

**THE DEPICTION OF WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY FEMRITE SHORT STORY
ANTHOLOGIES**

FORTUNATE KANSIIME

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I, Kansiiime Fortunate, declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation and I have never submitted it for an award to any university or any other institution of higher learning.



11th March, 2024

Kansiiime Fortunate

APPROVAL

I, Peter Mugume acknowledge that this study was conducted under my supervision and is ready for submission to the Faculty of Education and Arts, Uganda Christian University for an award of Master of Arts in Literature Degree.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Mugume', is written over a faint dotted line.

Date: 15th April, 2024

Peter Mugume

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my children, my parents, siblings, all concerned relatives, friends, and my supervisors for their immeasurable support and wonderful work towards the successful completion of this course.

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The completion of this dissertation is a humbling opportunity to thank God our Lord and Saviour for life, protection, good health, and wisdom. I am indebted to my supervisor Peter Mugume who rendered me unfailing support, and Ms. Pamela Tumwebaze for her advice, guidance, and knowledge without which this project would not have come to reality. I am also indebted to Jacob Katumusiime, who made sure I received the right materials for use in my dissertation and Innocent Atukwatse who guided and helped me throughout the journey. I extend my gratitude to all my relatives especially my siblings, and parents for their prayers, my in-laws for taking care of my children in my absence, the Kaginas and Ellen Owomugisha who hosted me every time I would be in Kampala and lastly but certainly not the least the Banangas for their advice, encouragement and inspiration.

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ABSTRACT

Gender representation in female-authored literary texts has hitherto been characterised as a positive representation of women contrary to the former subjective misrepresentation and underrepresentation of women by male authors. The study sought to broaden the understanding of women's depiction in contemporary female-authored FEMRITE short story anthologies. It investigated the depiction of women's character traits, assigned roles, and gender-related themes in female-authored short story anthologies published by FEMRITE Publications Limited, Uganda. The study analysed fifteen short stories, selecting five from each of the three FEMRITE published short story anthologies selected for the study. These were: *Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts* (2009) edited by Hellen Moffet and Violet Barungi, *Summoning the Rains* (2012) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe and Ellen Banda-Aaku, and *Nothing to See Here* (2015) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe). The short story anthologies used for the study consisted of short narratives compiled in the FEMRITE Annual Residency for African Women Writers. Feminism is a theory that premises itself on the importance of gender equality that develops an account, identifies the causes and effects of women's subordination and prescribes the strategies of women's liberation. This theory was employed in the study to ascertain the representation of women and their struggles to gain equality and fair treatment from the point of view of female authors.

Gender theory, which describes gender roles, was also used in the study to examine the roles assigned to female characters and roles of female authors in the struggle to gain equality in female-authored texts. The study employed a qualitative approach based on the collection of textual material, analysis, and interpretation of the texts. Data were presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed using a textual checklist basing on the feminist and gender literary theories. The findings of this research indicate that the study achieved its purpose/objectives and successfully answered its research questions. The research recommends that works of female authors should be made available and accessible to the public since they create a positive representation of women. It further recommended that publication of more female-authored literature be used to sensitize the population about issues of gender equality, human rights support and writing more reviews about the FEMRITE short story anthologies that have not received much scholarly attention.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research was on the topic, “*Depiction of Women in Contemporary Female-Authored FEMRITE Short Story Anthologies*”. It sought to find out how women are portrayed by female writers. The study examined the female character traits, roles assigned to them, and gender-related themes portrayed in three female-authored and FEMRITE published short story anthologies: *Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts* (2009) edited by Hellen Moffet and Violet Barungi, *Summoning the Rains* (2012) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe and Ellen Banda-Aaku, and *Nothing to See Here* (2015) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe. This chapter covers the background to the study, purpose, objectives, scope, problem statement, research questions, justification, theoretical framework, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Traditionally, a patriarchal society renders women invisible, marginalised, and enslaved by cultural norms. Literature being a product of society has always presented women differently. Most of the post-colonial male-authored literary works are male-centred and often depict women as second-class citizens sadly oppressed by men and possess no power in society. However, women emancipation has continually become a crucial topic, with scholarship and literature often depicting the struggles and hard circumstances of African women as a significant trope. The post-colonial/contemporary female works are largely dominated by concerns about women trying to establish their position in the changing world in an attempt to advance women’s liberation struggles through exposing the unfairness of the patriarchal society.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women began to take large roles in society but had to struggle to be accepted in the literary world. However much, women writers struggled to project their voices through their writings, they were not taken seriously in the literary world. Some writers like M. G. ‘Monk’ Lewis, even suggested that women were better at handling the needle than the pen. Others like Nathaniel Hawthorne who attempted to balance their prejudices against women writers only felt that women who wrote worthwhile literature were perhaps possessed by the devil.

Women writers also often doubted themselves. Consequently, instead of expressing their anti-patronizing agency, they took the position of fear – the fear of having no readers. Female writers in the male-dominated literary world thus resorted to using male names to publish their works. A popular example is a female novelist and columnist, Fanny Fern (1811 – 1872), whose original name was Sara Willis Parton. To keep her identity anonymous while writing for the New York Ledger, Fern used a pseudonym. In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs used her pseudonym Linda Brent to recount the harsh experience as a slave, without having to face her fear of criticism from the white population. Other female authors who used male pseudonyms to attain recognition in the literary world include: Anne Evans (George Eliot), Alice Bradley Sheldon (James Tiptree), Joanne Rowling (J.K Rowling), and many others (Easley, 2016). Nonetheless, women who were courageous enough to publish books under their signatures achieved fame, influenced the literary culture, and attained economic self-sufficiency (Coultrap-McQuin, 2000).

In Africa, like the rest of the world, writing and publishing have been largely male-dominated. There were a few female African writers. African women writers also had to struggle to gain literary attention and admission to the literary canon. The increase in scholarly inquiries on and about women in the 1980s helped in changing the status of African women writers. African women writers gained courage and determination as their works started to attract scholars, as Earnest Emenyoni (2014) notes, it has not been easy for critics to notice a few African female writers who have struggled and managed to publish their works.

Literature in Uganda first attained recognition with the publication of literary works mostly by men with writers. In the early 1960s, Barbra Kimenyé emerged as the only prominent Ugandan female writer widely regarded as “the leading writer of children’s literature in Uganda” (Kiyimba, 2008). She is among the first women writers in East and Central Africa. Even though Kimenyé opened doors for women in writing, her example was not emulated until the 1990s when several Ugandan women emerged on the literary scene, with the founding of a female-run publishing house, FEMRITE, set up to promote female writers.

The formation of a female-founded and run publishing house, FEMRITE in Uganda has supported numerous African female writers. FEMRITE is Uganda’s leading activist movement for women writers. Translated as Uganda Women Writers Association, FEMRITE was founded a decade after

the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM)'s 'Liberation' struggle. Doubling then as both a Lecturer of Literature at Makerere University and the Press Secretary to the Vice-President of Uganda, Mary Karooro Okurut convened a meeting from the Head of Literature Department's office at Makerere University that birthed what was to later transform into a pronounced East African women writers' force.

Since FEMRITE's formation, Ugandan women writers have won various literary awards. Glaydah Namukasa's novel '*Voice of a Dream*' won the senior prize of the Macmillan Writers Prize for Africa in 2005 and Doreen Baingana, was the 2006 winner of the Common Wealth First Book Prize for her short story collection, '*Tropical Fish*'. Baingana was also shortlisted for the Caine Prize for African Writing 2004 and 2005 and Monica Arac de Nyeko's '*Strange Fruit*' and Jackee Budesta Batanda's '*Remember Atita*' were nominated for the Caine Prize for African Writing 2006.

FEMRITE Publications has supported, promoted, and helped many female writers to succeed and become famous writers recognised across the globe. FEMRITE has led to the recognition of women's efforts by, not only the government awarding several women writers' national medals, but also through international appointments. The association has largely broken men's monopoly of the Ugandan literary scene and its achievements speak to the success of its efforts in this direction (Kyomuhendo, 2003; Kruger, 2011; Hunsu, 2014). As Susan Kiguli reflects, "The chief reason for forming this association was to make the voice of the female writer, previously marginal, more present in the Ugandan literary scene."

Lillian Tindyebwa notes that FEMRITE has encouraged, promoted, and generally made Ugandan women writers visible on the literary scene in Uganda and abroad. FEMRITE has nurtured several women writers and many have won national and international literary accolades and recognition. FEMRITE has improved writing skills of many. In various meetings held, writers meet readers to have their works critiqued. According to Tindyebwa, the success of most Ugandan women writers in the literary scene is attributed to FEMRITE. She believes that had it not been for FEMRITE's support, a number of the female writers would have never come up (Tindyebwa, 2007). Since its inception, FEMRITE has been the largest and most successful women's writing group in East Africa, and one of the most influential literary organisations on the African continent. It has grown

in membership, publishing, training, and promotion of writers, some of whom have received national and international recognition. (Christine Evain, 2018 and Stratford, 2018).

Regardless of the patriarchal setting, FEMRITE female writers should have ideally presented a distinct image of a woman that this study proposes to establish. The women writers in the modernist period dwell on the subject of relationships between women and men who prize independence and are committed to feminism and social reform as the central theme (Benstock, 2002). In female written literary texts, women write feminine language of the time, use the setting and develop heroines to advance their liberation and freedom. The female writers do not let men dictate the lives of their female characters (Ludmilla, 2017).

Female-run publishing houses have played a key role in empowering women writers as they strive to promote, encourage, support, motivate, and defend them. Women writers create strong, resistant, independent, and realistic characters struggling against patriarchal values, beliefs, and behaviour in society. They also help motivate, encourage and bring hope to the suffering African woman. Their works depict the problems of African women, the need for emancipation, and empowerment within their own cultural and social positions. It is with this historical background that the researcher chose to investigate the representation of women in contemporary FEMRITE short story anthologies through analysing the traits of female characters, roles assigned to them, and female related themes depicted in these short narratives.

The short story anthologies chosen for this study are: *Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts* (2009) edited by Hellen Moffet and Violet Barungi, *Summoning the Rains* (2012) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe and Ellen Banda-Aaku, and *Nothing to See Here* (2015) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe. The profiles, background, and achievements of the editors of the FEMRITE short story anthologies used are presented in appendix 3.

1.2 Definition of Key Terms

Depiction refers to the portrayal or description of someone or something in a work of literature.

Character implies the people involved in the action of the story.

A short story anthology means a collection of short narratives by different authors with a developed theme, but less elaborate and shorter than a novel.

Contemporary literature generally denotes the written tradition expression in the current society.

Patriarchy means a system of male dominance that oppresses women through its social, political, and economic institutions.

Gender refers to characteristics culturally and socially constructed presentation of women and men.

Chick-Lit implies literature written by on and about women.

1.3 Problem Statement

This study intends to review the subject on “Depiction of Women in Female-authored Contemporary FEMRITE Short Story Anthologies”, with an aim of evaluating women in the lenses of female authors. Whereas studies have been conducted on various texts produced by FEMRITE, not much research has been done on the genre of the short story. This study therefore explores the extent to which women writers published by FEMRITE address gender dimensions in their works by investigating the female character traits, assigned roles, and gender related themes as depicted in contemporary FEMRITE short story anthologies selected for this study.

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this research was to examine the depiction of women by FEMRITE female authors establishing their character traits, assigned roles, and gender related thematic concerns portrayed in contemporary short story anthologies.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To analyse traits of women characters in the selected texts.
2. To examine the roles assigned to women characters in the selected works

3. To establish female related thematic concerns in the selected short story narratives

1.6 Research Questions

This research was guided by the following questions which were derived from the objectives:

1. What character traits do women characters possess in the selected texts?
2. What roles are assigned to women characters in the selected works?
3. What female-related thematic concerns are depicted in the selected short narratives?

1.7 Justification of the Study

The study was worth undertaking because most of the studies conducted on FEMRITE published texts have been done on other literature genres neglecting the genre of the short story. Thus, this study is justified in order to explore the extent to which women writers who have published FEMRITE Publications address gender dimensions in their short stories hence contributing to the existing scholarship gap on gender-related issues in literature.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The study portrays the function of the short story genre in exploring the image and life of women through women's perspective, thus contributing to the data bank of criticism on contemporary literature by female writers and publishers.

