been charged to.

This presupposition that women experience terrors more than men creates a fodder for exploitation. If women are terrorised, then they need protection; if they need protection, then they need to offer something in return for that protection. Exploitation, according to Marx, is the inadequacies of the distribution of each individual's needs according to their labour which is sufficiently explored in the novels (x).

Sexual exploitation is defined by the United Nations as any means of abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. It includes exchanging money or goods and services for sex. It also includes any situation where sex is coerced or demanded by withholding services or blackmailing in exchange for sex (www.unhcr.org).

The chaos and turmoil of social unrest encourages inequality of resources which affects the tenets of economic exchange. This imbalance enriches some over the others as in the case of Aku and Chief Toje. Toje, gains the trust of the military which accords him several benefits and influence which he lords over the community.

Do you realise that the woman is in trouble? ...and don't you see that I am trying to help her? It's only a fair exchange. She needs food, clothing, maintenance and protection... I am in need of self-reassurance. (TLD, 7; 133)

Toje insists and convinces himself that his transaction with Aku is a fair exchange as he offers material resources in exchange for sexual pleasures despite the understanding that she would not debase herself without the context of war. He objectifies her for his pleasure in exchange for provision and protection. Having the upper hand in their dealings, he counts on her loneliness and lack while he gloats over his power on her.

What else would cause a beautiful woman like Aku to stop pining for her imprisoned husband, leave her only son at home and make haste to meet me... the power to beckon on a woman and she comes running to you happily because she can hardly resist you, knowing that you have the one thing

which can decide whether or not she and her child can live.
(TLD, 26; 27)

Asides the exploitation of Aku by Chief Toje, Odibo also exploits her. Odibo, Chief Toje's lame nephew, exploits Aku's sexual frustration and uses her for his own sexual pleasures too. Toje's advances towards Aku stem not only from her availability/loneliness but from a desire to humiliate her husband whom he had imprisoned on falsified allegations of treason.

I was in the rubber business before Oshevire came into it... I was conducting mine quietly, without molestation or doubts; I was doing my business very well and successfully... I could have enjoyed a long and unchallenged supremacy if Oshevire had not pushed himself into the scene. (TLD, 121; 122)
Nothing will happen. Leave that to me. They can't do anything to him... they still listen to people like me. They assure me that they have really not found anything against him. (TLD, 70; 71)

Young girls in *R&B* are presented as offering their bodies to privileged men in exchange for comfort. Ginika's friend, Janet, is one of such girls. Just three and they help me in different way. The squadron leader in the air force base in Ekwulobia gives me soap, cream and hair thread from Lisbon; the captain in 11 Div in Nnewi gives me money to purchase what I need; and there's the major in Nkwerre whom I love most and whose company makes the war bearable. (*R&B*, 226)

Soldiers assigned to stations often prey on the civilians and their desperation for survival which is reflected in the incident between a Sergeant, his Private and a young woman (TLD, 16). The superior Sergeant desires the 'girlfriend' of the Private and using his seniority and access to relief materials coerces the young woman to be his mistress. The Private on discovering them during their illicit tryst, kills his lover and his superior. Scholarly conversations describe this act as immoral whereas the definition of sexual exploitation proves that both the Private and the Sergeant were exploiting the young woman. She received gifts

from both soldiers and probably engaged with the superior soldier as he posed a better chance at survival for her.

Likewise, *R&B* explores sexual exploitation by soldiers assigned to protect civilians who instead prey on the young women. Ginika tags along with her friend to a party organised by military officers but gets drugged, molested and raped by a soldier after turning down his advances several times (*R&B*, 269/271).

...Captain Akudo who was addicted to sex with teenagers. Lieutenant Nandu who saw sex as delectable food which he must eat at least once a day to remain alive and sane. (*R&B*, 353)

Men, in places of power during war, take advantage of women under the guise of giving the women provisions and protection. Women who refuse their advances are victimised or punished like Ginika who is subjected to rape, torture and imprisonment.

It was not his idea to use her and dump her, as many men were doing to women in Biafra. He didn't just want a win-the-war wife... referred to women they were sleeping with, without any commitment. (*R&B*, 164)

The man in charge wanted to have sex with me before giving me anything and I refused... even some Roman Catholic priests slept with girls before they gave them relief materials. (*R&B*, 322)

Women as Resilient Survivors

Despite the prevalence of analysis and interpretations of women as vulnerable and fragile victims, there is a sense of strength and resilience in the actions of female characters. It takes courage to brave the storm of violence and terror associated with armed conflicts.

Asides Aku's indiscretions with Toje and Odibo which are often the focus of analyses on Okpewho's *The Last Duty*; she shows resilience and determination to survive the war. She faces discrimination and hostility but perseveres.