The study can be used by scholars, since it adds to the existing scholarship knowledge by depicting how female authors and publishers present women in their literary works.

The information in the study can also be used by women activists, since it addresses challenges encountered by women in their struggle for equality.

This data can also be utilised by teachers of literature to enhance their teaching and knowledge.

The information presented can further be used by curriculum and syllabus designers, planners, and implementers to include female written and published texts on the syllabus.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The study focused on contemporary female-authored short story anthologies, published by FEMRITE Publications Limited Uganda, a female-founded publishing house. The study used fifteen short stories selecting five from each of the three short story anthologies; *Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts* (2009) edited by Hellen Moffet and Violet Barungi, *Summoning the Rains* (2012) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe and Ellen Banda-Aaku, and *Nothing to See Here* (2015) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe.

1.9.1 *Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts* (2009)

Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts (2009) was edited by Hellen Moffet and Violet Barungi and it includes stories from the FEMRITE Regional Writers Residency of 2008. This anthology was selected because the authors of the short stories therein tell half their story about defiance, elopement, despair, loss, and lifelessness which form a basis of this study. The writings never leave the reader indifferent –one is likely to take sides, get emotions like angry, laugh, to cry, and to think of a lot that goes on inside the human heart. The selected short stories from *Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts* are; *The Pumpkin Seed* by Hilda Twongyeirwe, *Home to Die* by Winnie Munyarugerero, *The Sacrifice* by Costance Obonyo, *The Drinking Jar* by Philomena Nabweru Rwabukuku, and *Gift of a Letter* by Lilian Tindyebwa.

1.9.2 *Summoning the Rains* (2012)

Summoning the Rains (2012), edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe and Ellen Banda-Aaku includes stories from the third Regional Residency for African Women Writers that sat in Uganda for two weeks in November 2011. The anthology was chosen for diversity perspective for it consists of fifteen writers that were from different countries across the African continent (Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Tunisia, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon, and Botswana). This gives a picture of the African continent even when the study is done in Uganda. This anthology is the product of the writing developed before and during the residency and has stories told from different perspectives, with varied voices, some experienced, others less so, but all told with freshness and honesty. The short stories selected from this text are; *In the Shadow of God* by

Gothataone Moeng, *The Absorber* by Onyinye Ihezukwu, *Walking the Familiar Path* by Nakisanze Segawa, *The Knife Pleat Skirt* by Rhoda Zulu, and *Beauty* by Mamle Kabu.

1.9.3 *Nothing to See Here* (2015)

Nothing to See Here (2015) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe includes stories of the fifth Regional Residency for African Women Writers. It was selected because it includes stories from sixteen remarkable African women writers who come out with well plotted and written tales that ably deal with the politics of nationhood and identity, and the burden and beauty of a woman that are key to the depiction of women in society. The serious, absurd, and serious absurd stories presented leave one pondering, crying, and laughing while traveling from East Africa to Southern Africa through to West Africa. The selected short stories from *Nothing to See Here* include; *People of the Valley* by Makhosazana Xaba, *The Sausage Tree* by Grace Neliya Gardner, *Reconstruction* by Doreen Anyango, *My Fault* by Monica Cheru, and *The American* by Mercy Dhilwayo.

The research was prompted by the false impression and representation of women created in male-authored literary works in patriarchal societies. The researcher saw the need to use FEMRITE short story anthologies to analyse how contemporary female authors diverse backgrounds represent women characters in their texts.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

The study applies feminism and gender theories in the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data from the selected female-authored contemporary FEMRITE short story anthologies. The researcher applied multiple strands of feminism and gender theory, because of the complexity of gender issues that demand a wide perspective to identify the multiple ways in which the female-authored texts can help in the struggle for gender equity.

1.10.1 Feminism

Feminism refers broadly to political, cultural, and economic movements aimed at establishing greater rights and legal protections for women. It is based on gender equality, exposing gender hierarchy as a socially constructed concept. Feminism recognises that historically, literature and other arts are male-dominated and reinforce social, economic, political, and psychological

oppression of women. It is herein used to help this study analyse the depiction of women from the point of view of female literary writers.

This movement and literary theory, dates back to the 18th century as an attempt to develop a comprehensive account of the subordination of women and identifies the underlying causes of women's subordination, and develop effective strategies to liberate women. It is an ideology or commitment to women's liberation movement that describes women oppression, explains its causes and consequences, and prescribes strategies for women liberation. Feminist theory has two main purposes: to understand the power differential between men and women and to understand women's oppression, how it evolved, how it changes over time, how it is related to other forms of oppression, and how it can be overcome.

The theory is thus, intimately related to the action to show commitment to change oppressive structures and connect abstract ideas with concrete problems for political action. In other words, there has to be a commitment to do something about the situation of women. While there are several branches of feminism theories, this study will be guided by liberal feminism, radical feminism, and postcolonial feminism. Liberal feminism and radical feminism, both Western constructs in advancing gender equality, give a historical background to contemporary theories like postcolonial feminism. Post-colonial feminism seeks to account for the way racism and the long-lasting political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism affect non-white and non-western women in the postcolonial world that this research investigates.

1.10.1.1 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism, which can be understood as equal rights feminism or particularly the "first wave" of women's movement, developed in the 19th century as an extension of other movements explaining the unequal rights or artificial barriers to women's participation in the public world, beyond the family and household. Liberal feminist writers included Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) whose famous book, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) emphasizes the equality of men and women. John Stuart Mill (1806-1973), a British philosopher, stressed in "Subjection of Women" (1869) that women should enjoy the same rights as men and that women are not inferior to men. He generally comments on the major factors hindering women's lives, society, gender constriction, education, and marriage.

1.10.1.2 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism, also known as feminism of difference for women, protests that liberal feminism is too artificial in its approach and does not make room for issues unrelated to the nature and function of work (the sex-gender system). Radical feminists believe that women are oppressed because of their sex, that sexual oppression is a fundamental form of oppression, and that patriarchy is the key offender. Simone De Beauvoir (1908-86), a radical feminist writer, French author, and philosopher wrote in *The Second Sex* (1949) that man presents himself as a subject and woman as an object. She argues that one is not born an object; rather, one becomes a woman in society, and no biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society. Shula Smith Firestone's book *The Dialect of Sex: The Case of Feminist Revolutions* (1970) identifies sex as the root of the basic class division and oppression of women. She argues that the powerlessness of a woman and her biology is closely related to their oppression. Because sexuality is the root cause of oppression, women are oppressed simply because they are women.

Radical feminism focuses on the subordination of women as its primary concern, showing how male power is exercised and reinforced through such practices as sexual harassment, rape, pornography, prostitution, childbearing, housework, love, and marriage. Radical feminists, strive to advocate for fair treatment of women and have tried to celebrate womanhood in contrast to the devaluation of women in society. They also focus on the creative power inherent in women's biology, that gives rise to the psychological characteristics linked with women: nurturance, warmth, emotional expressiveness, endurance, and common sense.

1.10.1.3 Postcolonial Feminism

The first and second-wave feminist theories failed to account for differences between women in terms of race and class by only addressing the needs and issues of white western women who started the movement. In response, Post-colonial Feminism emerged as part of the third wave of feminism in the 1980s. Its focus is on the experiences of women in western cultures and former colonies to account for the impact of racism and the long-lasting political, economic and cultural effects of colonialism on non-white and non-western women in the postcolonial world.

Postcolonial feminists, who incorporate the ideas of indigenous and other third world feminist movements into mainstream western feminism argue that by using the term 'woman' as a universal group, it implies that women are only defined by their gender and not by social class, race, ethnicity

or sexual preference. Thus, feminism in third world countries is not imported from the first world countries, but originates from internal ideologies and socio-cultural factors. Several works gave way to the foundation for the formation of postcolonial feminism which relates gender issues to other spheres of influence within society. These works look at the gendered history of colonialism and how that continues to affect the status of women today. Some of these works include; Audre Lorde's 1984 essay *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* and Chandra Talpade Mohanty's 1984 essay '*Under Western Eyes*' that analyses the homogenising western feminist depiction of the "third world woman". Post-colonial feminists like Gayatri Spivak suggested that postcolonial feminism identifies the political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism on non-white, non-western women in the postcolonial world.

1.10.2 Gender Theory

Gender roles and relations change naturally in any community because of specific events like conflict or economic crisis. The gender learned roles vary in different societies, cultures, and historical periods depending on socio-economic factors, age, education, ethnicity, and religion since social values and norms are not static. At birth, the difference between boys and girls is their sex, and as they grow up, society imposes different roles, attributes, opportunities, privileges and rights, that in the end create the social differences between men and women. This study further employs gender theory to identify what is understood as masculine or feminine in any given social context.

1.10.2.1 Harvard Analytical Framework

The Harvard Analytical Framework often referred to as 'the gender roles framework' or 'gender analysis framework,' is used in this study to present, analyse and interpret the female-assigned roles in the FEMRITE short stories. This framework was developed by researchers at the Harvard Institute for International Development in 1985 at a time when the efficient approach to integrating women in development work was gaining prominence in development circles. The framework demonstrates an economic case for allocating resources to both women and men, helps planners design projects that are more efficient, and improves overall productivity through mapping the work and resources of men and women in a community and highlights the main differences. It is a grid/matrix for collecting data at a micro-level; that is the community and household level and

useful in organising information that can be adapted to many situations. The Harvard Analytical Framework has four components: 1) The activity profile which identifies both productive and reproductive tasks and answers the question, “Who does what? 2) The access and control profile that enables the user to list what resources people use to carry out the tasks identified in the activity profile indicating whether both men and women have access to resources, who controls their use, and the benefits of the household (3) The influencing factors tool that allows one to identify factors that influence the differences in the gender division of labour, access, and control and (4) Checklist for project cycle analysis, which consists of series of questions designed to assist a person to examine a study from a gender perspective, using gender-disaggregate data and capturing the different effects of social change on men and women.

In conclusion, the chapter has laid the groundwork for the study by providing a comprehensive overview of the topic, exploring the historical context and evolution of the subject, tracing its significance through various perspectives and scholarly contributions. The key themes, gaps, and areas of debate, which will serve as the focal points of our investigation were identified. The research objectives, questions, and justification establish a clear roadmap for the study ahead.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter reviews the literature related to the depiction of women in contemporary female-authored FEMRITE short story anthologies. It examines how various scholars have dealt with the presentation of women in female-authored literary texts. The literature reviewed is two-way presented. The first part reviews the literature on images and the position of women in society under three subtopics; female character traits, assigned roles, and female-related thematic concerns. The second part is concerned with women in the publishing industry and presents literature reviews of female literary works, concluding with reviewed literature on FEMRITE published literary works.

2.1 Images and Position of Women in Society

2.1.1 Female Character Traits

Various scholars and critics have represented women differently. Studies before 1980 indicate that character portrayal in literature is influenced by patriarchal cultural beliefs and practices, and that women are underrepresented as main characters and negatively stereotyped when shown. Women stereotypes are observed through personality traits like being fragile, pure, and aggressive, for example, as well as through gender roles and behaviours such as being self-sacrificing, mothering/nurturing, warm, mature, dependent, passive, caring, and expressive (Rudman and Glick, 2001).

Aristotle and Plato also wrote about women, but with divergent views. Aristotle refers to women as ‘deformed males’ who are subjects to men, lack authority, and should therefore be more submissive, impulsive, compassionate, complaining, and deceptive. Plato, on the other hand, believes in the potential equality of men and women, where no gender has authority over the other and objects to the notion and practice of women being treated unfairly. Plato’s argument is supported because women who have been given a right to education have proved to be resourceful and successful in their occupations. Plato’s belief in fair and equal treatment of women will factor in my analysis as a foundation for discussing the theme of gender equality and women’s emancipation as portrayed by female authors of the short stories under this study.

Wright (2010) points out how women are afterthoughts and less important from the way they are addressed later in phrases like “boys and girls,” “he or she,” “his and hers,” and “male and female.” She thus suggests that other phrases could be used so that neither men nor women always go first for gender equality to prevail. Beyendeza (2017) on gender representation in traditional marriage songs of the Banyankore reports that female characters have both positive and negative character traits. This is similar to Betty Nabiryo’s (2018) findings while comparing John Ruganda’s female characters with those of William Shakespeare. The positive traits included loyalty, intelligence, hard work, humility, assertiveness, sincerity, love, care, and responsibility. Negatively, women are represented as lazy, greedy, materialistic, revengeful, naive, lustful, jealous, cruel, treacherous, aggressive, sarcastic, proud, and inhospitable (Nabiryo, 2018). Later in this analysis, Nabiryo’s, (2018) and Beyendeza’s (2017) findings on the presentation of female character traits as being both positive and negative will guide an understanding of female character traits from the FEMRITE female authors’ perspective.

Similar to Beyendeza (2017) and Nabiryo (2018), other studies on gender stereotyping in children's books found out that females were presented as more fearful, dependent, and able to deal/workout feelings of grief through communicating with others, which supports women’s descriptions as being expressive and dependent. Kita (2015), while discussing “Feminism in Carver’s Works,” states that women occupy an insignificant role in Carver's world. This makes his work showcase more noticeable masculine characteristics, as women struggle to achieve self-assertion, thus illustrating societal bias against the female agency. Mugume (1999) confirms the negative stereotyping of women who are oppressed, exploited, and discriminated against by males, observing how they are recast negatively as cowards, emotional, evil, irrational, and strong. They are helpless, incompetent, and unambitious as depicted through female characters presented in the central roles, and that they require help to solve any problem. The negative representation of females as being inferior, weak, less intelligent, naive, dependent-minded, emotional, subjective, foolish, oppressed victims of male dominance and sex objects is further confirmed by Mushengyezi (2003) and Ssali (2007). Findings of Ikiror (2014) also represent women in Lango folktales stereotyped negatively as weak, ignorant, lacking authority, and ideas, are less intelligent, cowards, submissive and obedient. The literature further presents female characters as indecisive and dependent-minded (Mushengyezi, 2003; Ikiror, 2013; Mpeirwe 2013). Nonetheless, as

Fernald (2006) believes, the negative portrayal of women leads to their being less vocal and the inequalities in household duties, including childcare, which is expressed as major sources of conflict and depression within families that have continuously rendered females marginalised in a patriarchal society.

Given the above insights, it is clear that earlier literature depicted women as the weaker marginalised gender compared to men. On the contrary, the trend is changing in real African society as Kita (2015) notes that through the dialogues between men and women, it is clear that women are more capable in their confrontation with everyday life. Their capability and achievements in everyday life, make assumptions regarding female character traits depicted in earlier literature seem outdated and ungrounded. Lorraine and Kimberly (2000), while reviewing recent elementary textbooks, found out that the trend has now changed, with girls portrayed to possess positive character traits, like being caring, loving, disciplined, and respectful, as well as formerly stereotypically masculine traits, like being strong, aggressive assertive and wicked (Mushengyezi, 2000). Lomme (2012), while analysing the female characters in Shakespeare's comedies, points out how female characters were able to break away from the patriarchy to gain their freedom.

She focuses on the women's unity and intellectual potency as a tool to gain freedom from patriarchal tendencies in the Elizabethan era that they had been subjected to. As mothers were shown as caring nurturers who discipline their children, this study also analyses the roles, positions and challenges women encounter while nurturing children as revealed from the female author's perspective. Hamilton (2001) concludes that the stereotype of women to be less aggressive than men depends on the ages, settings, and measures involved. Fischer and Mosquera (2001) argue that women may suppress expressions of anger for fear of reprisal and the violation of cultural expectations. Hamilton and Fishers' arguments are convincing, since in a patriarchal society, women are confined to cultural norms and find it hard to react to the exploitative and oppressive nature of the communities they live in. However, women need to receive equal treatment for the development of a family and society in general. The study thus used female-authored texts to find out how these authors present female characters expressing anger and reacting to the mistreatment.

Female characters are further presented as very kind, caring, creative, emotional, decisive, and independent-minded (Mushengyezi 2003). In *Anthills of Savannah* as quoted by (Elda and Chipppo

2020), Achebe has presented the power of a woman through Beatrice, a female character who challenges male chauvinism when she says: “Every woman wants a man to complete her is a piece of male chauvinism bullshit. I had completely rejected before I knew there was anything like women lib.” To Elda and Chippo Achebe uses Beatrice to project a new vision of women’s role, especially when he places Beatrice as an assistant secretary in the ministry of finance and a woman with a first-class degree. This implies that women are equal stakeholders in the matters of the state, thus affirming the moral strength and intellectual integrity of African women. The researcher set to find out how the female authors of FEMRITE short story anthologies use women characters in challenging male chauvinism and patriarchy in their societies.

Andelka (2019), using “The Beauty and Beast,” shows how Beauty’s generosity, kindness, and sacrifice teaches the Beast to become a better person and is rewarded with good fortune and a happily-ever-after ending. Beauty’s sympathy and kindness is further witnessed when she finally marries the Beast. She thinks that it’s terrible to cause grief to someone who has done so much to please her. Eventually, she is rewarded with his transformation into a handsome prince. This fairy tale teaches and encourages females to be patient, submissive, understanding, gentle, and kind, regardless of circumstances, because such behaviour will eventually be compensated just like Beauty. Beauty’s lessons and achievements from being kind and patient act as a supportive background in my analysis of female characters and traits in the short story anthologies published by a female found and run publishing house, FEMRITE.

Women writers use their works to define the female self in their work as equal to men, opposing certain views that define women purely from a biological point of view. In the struggle for women's liberation from patriarchal pressures, women find within themselves courage and dignity, hence expressing, the ‘true’ reality of their experiences. Women writers like Buchi Emecheta and Flora Nwapa present independent and single women from a woman’s point of view who are courageous enough to tower above their husbands and enjoy freedom from patriarchy (Uimonen, 2019). Women are free from male domination and all negative perceptions of women. They do not want to be unhappy nor have their voices ignored simply because they are women. With this representation of women by women authors, the researcher sought to establish whether contemporary FEMRITE authors present their female characters in the same way or if they depart from this kind of portrayal.

Laudita (2019) analysing the movie *Educating Rita* uses Rita's example to support liberal feminism's definition as men and women having the same equality to, for example, get higher education. She presents Ritah as a smart, determined, smart educated lady who takes all the precautions of not having a baby until she finds her true self. No matter the oppression she receives from her environment, especially her father and husband, she does not give up her dream. She keeps on taking the pregnancy control pill and lies to the husband, Denny that she stopped taking the pills six months earlier. It's unfortunate that when Denny later finds out that she is still on pregnancy pills, he grabs and burns Rita's books even when she has tries to explain her intention of discovering herself first before having a baby. Denny's action indicates that he does not support Ritah to pursue her dream of becoming an educated woman. However, Ritah's determination and courage are not lost, for she opts for a divorce rather than have a baby before completing her education. Similar to this study, the research employed postcolonial feminism to analyse how female characters in African female written and published short story anthologies are supported. The researcher tried to find out whether women receive the same education as men, or whether men support women when they (women) try to pursue their careers.

Andelka (2019) states that traditional fairy tales present women as pure, liberated from any sexual desire, submissive and passive, which are behaviour models that children are taught from a very early age. According to Brooke, women survive not only 'within their narratives' but also within our collective cultural experience' (2004). Brooke points out how Carter managed to assign her heroines a set of characteristics such as violence, aggression, rebellious nature, disobedience, self-confidence, self-sufficient, fulfilment, and freedom. By doing so, Carter is empowering her female characters and through their image, the whole human race pursues their individual needs and rebel against societal constraints. Shrivastwa's (2020) study reveals how Shurg Avery is presented as independent, self-guided and motivated. She is a mother who behaves as if she has no one or nothing to care for. Shurg tries to create her own identity as an independent self. Without the help of men, she is able to create herself, economy and power, hence becoming superior to males because she can buy anything for her lover Grady. She therefore becomes the leader, not Grady the man. Some female characters are presented as having masculine qualities, unlike the belief of the patriarchal society that marginalises women. These women have the quality of physical strength, sexual assertiveness, activeness and daring in speech. Due to these features, they go

beyond the traditional female boundaries and try to establish a new terrain in society. Hence, they resist the trend of marginalising women and becoming masculine-female Shrivastwa's (2020).

Novianti (2008) using the example of Mary, portrays how women are good negotiators, courageous, decisive, and obstinate. She presents herself as an ambassador who uses her negotiating skills to solve all interconnected problems that happen between America and Romania through negotiations. She also succeeds in saving Hannah Murphy from imprisonment. Her intelligence is further portrayed when she negotiates with Negulesco, the Romanian Finance Minister who intends to borrow money from America to assist his state's finance. She shows her courage when she receives a threatening message on her office wall with red paint, "Go home before you die". Even though she feels frightened and annoyed, she tries to face it and finds out who threatens her. She thus portrays her brave character, for she knows that it's not easy for her to lead men as an ambassador. However much, Mary is threatened, she does not give up her position, but she remains calm and brave until the president decides otherwise.

In the female-authored Literature, women characters are portrayed as strong, resistant, independent and realistic characters who boldly resist male paternalism and dominance to look to the future with courage. Women can live successful lives and contribute meaningfully to their future and that of their children without depending on the men and being disobedient to their culture. They are independent individuals who are architects of their potential happiness, rather than passive receivers of the dictates of patriarchy and can account for their values. They also, cannot surrender to stereotypical conventions and have the professional and economic means to look after themselves. Thus, women writers have successfully published enriching literary works which are also used as agents of social change in the struggle for gender equality.

Halirova (2016) portrays Charlotte Bronte's creation of Jane Eyre as a plain, modest, morally strong, and intelligent girl who does not need a man to make her feel worthy; but rather carries her self-worth in her mind and determination. Thus, Bronte contradicts a Victorian society, while speaking for the oppressed and disrespected women and is therefore considered the first modern writer of her time. Female authors and publishers promote the feminist ideology that suggests that women are as strong and capable of having power in work and love relationships as men are. The authors prefer love based on equality and friendship, which is not based on superficial love. Love

should thus be mutually beneficial and positive and bring happiness or marriage. Kilel (2019) suggests that self-determination, self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-esteem are the major contributors to the psychological empowerment of women that reduce stress and increase their satisfaction in society, love and the workplace. Training and awareness on such issues should be done to empower women. Anilkumar (2021) states that feminism was clearly reflected through Elisa's character, who is reflected as a strong independent and hardworking woman. Although it was hard during her period, Elisa portrayed radical feminism by showing the different images of the views and expectations of society about a woman. Elisa as a typical and efficient housewife dramatizes how a woman and her femininity can be limited and undervalued in the masculine world.

Even though several studies have been done in the areas of gender stereotyping in female-authored works, no known study has been conducted on female-authored contemporary short story anthologies published by FEMRITE Publications Limited Uganda, a Ugandan female-founded publishing house. This study was therefore conducted to ascertain the traits of female characters as presented in contemporary female-authored FEMRITE short story anthologies.

2.1.2 Women's Roles

Gender positioning and roles in society depend on the social, economic, and power relations in a particular community. Society is highly patriarchal depicted from the way females are treated as male subordinates and an inferior race to the male race. The men exert power directly and indirectly onto women in both civil and domestic life. Thurman (2010) while introducing Simone de Beauvoir's book, *The Second Sex* describes Simone's argument that women have been made inferior by nature. She states that when a woman begins to introduce herself, she starts by saying 'I am a woman' something a man would never do. Female characters in literature were often presented as secondary characters regularly relegated to passive, marginalised, supportive, domestic, limited, and devalued roles and greatly underrepresented in titles and central roles. The study thus sought to investigate whether FEMRITE authors under-represent or misrepresent female characters and what roles they assign to them.

Patterns of life have a gender orientation in that male and female roles are predefined. Generally, for a long time, previous studies reveal that women are portrayed as passive followers who perform traditional tasks in the home. Studies specifically described female roles as passive, immobile, restricted by clothing, prizes for male adventurousness, dependent, pleasers, saved, static and pretty dolls to be admired and bring pleasure to men. They are seen as domestic workers, garden tenderers, bakers, nurses, child-tender, and launderers, mothers, wives, fairy godmothers, fairly witches and underwater maidens.