...can hardly walk on the streets, venture to the market to buy food for my child and me, because hostile eyes assail me from all sides and all but tear the heart out of me. (TLD, 11)

Toje acknowledges that Aku's life is in danger not only from the incessant air raids and attacks but from within the community that hates her for her tribal affiliations:

You realise that a woman is afraid for herself and her child you do not see that if she has to go anywhere for any reason somebody should be there to keep her son company if only to reassure the mother. (TLD, 7)

Major Ali, the commander-in-charge of Urukpe, charges Sergeant Okumagba to protect Aku as he is aware of the danger she faces for being a foreigner/rebel responsible for the loss of their loved ones and properties. However, Okumagba also hates her.

Only the consequences of such an action can deter me from sticking the barrel of my gun through the window and blasting the brains clean out of that woman and her child. (TLD, 130)

...my trigger-finger was driven on by the anxiety to save the lives of people who have shown by their collaboration with the rebels that they never meant Urukpe well. (TLD, 131)

With the exposure of Toje's exploitation, Major Ali feels responsible and guilty for trusting Toje:

How could I have known that by giving the woman freedom and protection I was only exposing her to this sort of exploitation and making her the target of a rotten relationship ...that such a woman had too little chance of living a normal life whatever assurances and protection I tried to give her. (TLD, 218)

Yet the consequences and responsibility of infidelity and immorality is often placed at the door of the woman in these situations as though women alone should be the custodians of morals and propriety evident in Okumagba's statement: If I ever get married and I have to go

anywhere without my family, I will plug my wife's cunt with a hand grenade. (TLD, 233)

Although, Oshevire notes the precocity position his wife was caught in, he absorbs the reactions and disgust of the community to the situation which he inflicts on Aku. He refuses to consider that the hostility and reproach he feels from the community is what his wife had to endure for three years. He punishes her with his silence as he believes that it is too much for him to bear though he does not consider how she bore it since his imprisonment.

...they should know that the dishonour brought upon my wife
-on my household -was totally unjust. (TLD, 237)

Aku, a rebel waiting for the return of her falsely imprisoned husband, endures the torment and hostility meted out by the villagers. She therefore accepts the friendship of Chief Toje. For fear of being lynched, she desperately accepts the only lifeline available to save herself and her son.

The chaos in armed conflict puts an end to societal structures as we know them and food becomes scarce. Women are left to scavenge in order to save their children from malnourishment or worse starvation. The women in the refugee camp often watch incapacitated as their young die from starvation, malnourishment and illnesses. Despite knowing the inevitability of death, they persevere and hope against all odds: "we live day by day, from one day to the next, but no one knows what tomorrow will bring". (R&B, 252) Women like Chief Odunze's mistress, whose husband is believed to have joined the army, with two children to cater for and succumbs to his advances for protection and provision. (R&B, 219/227/239)

What am I living for? What's the use of my life now? I have lost the two people whose existence compelled me to struggle on, to try to come to terms with a war that has stripped me of my possessions. The women who tried to restrain her could not control her. (R&B, 237)

Women lose their children like Mgboli and believe they are holding on because of their children. Therefore, women like Janet and Chief Odunze's mistress attach themselves to men of power and influence as a means of survival, not due to love for immorality, as chances of survival get slimmer with each air raid and displacement. After Ginika's ordeal of being raped and losing the child borne out of rape, she refuses to wallow in self-pity but becomes tough and strong, a far cry from the young woman she was when the war began.

She did this to protect herself from being violated. She also had a penknife with which she would cut off any dangling thing that came at her. She was determined to defend herself from any such attack during the journey. (*R&B*, 328)

In a bid to survive the war, women engaged in crossing behind enemy lines for trade as the defunct Eastern region was blockaded and unable to carry on regular commercial activities. The difficulty of this act speaks volumes of the determination of women to survive this tumultuous time as most died from ambushes or were raped and murdered (*R&B*, 325).

In realisation of the futility of war, women became determined to save their young ones (brothers and sons) from being conscripted into the army like Ginika protects Udo from being conscripted when the soldiers refused to acknowledge his age (*R&B*, 189).

Conclusion

Okpewho's *The Last Duty* skillfully presents the precarious situation women experience during armed conflict through the perspective of both the exploiter and the exploited. However, the tone of the text does not fully acknowledge the difficulty of her experience. Through the perspective of the husband, Oshevire, it presents patriarchal reactions to the precarious situation. Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*, on the other hand, paints a more adept picture of this difficulty and precariousness. Despite Ginika's brother and husband's reactions

to her plight, there are other sympathetic characters such as her aunty and teacher.