Men are usually conditioned to imagine life horizons as fathers, breadwinners, achievers, and masters of family households, while females whatever their somewhat expanded life opportunities, remain persuaded into forms of nurturing, subservience, and obedience which are expected to prioritize the good of others, among them, husbands, children and relatives. (Asante, 2015)

Asante's words illustrate that an African woman is expected to produce, nurture, and take care of her husband and his children, and relatives. With the help of postcolonial feminism, the study sought to establish if FEMRITE authors assign such traditional feminine roles to their characters and for what reasons.

Women are defined according to their responsive roles to a man and their domestic diligence. The researcher finds this claim convincing because the women in these works are always docile and rarely speak to the audience. However, female authors assign such domestic roles to females to show how the performance of such roles by only females affects them and confines them in the domestic sphere. African women are seen as mothers, caretakers, and not providers or independent and determined women known in today's society. Mothers performed one-third more housework than fathers do; they shoulder the majority of cooking and childcare responsibilities (Bond and Thompson, Galinsky and Prottas, 2003). Studies on gender roles confirm that mothers would more often be portrayed as affection nurturers than the fathers who are presented as relatively hands-off parents who performed no significant action, be it feeding babies. Mothers often made most of the contact with children and did most of the feeding, disciplining, and expressed emotion more often than fathers did. Young girls also were cast in a nurturing role by helping, watching over, and

caring for a sibling. Kita (2015) points out that the suburban domestic atmosphere to which women in Carver's fiction have been confined leaves them trapped in domestic routines.

Women lose all senses of identity because they have no opportunity for self-realisation. Carver's work portrays many female characters who challenge the boundaries placed on them by society. They achieve this by developing strategies that help them. However, though women don't have such freedom and therefore the chance to do anything exceptional, they find transcendence in small acts of bravery and honesty that confront them daily. Based on this background, this research set to establish how female authors develop female characters whom they assign public roles and responsibilities. The extent to which these female characters manage to achieve the assigned roles was also investigated.

Nevertheless, a change that has been witnessed in the female representation in titles, and central roles, indicates that authors after 1980 are more aware and sensitive to women's changing roles and positions in society. Since then, females in literature have adopted male-stereotypic characteristics and roles. Alfonso (1986) explains that books are beginning to reflect these times of changing gender roles, although those written before the impact of the feminist movement frequently portray the more traditional and often stereotyped gender roles. Women have thus increased their participation in male-dominated roles, like assuming more responsibility for the economic support of the family (US. Department of Labor, 2002). It is believed that the change in roles and characteristics will continue in the future as women will assume even higher levels of masculine characteristics (Diekman & Eagly 2000; Goodfriend & Goodwin, 2004) and their assumption of masculine characteristics (Eagly Wood & Diekman, 2000). Niala (1986) while carrying out her research among the Yuroba in Nigerian and other parts of West Africa finds out that women were represented in "high places" like being queen mothers, queen sisters, princesses, and holders of other offices. In economic life, women are involved in farming trade, and craft production. This portrayal of a liberated woman exists in both male and female-authored fiction.

Andelka's (2019) analysis of 'Beauty and the Beast', shows how women can tame and civilise men. Having decided to save her father, Beauty moves to the Beast's castle. Even though it is an individual's decision, she completely relies and depends on her father and feels under obligation to do so. Regardless of the reason for Beauty's decision, she eventually helps the beast discover

his own. It is her kindness that makes him sophisticated and noble in her presence and even gives her gifts as a sign of affection. The Beast imitates Beauty's behaviour and kindness, which civilise and improve him. Even when she refuses to marry him and gently explains how she respects their friendship; he repays her courtesy by allowing her to see her dying father: 'I would rather die myself than cause you pain. I will send you back to your father' (De Beaumont, 1999, P.39). This study hence set to find out how female characters help other society members to improve their lives from the female author's perspective.

The early writings by women show the elements of an ideal woman as being hard-working, nurturer, adviser, caretaker, and educator. Women used indigenous African education (informal education) to teach, educate, and instil good behaviour ethics and the language of the society of the young ones. The children were taught customs, social behaviour, and societal norms through storytelling that brought together members of the family, be it nuclear or extended to share in the creativity of the community. Children were taught about morality and how to address their relatives and give respect to other people (Namirembe 2007). When mothers fail to perform their responsibility of providing safety, support, and nurturing, girls end up being failures in life with decayed morals. Turner-Shults (2002) and McDaniel (2008) found this in their qualitative interviews with female addicts who described their mothers as "cold, unavailable, and unsafe". Their findings indicate that female sex addicts always had mothers who were unable to serve as healthy attachment objects, hence failing in their responsibility of nurturing and instilling morals to their daughters (Ferree, 2012; McDaniel 2008; Turner, 2008; Turner-Shults, 2002). However, the contemporary gender roles encourage that childcare and education should be a shared responsibility by both parents since it is one of the hindrances of women's participation in public roles. Women should therefore not be blamed for all the social ills in their families like having unruly children because nurturing a child is a shared responsibility for both parents.

According to Shrivastwa (2020) however much, females in a patriarchal society are marginalised as emotional, irrational, weak, nurturing, and submissive, Walker in *The Colour Purple*, defies this patriarchal convention and gives masculine roles to females. Consequently, her characters in the novel resist such patriarchal notion and subvert the traditional gender roles. Using clear examples of Sofia (Celie's daughter-in-law) and Shug Avery, (Albert's mistress), depict how women play visual roles in the process of rupturing the convention. Not only do they act as anti-conventional,

but also encourage Celie to transform herself from a passive to an active female character. In the novel, Sofia is presented as an active and bold girl, unlike the traditional females. She doesn't accept any bad comments made against her as evidenced when she and Harpo, the lover of Sofia meet with his father to discuss the issue of marriage. Seeing Sofia pregnant, the father makes bad remarks about her. Harpo sits quietly with his head down being passive, but Sofia reacts against these bad comments made against her. To answer the question about what roles and responsibilities are assigned to female characters, the study investigated how female authors assign both domestic and public roles that were traditionally considered masculine to female characters.

According to Shrivastwa (2020) in *The Colour Purple* unlike the traditional patriarchal belief, females turn to females for support, development and creating identity, leaving their male counterparts. Beyond the bond of the loving and nurturing relationship, women challenge the patriarchal norms and values by creating their own female world. Walker's female characters powerfully challenge the traditional belief which always regards females as dependent on males. Nevertheless, throughout the novel, Walter portrays female friendship as a means for women to summon the courage to resist the oppression and dominance of patriarchal society. Female relationships, especially unity assist them to gain new power and the ability to form their selfhood. The regular help, support, and guidance of Shurg, Sofia, and Nettie enables Celie to regain her real existence. . Celie transforms herself from the dependent woman to an independent self and celebrates joy and bliss in her business and companions. She also appreciates the rights of women in the male-dominated environment, when Shug Avery proves herself as an independent and economically strong, self-defensive woman who fights and leaves Harpo to lead an independent life. Eventually, Celie becomes active and revengeful against the tyranny of her husband, whom she curses for being violent when she discovers that he has kept Nettie's letter. Even though women are defined negatively by the patriarchal society and expected to treat men as gods, in *The Colour Purple*, many female characters go beyond the boundaries of traditional gender roles and gain moral victory with the help of other female characters.

Anilkumar (2021) records that the traditional gender roles assigned to women in literature were crushed by many women writers who depicted women in unconventional roles. Traditionally, the majority of leading characters had always been men and women used as the victims. Female writers however create intelligence and give heroic attributes to female characters to prove that

they are also capable of achieving goals like men. As most of the female written Literature portrays men and women continuing to occupy different roles in society, the change in female roles led the researcher to examine whether contemporary female-authored FEMRITE short story anthologies depict this change. The primary goal of this study was to explore how female writers represent the change in female roles and how female characters lead, encourage and motivate others to victory in FEMRITE published short story anthologies. Even though many studies on women have always depicted women in a subordinate and largely negative role in the works of most male African writers, there is an indication that the situation is changing. It is with this background that the researcher set to analyse and investigate how contemporary FEMRITE female writers portray and assign roles to women characters from a woman's perspective in the short narratives.

2.1.3 Thematic Concerns in Literature

Themes depicted in literature in patriarchal societies are usually gender-related, depicting the female gender as the most disadvantaged. The most common theme is the power dynamic that differentiates females from males, as men and women are relegated to a specific public space. Other themes include oppression of females, economic and sexual exploitation of females, female identity crisis, gender discrimination, economic deprivation, women emancipation, and domestic violence. Ikiror (2014) reveals that the general themes in Lango folktales are education, war, violence, work, respect, wisdom, marriage, death, responsibility, love, and greed. Beyendeza (2018) points out that the major gender-related themes in marriage songs of Banyankore are the essence of marriage; parental care, family love, chastity for the female who must preserve her virginity, bride price, male dominance or patriarchy and domestic violence. The themes of tradition and culture, gender inequality, injustice to females, male dominance or patriarchy or male chauvinism, and chastity are portrayed by the way men dominate in everything within society, and women considered as incomplete beings owing to their attachment to men.

Kiamba (2008) reveals that societal conventions regarding gender and leadership traditionally exclude women and top leadership is viewed as a masculine domain. In African societies men lead and women follow, hence explaining the traditional belief that leadership is masculine. Ikiror (2014), shows that a man has authority over a woman. Under patriarchy, men always speak from different positions that women and their political strategies take into account. This implies that

men can make decisions and women will refer to them for any action to be taken. Women were thus treated as less equipped with ideas than men, thus encouraging women to be submissive and obedient to the men. All these explain male dominance in an African setting which female African authors preach against and advocate for equal treatment of all genders using their literary texts.

Zola (2010) depicts how female characters are not considered and how there is no respect for their views, dreams or ambitions in male writings. In arranged marriage negotiations, fathers choose partners for their daughters without considering their feelings. The literary texts indicate that the socio-economic status of families plays a major role in the consummation of arranged marriages and female characters are denied a chance to accept the man of their choice. Various cultural and family reasons such as poverty, witchcraft, or infertility are used as reasons for preventing female characters from choosing a spouse. Marriage is thus presented to be based on specific social circumstances, not love. It is this love of wealth that has depicted women as commercial commodities who function as objects of economic exchange. Zola (2010) reveals that male-authored literary texts suggest that a female character's place of work is home, where she is in charge of everything in her kitchen and is absent and silent in any decision making of her family. Females are thus regarded as minors under the authority of males, after marriage, they are portrayed as individuals who succumb to the authority of their husbands. Moreover, after their husbands' death, the authority is transformed to the most senior members of her husbands' family. The primary objective of this study is thus to determine how female-authored literature produces the positive meanings and values of female characters in the struggle for women's emancipation.

Through African setting, beliefs, and expectations, the themes of chastity, segregation, and discrimination in literature are portrayed. Traditionally, women are expected to remain virgins until marriage for fear of being marginalised. Women who don't retain their virginity are chastised and marginalised (Server and Yurdakul, 2001). The preservation of a woman's virginity till marriage is the most feminine virtue therefore optimized a perfect lady. Failure to preserve virginity only affects women, as men are never blamed or considered impure. This was similar to the law of Moses in *The Bible*, where in case of adultery, only the woman would be accused and stoned to death while the man walked away scot-free yet both had broken the law. Women are thus denied the same rights that men enjoy. They remain confined in societal norms and beliefs which portrays the themes of male chauvinism and discrimination, tradition and culture since it is in

patriarchal societies where a woman is believed to be impure if she engages in sexual behaviours and a man is perfect (Aaron, 2020; Ferree 2010, 2012, McDaniel 2008).

The theme of discrimination entails unjust or prejudicial treatment of females by males. This is common in both oral and written literature as reported in the study of Ikiror (2013) in Lango culture. In this report, due to patriarchal culture, males discriminate against females as witnessed through the way females are treated as an inferior race in the traditional folktales, songs, and other forms of oral literature. Despite the fact that not all societies were patriarchal, there was gender discrimination and segregation in most countries in the 16th century. Women had no vote, few legal rights, a limited chance to education, writing and jobs. Female writers in the 18th and 19th centuries faced challenges in publishing and getting readers for their works and thus resorted to publishing under male names so that their works could get an audience. With such belief, women's feelings were suppressed and could not be accepted in society (Ferree, 2010). With the observation dating from the Victoria era, the researcher sought to find out if the contemporary female-authored FEMRITE short story anthologies portray women in the same way.

Furthermore, there is a theme of economic and sexual exploitation of females by males both in the family and public sectors. The evidence exists in the study on Ugandan oral literature study by Ikiror (2013) in Lango culture. In patriarchal communities, males have more access to power and property, which puts them in a position to exploit females. Sexual exploitation, immorality/ moral decay/ moral decadence is depicted through the portrayal of females as sex objects to be used and dumped at any time by males (Mushengyezi 2003). The ancient fictional writers also presented women as sex objects. The few women who appear in Homer's *Iliad* are for the amusement of the warriors. Brussels was given to Achilles the warrior to soothe him sexually. Toni's probable prostitution act in *Are These Actual Miles* to ensure the sale of the convertible car is a symbolic act of the way a female's body is 'used' by men in our society clearly accompanied by the feelings of guilt and remorse (Kita, 2015). In addition, Wasike (2009) while analysing Rugunda's plays establishes that the author portrays women as sex objects:

“Rugunda's plays project the female characters' bodies as symbols of sexualized identity and contradictions, yet recognising how the same bodies can be read as canvases that

intersect between the semiotic and power and the imagination of the nation” (Wasike, 2009)

Here, it is depicted that women characters are used, viewed, and treated like sex objects. Wasike aims at showing how Rugunda's dramaturgy is deployed through female characters, their bodies, and their dramatic conversions. At places of work and education institutions, men use their positions as bosses to demand sex from their female employees and students. Unless women submit to their bosses' sexual desires, they can never be promoted at work, fairly awarded marks, and as a result, they can eventually give up on work or studies. In a home or family setting, men expect women to treat them like gods, failure to do that, a wife is deemed disrespectful. The woman is abandoned, or thrown out of her home and replaced with a 'fresh' one who is also neglected after a few years in marriage.

There is a theme of gender oppression, and torture of females by the males. This is common in folktales in Ugandan oral literature among the Bakiga, Lango, and Bakonzo cultures as reported by Asimwe (2011), Ikiror (2013), and Bwambale (2013) respectively. Females are seen as possessions of males and as such are treated as children with no rights or involvement in decision-making. Men beat and torture women for no apparent reason. This torture is made worse by payment of pride price, which reduces the status of women to secondary citizens only seen as men's property. This has hence led to women's suffering, misery, disappointment, disillusionment, and betrayal.

Ashley's (2009) analysis on how Shakespeare's plays were dominated by males shows that the relationship between male and female characters is often characterised by physical and psychological victimisation of women, their feelings of misery, and destruction of life. Women become victims of political intrigue as men always attack them. Kita's (2015) analysis reveals that basing on the feminist discourse of the period, Carver's description of lives in the home with no possibility of escape or change becomes a symbol of the depression that results from its monotony. Despite their inferior status, women demonstrate a desire to change their position and lives and therefore become less independent of others which makes them superior to the lethargy found in men in most of Carver's stories. Women become the best representative for the working-class

people who struggle to overcome the biographical and socio-cultural obstacles imposed by society. Thus, women certainly start to influence society.

Females have been presented in a way that depict sexism, discrimination, and segregation in work and family roles, traditional idealisation of femininity and unequal representation of the sexes. As a result, the late 1960s, and early 1970s marked considerable national attention to the women's movement with an emphasis on the need to overcome gender discrimination. Mugume (1999), points out that discrimination in Uganda and other patriarchal societies in the world has gradually and steadily become an outdated and socially unacceptable practice. Literature has since been used to advocate for change through its depiction of the themes of change, revolution, and struggle for women's liberation, gender equality, and modernity. Literature is thus employing modern and liberated women characters who are advocating for social, economic change in their societies so that both genders receive equal treatment and judgment. With the social, economic, and political changes since the colonial and postcolonial period that seem to make women liberated, the researcher sought to find out the female authors' roles in the struggle for equality using FEMRITE fictional short narratives.

Almost all the modern female writers have pointed out women's emancipation as a crucial topic by depicting the hard circumstances of African women. Modern female writers have thus voiced their concerns on the recognition of gender equality, observing the girl child's rights, and promoting girl child education and health to ensure critical development. In her advocacy for girl child education, Sweetman she puts it as:

If girls are not viewed by families and societies as having critical roles and potential for adulthood, and if opportunities are not available, then they will become mothers with children who are more likely to die in infancy, less healthy, less educated, and less confident and the cycle will be repeated, an investment in national development (Sweetman, 2000).

Sweetman is showing the negative impact of neglecting a girl child who is made to view herself as a second-class citizen. The girl child is denied a chance to education and thus ends up getting married off at a tender age and in most cases to a man old enough to be her father. To have a

developed society, girls should be treated as responsible and first-class citizens like boys as many writers have advocated. Eventually, several female writers have joined the struggle to liberate women by using their literary works to expose the oppression, exploitation, and suffering women experience. For example, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) inspired by the continuous mistreatment of women globally wrote an essay, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. This is included in *Critical Theory since Plato* edited by Hazards and Leroy (1992). Here, oppression and exploitation of women by keeping them backward and denying them equal rights that had dominated the entire world is condemned:

‘Society is wasting its assets if it retains women in the role of convenient domestic slaves and alluring mistresses denies them economic independence and encourages them to be docile and attentive to their looks to the exclusion of all else’ (Wollstonecraft, 2017).

Wollstonecraft advocates for equal rights for both men and women regardless of sex implying that no gender should feel powerful, authoritative, and privileged over the other. Treating all genders equally in society ensures critical development since women will no longer be oppressed and exploited but rather supported to develop their families and country at large.

De Lauretis (1990) uses the 'Eccentric Subject' theory to analyse Carver's female character. Subjectivity a key concept in feminist theory refers to an excessive critical position attained through practices of political and personal displacement across boundaries between socio-sexual identities and communities between bodies and discourses. In Carver's fiction collection some women feel they could get rid of their husbands, isolate them and make them feel smaller and unimportant, but they don't have the strength and determination to do so. De Lauretis while explaining the concept of 'the figures of resistance' shows how certain female figures refuse to accept the norms and rules imposed on them by society. Using the short story 'What Do You Do in San Francisco?' a young woman is nothing like the standard of femininity that is perceived by society. She wears male clothes hence making the people around her feel outrageous and neighbours begin questioning her devotion and role as a mother and wife simply because she refuses to wear what society considers decent. A similar vivid example of a figure of resistance is in 'Blackbird Pie' where the husband is reluctant to accept the fact that his wife has abandoned him. He thus constructs a whole theory of secrets and suspicious actions claiming that the

handwriting in the letter he receives is not that of his wife, therefore something strange and inexplicable must be going on. The letter, symbolically a figure of resistance, breaks all the norms of the patriarchal law according to which a woman cannot leave her husband. Ironically, women find their force even in a pen. The same idea is implied in Carver's poem 'The Other Life' in which the husband narrator describes the moment his wife is signing the divorce papers:

'My wife is in the other half of this mobile home making a case against me. I can hear her pen scratch, scratch. Now and then she stops to weep, then -scratch, scratch.'

The verb 'scratch' is repeated to make us believe that her writing is disturbing the husband who feels that the patriarchal order is threatened. Carver's female characters are portrayed as searching for freedom which is considered heroic as the conflict between masculinity and femininity is as old as the whole world. Consequently, women are depicted as having greatly taken part in struggling for their position in society whereas men just had it given as a gift from their birth.

As Kita (2015) states, the topics concerning feminism include the 'use' of the female body by men as portrayed in the short story *Are These Actual Miles*, 'women trapped in the domestic atmosphere' and also the topic of 'challenging all the boundaries imposed on them by society'. De Lauretis presents the concept of 'The Figures of Resistance' where a particular category of women neither cares nor minds about the norms of society. The women rather develop their own individuality and perform things that are only acceptable considering human rights but shocking to a patriarchal society. The perfect revelation of such women is in women characters like the women who wear male clothes and those who abandon their husbands. By employing such characters, authors like Carter fought for an unsuppressed image of women as well their liberation, especially in terms of sexual urges (Muzdeka, 2016). The heroine in 'The Tiger's Bride' pursues her needs, accepts her natural, dissocialised self and embraces the inner bestial side of her personality (Barootes (2007)). Through the portrayal of how society treats animals and women as objects designed for men's satisfaction and commodity, it is clear that Carter criticises the ongoing process of social acceptance of dehumanisation among humans, with the presentation of powerful images of mechanical maids and carnival figures of men. The author's aim is to reconstruct the socially accepted system of predetermined male and female, owner and property, roles in order to demonstrate the futility of such divisions based on sex. Feminism thus does not merely reinforce women's rights but rather empowers all those marginalised individuals who do not fit in the

patriarchy established paradigms that are depicted in the transformations of both male and female characters in literary texts.

Jenkins' (2017) film entitled, *Wonder Woman* portrays the traditional role of feminism in which masculine traits including courage, strength, leadership, independence, and assertiveness are used to overwhelm a male-dominant society, while manhood as a masculine trait is challenged by a woman constantly striving for power and authority. The film is a portrayal of the labyrinth of ideas in wonder woman regarding feminism that challenges the subtle ideas of sexual harmony. Men and women are both equal counterparts of society. As Fayaz notes 'Wonder Woman' criticises the strong bond of family, marriage, and childbirth and points out Matriarchy as redemption against patriarchal values while the root cause of turmoil against women is associated with the hierarchy of patriarchal hegemony. He is supported by Everett (2009) who strongly argues that patriarchy is needed to be dismantled only then can women be empowered. There must be a wonder woman for challenging patriarchy. Similarly, Hook (2004) as an intersectional feminist in her essay 'Understanding Patriarchal Challenges' argues that crises men are confronted with, are not regarded with masculinity but are the crisis of patriarchal masculinity. Her consideration in the essay revolves around the supremacy of women through knocking down men's authority not only in a clan but in every field of life. As feminists analyse men's issues, one generally gets an extremely clear answer of how males are in crisis because females are challenging male supremacy as women are questioning men to share the public reins and men can't bear it. According to Fayaz (2017), *Wonder Woman* portrays women as paragons of a perfect world order while men are portrayed as evil advocates. Some male characters are portrayed as subordinates, good in virtue but their good deeds seem void and the constant suspicions of their character throughout the movie make them less human or subordinate gene of the human species.

Fayaz's (2017) study on *Diana the Challenger*, reports that males and females are both the better half of the dynamic care of society and the equal counterpart of society. To make their journey smooth, there is a need for trustworthiness but not doubts and suspicions that derail the main engine hence making their journey tiresome and crucial. Jenkin's (2017) movie shows that all corruption in the world is because of men folk. On the contrary, it is shown in the movie that the purpose of creating women was to restore peace to the earth. The role of both men and women in society is pivotal for society development and the notion of womanhood is as important as manhood is

considered. Since, domestic chores and giving birth to children is a delicate business that preserves the human gene in society, men and women have both equal partnerships in society building and preserving the human species.

Shrivastwa's (2020) work on "Resistance against the Marginalization of Afro American Women" depicts how the Afro-American female characters in Alice Walker's, novel, *The Colour Purple* break the boundaries of traditional male or female roles focusing on the struggles of African-American women against the exploitation both by the white and black men. In analysing the black woman's tragic experiences in a racist society and their struggle for survival and wholeness, the female characters are presented with masculine traits such as activeness, boldness, and physical strength. As Shrivastwa (2020) suggests, the women's movement should constitute the struggle for a society free of exploitation, and oppression. It should also be identical with the aims of proletarian class struggle and feminist contentions as regards self-transformation and participation of women in the issues for women, by women and of women. Since thousands of married women experience violence in physical and economic forms, Abdul Kalam, the former president of India noted that empowering a woman is a prerequisite for creating a good nation because when women are empowered, a stable society is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their value systems lead to the development of a family, a good society, and ultimately a good nation. The fact that women's working hours are longer than that of men, 12-16 hours per day, have lower status, low paid occupations, lower economic positions make them less conscious lacking self-confidence to venture into research. Therefore, society and country should unite and recognise women by giving them higher positions in employment and leadership so that their esteem can be raised hence motivating them to contribute positively towards development.