Masculine reactions to both scenarios typify patriarchal reactions and banal interpretation to the uniqueness of female experiences during armed conflict. Oshevire refuses to consider that the hostility he feels from the community is not only as a reaction to her indiscretion but as their belief of his loyalties/sympathy to the rebel-group, evident in Okumagba's soliloquy: "detailed to preserve the life of a rebel and her child and even make certain that no loyal citizen comes close to causing them the least concern" (*TLD*, 130). However, Ezeigbo presents a more balanced description of women during armed conflicts. She presents a frightened character in Mrs Ndefo; a woman thoroughly affected physically and psychologically by the unrest and chaos, the desperate in Janet, the passive in Aunty Chito and the courageous and independent in Ginika. Though Ginika is the focus of the narrative, she explores strength in all her characters; including the men. None of her characters remain linear and flat, contrary to criticisms against feminist literatures

Conclusively, men are prone to present women as victims in essence weak and immoral while feminine representations typify women as survivors –though affected but not consumed by the chaos.

References

- Adam, E.E. & Egbah, C.M. (2018). Narrating the woes of women in wartime: Examples from Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. In *Gender and Development in Africa and its Diaspora*, 31-48.
- Ajala, G.M. (2021). Feminist Issues in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*. *African Scholar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 23(6), 55-66.
- Annin, F. & Osei, C. (2020). Creating Juvenalian Mirrors in Reading Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 9(12), 13-23.

- Augustus, C. (2018). Guilt-Innocence Dialectics in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets: A Psychoanalytic perspective*. IKENGA: International Journal of Institute of African Studies, 19(1)
- Awogu-Maduagwu, E.A. & Umunnakwe, A. (2018). Gendered Representations of Women in War Literature: A Study of Akachi Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*. *International Journal of Social & Management Sciences, Madonna University (IJSMS)*, 2(1), 1-9.
- Dugguh, D. (2022). Re-forging Identities: Dynamic Trends of Women's Resistance in Francophone African Literature. *French Studies Bulletin*, 43(163), 8-12.
- Echols, A. (1989). *Daring to be bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Ekpo, E.E. & Ojima, N.S. (2018). Breaking Hegemonic Walls and Asserting the Female Self in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Akachi Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*. *ANGLISTICUM: Journal of the Association -Institute for English Language and American Studies*, 7(3), 10-24.
- Emenike, D. & Asuzu, S. (2020). Sexual Exploitation and the Nigerian Civil War: A study of Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*. *Preorc Journal of Gender and Sexuality Studies*, 1, 131-154.
- Ezeigbo, A. (?). Leadership Crisis in the Home: Inter and Intra-Gender Violence in Isidore Okpewho's *The Victims*. *Nigerian Integrative Discourses* 3.
- Ezeigbo, A. (2014). *Roses and Bullets*. Ibadan; University Press.
- Holmstrom, N. (1977). Exploitation. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 7(2), 353-369.
- Karam, A. (2000). Women in war and peace building: The roads traversed, the challenges ahead. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 3(1), 2-25.
- La Carriere, T. (2022). "Made for man": Marriage as Subjugation in American Women's Literature. *Women's Studies*, 51(5), 543-559.

- Lengermann, P. & Niebrugge, G. (2010). Feminism. In Ritzer, G; Ryan, J.M. (Eds.). *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Sociology*. John Wiley & Sons
- Loken, M. (2017). Rethinking Rape: The role of women in wartime violence. *Security Studies*, 26(1), 60-92.
- Marx, K. (2022). Critique of the Gotha Program. PM Press.
- McAlpine, A., Hossain, M. & Zimmerman, C. (2016). Sex trafficking and sexual exploitation in settings affected by armed conflicts in Africa, Asia and the Middle East: systematic review. *BMC International Health and Human Rights* 16, 1-16.
- Nwanyanwu, A.U. (2023). Trauma and the Narrative of Turbulences in Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*. *South-South Journal of Humanities and International Studies*, 37-53.
- Okpewho, I. (1973). The last duty. *African Arts*, 14-77.
- Okpewho, I. (1976). *The Last Duty*. Essex; Longman
- Onwuka, E. (2021). Portraits of the Nigerian Soldier in Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*. *SAGE OPEN* 11(3).
- Onyeachulam, S.S. & Ikeji, F.I. (2024). Angst of war in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* and Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn*. *Nigerian Journal of Arts and Humanities* 4(1), 40-47.
- Palmer, E. (1993). Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*. *International Fiction Review*, 20(1), 22-32.
- Roberts, J. (2017). "Women's work". *Distillations*, 3(1), 6-11.
- Shaw, J.J. (2010). Against myths and traditions that emasculate women: Language, Literature, law and Female Empowerment. *Liverpool Law Review* 31, 29-49.
- Webster, K., Chen, C. & Beardsley, K. (2019). Conflict, Peace and the Evolution of Women's Empowerment. *International Organisation*, 73(2), 255-289.
- www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/how-we-work/tackling-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment/what-is-sexual-exploitation