Zulidyana (2020) notes that the persistence of patriarchy in society has long been a concern where gendered binary opposition that marginalised women into deprecating traditional feminine roles like: cooking, babysitting, and cleaning and social roles: fashion designer, teacher are maintained through discourses. The study reveals the existence of marginalisation against women. There are strong patriarchal traits depicted by male characters and typical female inferiority shown by female characters as the male characters still present masculine traits such as strong, brave, rational, ambitious, hardworking, rough, smart, independent, honest, handsome, and careless. Meanwhile, the female traits like weak, fearful, irrational, passive, nurturing, articulate, stupid, dependent,

untrustworthy, beautiful, and caring are still found in the female characters. Zulidyana (2020) asserts that s education plays a crucial part in deconstructing these binary oppositions and marginalisation of women in general.

Yaoye (2021) guided by feminism expounds on the social reality of gender inequality under the patriarchal system. By virtue of their unique gender advantages, the men in the novel persecute and discriminate against women in family life, social status, and other aspects, putting women in a submissive position. Through this gender inequality, the traditional concept of loyalty to love, which is related to sex differences is reflected. The study describes how the author of *Great Gatsby* recreates a monetarist society, the oppression of the patriarchal system, and the disdain for the women of the new age making them lose their own ideas and shape their deplorable characters. Feminism views the male-centred society as abnormal and if women need to be truly liberated in society, society should change the prejudice against them and throw away the shackles. Yaoye (2021) states that since ancient times, the patriarchal ideology has been rooted in human development, which can even be traced back to the Bible. In the Bible, the gender inequity and imbalance lie in the fact that Eve is just Adam's rib. It is since then that society became male-dominated and men occupied the higher position in the sexual relationship, while women were secondary and they had lower sexual status. As Sutradhar (2014) notes, gendered notions existent in society, especially in a patriarchal society like India place women at a disadvantaged position because at the core of such a society remains gender-based discrimination leading to their oppressed and subordinate status. Such discrimination is strengthened by the cultural and ideological bases thereby shaping the female and male psyche to act and be a 'woman' or 'man' with all the feminine and masculine characteristics.

According to Asiegbu (2020), female writers' inclination to recast the ordinary experiences of the ordinary woman in society produces women whose traits are alike since the realities of the women who are represented by these writers are identical. The conditioning of these characters, by similar forces to react in the same ways is not overlooked by the writers either. Each author's independent recreation of a female character who turns out to have common attributes as the lead characters of the other writers, solidifies the female author's claim of allegiance to the realities of the woman in a patriarchal society. An outstanding mannerism that permeates these characters is the two-in-one characteristic of beauty and meekness, added to this is the trait of assertiveness, the inclination to

put up a fight when they can no longer withstand the assault to their humanity. These features are found in all the major characters of female-authored texts and they are the tenets of womanism—loving beauty, gentle approach to the struggle for female emancipation, and assertiveness.

Mohammed (2014) states that with many female writers advocating for the equality of men and women, society has witnessed the creation of many feminist organisations to fight and advocate for gender equality. The 18th century saw the formation of a union by female critics to help their fellow women fight for their rights which included; education, employment, and choice of marriage partner. They named their union; the *Women's Rights Movement* where Mary Wollstonecraft was among the pioneer members. It was through these unions that in the 19th century when the world transformed, women began to be recognised as sole contributors in the development. This started with the western countries where they would work on farms of rich people, in companies and industries. Females were helped to access education, employment as engineers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, careers that were historically enjoyed by men. With these jobs, women have contributed a lot to societal development. Women activists hold the view that women of the 21st century are more empowered than ever before as characterized by the acquisition of more income through their efforts, increasingly making decisions that affect their families and the public.

The post-colonial contemporary female writers create a space of independence for their characters to liberate their protagonists against patriarchal discrimination as their literary works are largely dominated by concerns about women in a world of patriarchal dominance. Women protagonists manage to take control of their previously paternalistic-centred lives. Contemporary African women's literature is filled with thematic concerns of refusing to be seen as docile, self-effacing, and passive observers in a male-driven world (Ludmilla, 2017). This research, therefore, sought to establish whether the general thematic concerns of contemporary female FEMRITE writers relate to those of other female writers in the world. The researcher's main aim was to establish if FEMRITE authored short stories in many cases tell the story of the empowerment of women— who break new ground as leaders in business and other community sectors in the African context.

2.2 Women in the Writing and Publishing Sector

2.2.1 History of Women in Publishing Industry

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries women began to take larger roles in society and projected their voices through their writings. They however struggled to be taken seriously in the literary world. Women writers often doubted themselves to express their struggles, subsequently forcing them to live in fear of their writing careers and lack of market for their works. To succeed in the male-dominated writing profession, women writers resorted to using pseudo male names to publish and be assured of a market for their literary works. As women tried to make the process of publishing their works easily, Twohey (2014) notes that Margaret Atwood tried to disguise her femininity to break into the publishing world. Miroslaw Miernick (2015) reveals that J.K.Rowling used a male name because young boys might not be interested in a book written by a woman. The use of male names by female writers emphasizes the fact that male writing was seen as more universal than women's writing. Nonetheless, women who were courageous enough to publish books under their signatures achieved fame, influenced literary culture, and attained economic self-sufficiency. Women writers were thus enabled to address broad subjects like slavery, women's emancipation, parliamentary reform, and industrialism.

In Africa, like the rest of the world, writing and publishing were largely male-dominated. A few female African writers had to struggle to gain literary attention and admission to the literary canon. The increase in scholarly inquiries on and about women in the 1980s was another important factor in changing the status of African women writers. African women writers gained courage and determination as their works started to attract scholars. Africa has thus witnessed a new generation of African women writers like Calixthe Beyala of French Cameroon, Tsitsi Dangarembga of Zimbabwe, Monica Arac de Nyeko of Uganda, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie of Nigeria;

The post-colonial contemporary female writers create a space of independence for their characters. Female-authored contemporary African writings are liberating their protagonists against patriarchal discrimination as their literary works are largely dominated by concerns about women in a world of patriarchal dominance. Ludmilla notes that:

The protagonist women characters in their writings always manage to take control of their previously paternalistic-centred lives. Contemporary African women's literature is filled

with thematic tones of refusing to be seen as docile, self-effacing and passive observers in a male-driven world (Ludmilla, 2017)

Ludmilla is trying to show how contemporary African women writers are preoccupied with the representation of a true African woman in their literature. Women authors try to establish their position in the changing world in an attempt to advance the women's liberation struggle through exposing the unfairness of the patriarchal society they live in. Shari Benstock in *A Handbook of Literary Feminisms* asserts that;

The women writers in the modernist period dwell on the subject of relationships between women and men who prize independence and who are committed to feminism and social reform as the central theme (Benstock, 2002)

This is a true assertion since, in the contemporary female written literary texts, women write in the feminist language of the time, use the setting and develop heroines to advance their liberation and freedom. The female writers don't let their female characters' lives be dictated by the men in their lives. Ludmilla notes that;

Their work encourages and supports their characters in defining their own space, be it choosing to remain unmarried or exploring their sexuality in different forms (Ludmilla 2017)

It is through language and narratives that knowledge (and hence power) is produced. Female-authored literature portrays the history and struggles of women. Pre-colonial literature reveals the traditional African woman and a transitional image witnessed during the colonial period whereas postcolonial literature reveals her transformation. Most African writers use the experiences learnt from their mothers who are fond of narrating stories to their children as a way of warning, giving pieces of advice, and imparting knowledge. It is this listening skill that enables female writers to create and form fictional narratives. Other writers use the same narratives to create their own;

The existence of active and powerful women in African oral tradition has been a vital source of inspiration for African women. African women writers have been motivated by mothers who were great and resourceful storytellers. Some writers are influenced by their childhood keenness to listen to old people's folktales (Zulfiqar, 2016)

Women writers however still face many challenges that hinder their daily activities in the literary world. Women are still struggling for the audience in society so that their works can receive scholarly attention and be freely included in the curriculum without a lot of debate.

2.2.2 Female Literary Works

Literature review shows that African women authors who have written and published write about women using the experiences encountered for example the struggle they went through against the political, social, historical, and cultural oppression, the fight they endured, and how they have managed to speak for themselves (Nnaemeka, 2021, Shah, 2008, Asaah, 2011). The role of women writers should therefore not be underestimated. Susan Coultrap-Mcquin (2000) while highlighting the struggle women authors go through in the publishing sector stresses the importance of their contribution to the economics of the literary marketplace, politics, and the development of any given society and world in general. It is against this background that this study chose to use FEMRITE short story anthologies to explore how the authors and publishers strive to contribute to societal development based on the characters they present in the texts under study. The study however acknowledges the fact that many studies have been done on female-authored literary texts some of which include the following.

Nyawira (2020) looks at Immigration and Women's Self-identity in the novels of Adichie, Bulawayo, and Baingana. She analyses African women's immigrant characters to establish how their immigration to the USA affects their self-identity and their interactions with others in society. She examines the identity transformation among African women writers who interact with American Diaspora space, survival tactics they employ while in the USA, as well as how post-immigration women characters relate with both their host land and homeland. The study argues that several factors determine the adoption or rejection of new self-identity and that the altered self-identity of African Diaspora women in the USA affects the way they interact with both American society and their society of origin. The study concludes that there is a remarkable difference between the representation of African women characters' self-identity before and after immigration to the USA.

Kilyobo's (2015) representation of the literary works of Anglophone and Francophone African Women Writers (1960-2012) establishes the extent to which their literary works were represented in UKZN Pietermaritzburg and Howard College Campus Libraries. The study generally revealed

an increase in the body of literature by African women writers. However, their writings or topics have been characterised as controversial because of the evaluation concerning the potential that their literature carries and the expectancy it produces. Therefore, there is a need to continue to create opportunities in terms of publication by women in Africa. This requires teamwork, involving all parties, and embedding it in curricula, a reason behind the use of FEMRITE short story anthologies, a female found publishing organisation that supports female writers in writing and publication.

Amba's (2019) research on Leadership, Voice and Visibility looks at strengthening African women's voice and representation using the African women development fund's social justice workshop for women writers. The workshop brings together women from across the continent for a residential camp to sharpen participant's skills in writing and communicating about social justice issues. The workshop has played a significant role in conceptualising and implementing communication for a development strategy that emphasises capacity building. In many of the workshops, women participants have produced works that confidently represent and analyse issues that affect women hence acting as agents of transformation in the struggle to combat gender stereotypes and inequality. With such background, the researcher settled on using FEMRITE which also engages its members in a Regional Women Writer's Residency annually to explore its impact on mentoring, training, and publishing of literary texts for upcoming women writers that present women characters striving to gain their freedom in patriarchal societies.

Ahlberg (2009) studies Women and War in Contemporary Love Stories from Uganda using Nyeko's *Jambula Tree*, and *Strange Fruit* and Baingana's *Tropical Fish*. The study depicts African female experiences during war and peace. Sofia further goes ahead to portray how love becomes a powerful means of political and social change. Even though the female characters' love in these stories, it does not guarantee everlasting happiness, it shows females' refusal to be victimised. The study explores how female writers use their literary works to denounce the violent atrocities that afflict the lives of many Ugandans in the Northern region. It also analyses the challenging social and economic conditions that hinder many young women from fulfilling their aspirations as well as the exploitation of young African women by Europeans, and the numerous forms of betrayal experienced by women. However much these are not solved through love, the study has proven that writing is an act of love that becomes a struggle for peace. The narratives discussed show the

determination of the female writers to tell their own stories of love and hope despite war and conflict. Their stories highlight ways through which women cope with violence, mothers who must ensure that human life goes on against all odds. Love has been portrayed to inspire self-expression and, in the war, and conflict context, love is analogous to survival. Through the love stories, the women writers become key agents for the development of peace. The researcher aimed to investigate the portrayal of love in the FEMRITE short story anthologies, analyse its influence on the characters featured in the selected anthologies and its significance in the fight for gender equality within these collections.

Naula, et al (2019) uses Akiiki Nyabongo's novel *Africa Answers* to discuss the Portrayal of Religious Syncretism in Africa as a reality that has persistently painted Christianity as an offshoot of traditional African religions. The study argues that most African Christians will take long to detach themselves from traditional African religious beliefs because their way of life and practices are rooted in African traditional religion. The study has portrayed that Christianity to some extent influences the way of life of Africans but much of it has remained intact hence Africans will continue to practice both the traditional and Christian beliefs because the former is deeply entrenched in their religious ethos. Even though Africans appreciate that certain elements of their tradition need to be discarded since they are no longer useful, they are trapped between the familiar and the foreign leading to religious syncretism. Christianity in Africa still has a long way to completely transform African society because Africans still practice African traditional religion alongside Christianity. This study is meant to explore if tradition versus modernity is a dominant theme in the short stories under study and how the FEMRITE authors have used religion in advocating for fair treatment of women.

Gichanda (2019) in 'Defence of Chick-Lit; Refashioning Feminine Subjectivities in Ugandan and South African contemporary women's writing uses Goretta Kyomuhendo's *Whispers from Vera* to depict how contemporary women's narratives reflect on the rapid pace of change in women's social lives. The study interrogates how Goretta Kyomuhendo embraces Chick-Lit as a form of writing that allows her to reflect on the realities of women and engage with the contradictions, complexities, and ambiguities of contemporary feminine subjectivities. Lynda argues that the text presents chick-lit as a genre that is more political and attempts to disrupt the original Chick-lit by offering a critique of society. Lynda's study articulates how women's views on their relationships

with family members, and female friends, reflect on the challenges that a modern woman faces in the work environment, interrogates women's realities concerning love, marriage, and motherhood, explores concepts of sexual desires and intimacy, and negotiates the dilemmas of a patriarchal society. The study finds out that contemporary women writers are adopting the Chick-lit genre because it allows them to reflect on realities that are complex and uncertain, transform gender relations, redefine the roles of women and construct new feminine subjectivities. Similarly, the researcher in the current study set to examine how FEMRITE Short story anthologies depict women's struggles, love, and challenges, encountered in the struggle for gender equality by analysing the roles assigned to female characters and the related thematic themes in the short stories studied.

2.2.3 FEMRITE Literary Works

Owing to the difficulty female writers face while trying to publishing their literary works and the need to succeed in the publishing sector, they established FEMRITE, an indigenous, non-governmental, non-profit making organisation that eased the publication of women authored literature. Evain et al state that;

Since its inception, FEMRITE has grown in membership, publishing, training and promoting writers, some of whom have received national and international recognition. FEMRITE has increased the number and validity of women writers in Uganda and Africa (Evain et al, 2018)

Women writers in Uganda and across Africa have thus been greatly supported by FEMRITE Publications Limited, Uganda as Stratford explains the organisation's achievements;

FEMRITE has become the largest and most successful women's writing group in East Africa and one of the most influential literary communities on the African continent (Stratford, 2018)

FEMRITE Publications Limited Uganda has several publications ranging from novels, poetry, short story anthologies and true-life stories. The novels published by FEMRITE include; *Memoirs of a Mother* (1998) Ayeta Anne Wangusa, *The Invisible Weevil* (1998) Mary Karooro Okurut, *Silent Patience* (1999) Jane Kaberuka. *A Season of Mirth* (2001) Regina Amollo, *Secrets No More*

(1999) Goretti Kyomuhendo, *Cassandra* (1999) Violent Barungi, *Shockwaves Across the Ocean* (2005) Jocelyn Bananuka Ekochu and others.

Poetry published by FEMRITE Publications limited Uganda includes; *The African Saga* (1998) Susan Kiguli, *No Hearts at Home* (1999) Christine Oryema Lalobo, *Painted Voices* Vol. 1(2008) and Vol.2 (2009) FEMRITE writers, *The Butterfly Dance* (2010) Rose Rwakasisi/Okaka Dokotum and others.

The true-life stories published by FEMRITE Publications include; *Tears of Hope* (2003) Violent Barungi, *I dare to Say* (2007) Dr. Susan Kiguli/ Violent Barungi, *Today You Will Understand* (2008), *Farming Ashes* (2009) Hilda Twongyeirwe/ Violent Barungi, and *Beyond the Dance* (2009) Violent Barungi/ Hilda Twongyeirwe.

The FEMRITE short story anthologies include; *A Woman's Voice* (1998) Mary Karoro Okurut/Violent Barungi, *Words From Granary* (1998) Violent Barungi, *Gifts of Harvest* (2006) Violent Barungi, *Pumpkin Seeds and Other Gifts* (2009) Helen Moffet/ Violent Barungi, *Talking Tales* (2009) Violent Barungi, *Never Too Late* (2011) Hilda Twongyeirwe/ Aaron Mushengyezi, *World of Our Own* (2011) Hilda Twongyeirwe and others.

2.2.3.1 FEMRITE Novels

Most of the FEMRITE novels have been researched on; Akite (2019) analyses the Representation of Women in Ugandan War Narratives in the *The Invisible Weevil* (1988). Babcook's (2019) article on "The Building of the Professional Class" uses *The Invisible Weevil* by Mary Karoro Okurut, to show how the novel's multi-generic structure alternates between bildungsroman and naturalist war. Naula et al (2018) while analysing the depiction of corporal punishment and its effects on students use *The Invisible Weevil* to show how such punishments produce fear, timidity, submissiveness, and violence. Naula et al (2018) use *The Invisible Weevil* in the study of the Portrayal of Virginity in African Traditional Marriages. Odiemo (2010) uses Okurut's *The Invisible Weevil* (1988) to explore the topic on Women Engagement with Power and Authority in Rewriting East Africa. In the current study, the researcher used a different genre of FEMRITE short story anthologies to explore the role of mothers and aunts in preparing their children for marriage and the way it affects the girls being prepared. She also explores the value attached to

virginity, and sexual exploitation in the selected short stories, plus how female developed characters fight against the sexual exploitation and discrimination that come with chastity.

Asante (2017) on *Modest Desires* and *Defiant Gestures*, looks at how female sexualities are represented in *Cassandra*. Kiyimba (2008) in his article, argues that male identity and female space in the fiction of Ugandan women writers shows that Violet's novel *Cassandra* confronts issues of inter-gender power struggle in a broader sense. Also, Adedapo (2019) uses *Cassandra* in her study on gender discourse shift and intra-gender conflicts in contemporary novels. She presents the intra-gender conflict in *Cassandra* between stepmother and stepson. Veaudry (2011) while commenting on *Cassandra* in *Women's Voices: a discussion on Women literature in Uganda* shows how *Cassandra's* determination to be focused and successful in her work is compromised when she becomes pregnant and is involved with a man who has another family.

Ogaga Okuyande (2015) in the study "Negotiating Growth in Turbulent Spaces"; *Violence, Secrecy, and Growth in Goretti Kyomuhendo's Secrets No More* examines how a partially demented child-protagonist negotiates her identity in the absence of her parents and comfort zone of a nuclear family. Nabutanyi (2014) uses Goretti Kyomuhendo's *Secrets No More* to explore the representation of children's experiences of mass violence arguing that the author employs strategies that invoke affect and other implicit analyses of children's experiences of mass violence. The study set to examine the treatment received by girls and women in contemporary African communities as portrayed in FEMRITE short story anthologies understudy to explore how children without parents live and the challenges they encounter in the parent's absence.

2.2.3.2 FEMRITE Short Stories

Literature review shows that few FEMRITE short stories have received scholarly attention thus the selection of the contemporary FEMRITE short story anthologies to explore the topic of the depiction of women by focusing on traits of female characters, roles assigned to the them and the thematic concerns related to women. Below are some inquiries done on FEMRITE short story anthologies.

Stratford (2015) uses FEMRITE narratives; *Butterfly Dreams* and *The Garden of Mushrooms* by Beatrice Lamwaka to study their effectiveness in traumatic healing. Hallemeier (2014) in 'Humanitarianism and the Humanity of Readers' uses three FEMRITE true life stories; "*Today*

You Will Understand (2008), *Farming Ashes* (2009), and ‘*IDare to Say*’ (2012) to give testimonies of women’s experiences of war in northern Uganda. The current study is interested in identifying how the short story anthologies studied create awareness of the need for gender equality. Ondrus (2014) on *Writing about Writing: African Women’s Epistolary Narratives* examines the literary techniques that create engagement with the narrators and how the writing characters convey both intellectual and emotional intimacy. Using ‘*To A Young Woman*’ by Hope Keshubi, the study shows how women writing characters examine present political and social issues that are roadblocks for women in their societies, such as unjust inheritance laws and traditions and AIDS in Uganda. The research aimed at establishing how short story anthologies enlighten women on how to manoeuvre through the social injustices to acquire their liberation.

2.2.3.3 FEMRITE Poetry

FEMRITE poetry is another genre of literature that has received less scholarly attention. The reviewed literature found out an inquiry on *The African Saga* (1998) by Susan Kiguli. *The African Saga* is a collection of poems by Ugandan poet by Susan Kiguli who won the National Book Trust of Uganda Poetry Award (1999). It is a collection of 95 poems in four sections: “Poems of Protest”, “Relational Poems”, “Poems of Nature” and “Existential Poems”. Kahyana (2015) on *Writing Dictatorship and Misrule in Uganda* uses Susan Kiguli’s ‘*The African Saga*’ to explore the portrayal of the theme of dictatorship and misrule to present the cruel leadership that is blind to the humanity of the ruled.

The literature reviewed portrayed that much has been written about women writers and their literary texts like how they manage to bring their stories to the fore and have shared their experiences after their voices being silenced by the patriarchal system that oppresses and exploits women for long (Shah 2008, Kroll 2010). It further shows that gender representation in terms of character traits, themes, and roles is usually misogynistic due to the patriarchal nature of society even though there are exceptions in the contemporary female-authored literature that portrays a different image of women. The literature review further reveals that no research has been done on the Depiction of Women in Female-authored Contemporary FEMRITE Short Story Anthologies selected for this study (that is, *Nothing to See Here* (2015), *Summoning the Rains* (2012), and *The Pumkin Seed and Other Gifts* (2009)). There was thus a need to find out how the FEMRITE authors of short story anthologies depict women by exploring the roles assigned to the female characters,

the character traits, and female related themes that are developed through the female characters in the three FEMRITE short story anthologies studied.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the description of methods that were used to carry out the study. It spells out the research plan, techniques, tools, and procedures that were followed in the collection and analysis of the data. This section thus discusses the research design, data collection methods, information sources, procedure of data collection, analysis, and presentation of the collected data.

3.1 Research Design

This was a library-based and documentary type of research that employed the qualitative approach. The researcher used secondary sources from Hamu Mukasa Library of Uganda Christian University, the Internet, and Uganda Christian University e-resources to acquire information. The study analysed the roles played by female authors in promoting the writing and publishing careers of female authors.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The researcher carried out an in-depth reading of primary sources and secondary texts to create a textual checklist as indicated in appendix 1. The primary sources were the female-authored short stories in anthologies published by FEMRITE Publications Limited, Uganda. The relevant secondary sources were used to provide a clear understanding of women's images, roles, and challenges encountered in pursuing their writing careers. The data collected was recorded in notebooks by either paraphrasing or directly quoting or summarising. Full bibliographic information is given at the end of each quotation.

3.3 Information Sources

Relevant sources of information from the internet and Uganda Christian University's main library, Hamu Mukasa Library were used to acquire data required for the study. The researcher used both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were the three short story anthologies published by EMRITE Publications Limited, Uganda– *Nothing to See Here* (2015), *Summoning*

the Rains (2012), and *Pumpkin Seeds* (2009). The secondary sources were internet sources, academic journals, articles, textbooks, and research dissertations. The researcher developed and employed a textual checklist that outlined the specific aspects like themes, character traits, and roles.

3.4 Sample

The sample for the study constituted five short stories from each of the short story anthologies; *Nothing to See Here* (2015), *Summoning the Rains* (2012), and *Pumpkin Seeds* (2009). These texts were chosen because of their relevance to the study of depictions of women by female authors.

3.5 Data Processing

The data was downloaded, stored on a flash disc, phone memory, and computer. The notes were made directly from other sources and written in exercise books. After collecting data from the primary and secondary sources, it was recorded to match the different character traits, roles, and themes. It was then edited and refined to a meaningful level. It was later then presented, analysed, interpreted in Chapter Four, and findings were discussed in Chapter Five.

3.6 Data Analysis

The study was divided into six chapters where Chapter One was Introduction. Chapter Two examined the reviewed literature, Chapter Three discusses the methodology employed in the study, Chapter Four presented, analysed, and interpreted data collected, Chapter Five discussed the findings of the study and Chapter Six concluded the study and gave recommendations.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into the depiction of women by contemporary female authors, there are limitations that should be noted.

The sample size of three of FEMRITE published short story anthologies was relatively small, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to broader populations. Future research could

benefit from larger, more diverse samples to address these limitations and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

The data collected by a female researcher from female authored and published texts on a female related research topic introduces the possibility of bias. However, this was managed by the researcher remaining objective throughout the study in order to produce a factual report.

3.7 Conclusion

The main elements of this chapter cover the plan that was followed in collecting data, the instruments, and the procedure of data analysis. The data was recorded and processed using note-taking, which was edited daily to come up with a coherent discussion on the depiction of women in female-authored literature.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

A textual analysis of fifteen short stories by FEMRITE authors who write in the African setting was undertaken by the researcher to identify the representation of women using the lens of female African authors and publishers. To simplify the broad spectrum of women's representation, the research specifically looked at the character traits of female characters, roles and responsibilities assigned to them, and gender-related themes in FEMRITE short story anthologies. This chapter presents, analyses and interprets data on the depiction of women in female-authored short story anthologies published by FEMRITE Publications Limited, Uganda. The selected short story anthologies are *Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts* (2009) edited by Hellen Moffet and Violet Barungi, *Summoning the Rains* (2012) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe and Ellen Banda-Aaku, and *Nothing to See Here* (2015) edited by Hilda Twongyeirwe all including stories compiled during the Annual Regional Residency for African Women Writers.

The selected short stories from *Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts* are: 1) *The Pumpkin Seed* by Hilda Twongyeirwe, 2) *Home to Die* by Winnie Munyarugerero, 3) *The Sacrifice* by Constance Obonyo, 4) *The Drinking Jar* by Philomena Nabweru Rwabukuku and 5) *Gift of a Letter* by Lilian Tindyebwa. The short stories chosen from *Summoning the Rains* are: 1) *In the Shadow of God* by Gothataone Moeng, 2) *The Absorber* by Onyinye Ihezukwu, 3) *Walking the Familiar Path* by Nakisanze Segawa, 4) *The Knife Pleat Skirt* by Rhoda Zulu and 5) *Beauty* by Mamle Kabu. The selected short stories from *Nothing to See Here* include 1) *People of the Valley* by Makhosazana Xaba, 2) *The Sausage Tree* by Grace Neliya Gardner, 3) *Reconstruction* by Doreen Anyango, 4) *My Fault* by Monica Cheru and 5) *The American* by Mercy Dhilwayo. The profiles of the authors of the fifteen short stories used for the study are presented in appendix 2.

4.1 Traits of Female Characters in FEMRITE Short Stories

This section presents, analyses and interprets data to answer the first research question: What character traits do female characters possess in the selected texts? As stated in Chapter Two, many authors have presented women differently, where in studies before 1980 stereotyping was

influenced by patriarchal cultural beliefs and practices. Women were thus underrepresented as main characters and negatively stereotyped as being weak, gullible, naïve, dull, fearful, irresponsible, and foolish. However, in contemporary literature, the trend has now changed as noted by Lorraine and Kimberly (2000). Girls are now depicted to possess positive character traits like being caring, loving, disciplined, and respectful. They have also assumed traditionally stereotyped masculine traits like being strong and aggressive, leaders and assertive as well as wicked.

To answer the first research question: What female character traits are depicted in the selected FEMRITE short stories? The study found out that female authors who have published with FEMRITE Publications Limited Uganda portray women positively, similar to other contemporary female writers like Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, and many others (Uimonen, 2019). The women characters are portrayed as self-reliant, independent, rebellious, determined, courageous, bold, decisive, motivated, encouraging intelligent, and amiable as further disused below;

FEMRITE authors portray women as decisive, independent, courageous, determined, aggressive, rebellious and bold as depicted by Doreen Anyango in her story, *Reconstruction* (2015) where the narrator's mother insists on going for further studies even though her husband and in-laws are against it, as she explains to her child:

I decided to go back and finish my studies when you were about a year old. Your dad didn't want me to go, but I did anyway. This changed after that (Anyango, 2015. p. 122).

It is because of independence, boldness, aggressiveness, courage, and determination that the narrator insists on going for further studies, though the husband and his family do not support her. Similarly, in *The American* (2015), Mercy Dhilwayo presents Chenje as determined and courageous to pursue her career abroad even though Antonio is interested in settling in Zimbabwe, not America where she had hoped and expected to go with him after their marriage:

I don't owe him anything. He made his decision and since he wants to settle in Zimbabwe, I am going to give him a real Zimbabwean welcome. And he is damned if he thinks he is going to get his citizenship through me. (Dhilwayo, 2015. p. 173)

Chenje is determined to achieve her dream of going abroad. When Antonio insists on buying a farm and settling in Zimbabwe, she decides to find all means to get out of the country to pursue her career abroad without the help of Antonio. Women are thus portrayed as determined, self-reliant, bold, independent, courageous, intelligent, decisive, aggressive, rebellious, and smart in doing whatever it takes to get an education. However, women's desire to get educated is restricted by family and other society members who think that a woman getting an education is a ridiculous thing. Women find the courage and determination to go for further studies amidst numerous barriers. As a result of such thinking and beliefs, fathers often marry off their daughters at a tender age, an offense that female authors are preaching against.

In her analysis of the movie *Educating Rita*, for example, K. R. Laudita (2019) presents Rita's determination and courage to get educated without the support of either her husband or father. Even when the husband burns all her books, Rita opts for a divorce so as to first complete her education. Such an example shows how determined, courageous, bold, and self-reliant women can be even when they face many challenges while trying to become educated. They remain firm and determined because the life after acquisition of education makes them great and independent women who can make their own decisions. Female authors thus encourage women not to be limited by the environment they live in but rather pursue their dreams for higher education. They should therefore fight and grab any opportunity that comes their way to get the freedom they deserve.

Twongyeirwe in *The Pumpkin Seed* (2009) uses the protagonist, Lyn to portray women as decisive, aggressive, rebellious, and bold. The protagonist refuses to wear the wedding gown that her husband chooses for her. The cousin to the narrators' husband has offered the gown at a cheaper price, but the bride refuses it and decides to get a gown of her choice. She boldly decides not to wear the outdated gown that the cousin to the narrator's husband wore at her wedding ten years earlier. . Since the protagonist is decisive, rebellious, and bold, she straightaway lets the husband know that she is interested in getting a gown of her taste:

I would not listen. Honestly, he should have known that fashions change! I was not about to wear that huge and shapeless gown. I just stood my ground, and we had to book another gown to my taste. (Twongyeirwe, p.18).

Lyn's action of refusing to wear the gown chosen by her husband shows that she is a straightforward, bold, decisive, confident, and rebellious character. Lyn knows what she wants and goes for it. She does not go by the husband's decision. She chooses to wear a gown she likes, thus representing how women rebel against the patriarchal society that considers men as the decision-makers of what happens in people's lives.

Not only do female characters use their determination to get an education, but also seek justice. Segawa, in *Walking the Familiar Path* (2012), shows how Namujju's determination and courage help her to seek justice. She finally makes up her mind to report her father for sexually abusing her even though her mother does not approve:

By the time morning came, I had made up my mind. My father was never going to rape me again. I was going to report him to the police. Since he was not ashamed to rape me, I was not to be ashamed to report him. (Segawa, 2012. p. 28)

Namujju's decision to report the case to police even when her mother advises her not to do so shows her courage and determination to seek her freedom, rights, and justice. Namujju wants justice to prevail, and thus sets an example to other young girls that are sexually harassed and exploited. Segawa's story is a call to all other women whose thinking is like Namujju's mother to wake up, know and fight for their rights. This is in agreement with Naula et al (2018) portrayal of virginity, where Nkwanzu is raped and ends up in an unhappy marriage with Genesis, similarly, women lawyers advocate and support women to acquire justice. Meaza Ashenati an Ethiopian lawyer and women's rights activist defends sexually harassed women and defends women who cannot afford the service. Makhosazana (2015) presents Mrs. Khuzwayo as a lawyer who advocates for equality in punishing criminals, especially those who rape and defile women other than only punishing women who have allegedly committed crimes. These act as lessons to women who fear to seek justice like Namujju's mother and aunt who are discourage from reporting her father for abusing her sexually.

Through determination and courage, other women have left marriages that do not give them peace, so as to avoid torture and mistreatment from their husbands and in-laws. In *Home to Die* (2009),

Winnie Munyarugerero depicts Mbabazi's determination to go back to her father's home and escape the mistreatment inflicted on her by her mother-in-law:

Mbabazi mastered enough strength to gather up her belongings and pack them onto a bodaboda. Clutching Simon on her lap, she boarded another bodaboda and followed her luggage. They headed for her parents' home, never to return (Munyarugerero, 2009. p. 60).

Mbabazi manages to make a final decision when her father-in-law stops her mother-in-law from smashing her head with a pestle. With courage and determination, she immediately decides to leave her husband's home and go back to her parents' home where she can experience freedom and care. Female authors have used their works to advocate for fair treatment of women, by presenting successful women who through determination get happiness and successful lives. Women thus deserve honour and respect in marriage, because men only have a right to choose marriage partners but not to frustrate them.

FEMRITE writers create female characters who possess traditionally masculine stereotypes. As Kita Viola (2015) states in her discussion of "Feminism in Carver's Works," women in Carver's 'world possess more noticeable masculine characteristics'. Female authors depict women who are rebellious and aggressive, especially to their husbands who mistreat and torture them to preach against the patriarchal system that oppresses and exploits wives. Rhoda Zulu, also uses Namapeta to portray the injustices encountered by women in a patriarchal society. The story *The Knife Pleat Skirt* (2012), presents an example of women's rebellious and aggressive character. Namapeta, who is tortured, mistreated, and abused for her failure to give birth to a child, decides to punish her husband and plans how to do it:

"A weeping, bruised, and bleeding Namapeta sat on the floor for a while before she got up and went into the kitchen. Mposa pulled the blankets over his head and tried to catch morning sleep. Namapeta boiled a pot of water. She always did this towards morning so that her husband could have a warm bath. That morning, Namapeta carried the boiling water towards their bedroom.

By the time her sixth sense said; "Please don't do it!" the pot was already on its way, flying, towards the bed where Mposa lay." (Zulu, 2012. p. 128)

Namapeta's reaction depicts how far women can go to fight for justice by rebelling against the evil deeds of their husbands. In addition, in *People of the Valley* (2015), Xaba Makhosazana features Matron Langa who kills her husband, and Singabakho who courageously kills and confesses having killed her husband to free herself from the torture he inflicts on her:

Firstly, Thuli Mr Mbonambi is right about those rumours. They did circulate when she first arrived here. But hey, I also killed my husband after twenty years of violent abuse and numerous rapes that I had reported to the police and the community over the years. That is why I won my case in court. I came to this valley to escape my community down there on the south coast. Some of them wanted me to go to jail. (Makhosazana, 2015. p. 46)

This shows the extent to which women go to fight for their space and freedom. Women thus do whatever it takes to get freedom. Female authors use their stories to advance the movement and struggle for gender equality and fair treatment. They create female characters who are against all odds of patriarchal systems that consider women as inferior objects who deserve no respect.

FEMRITE authors further depict women who are inclusive, supportive, empowering, encouraging, and motivated. In *Gift of a Letter* by Tindyebwa, (2009), the author depicts women's supportive, empowering, and encouraging characteristics. Kirabo's grandmother encourages, supports, and motivates her to focus on completing her studies not the whereabouts of the man responsible for fathering her baby: as Kirabo states in her letter to Zawadi:

My grandmother told me not to worry, that my examinations were more important at that point (Twongyeirwe, 2009. p.114).

Kirabo's grandmother thus encourages and empowers her granddaughter to complete her education other than running after the man that has impregnated her. She explains to her that education matters more than the man responsible for her pregnancy. The grandmother further goes ahead to look after Kirabo's children so that she can work and upgrade her studies:

My grandmother is now looking after my baby. I am working so that I can go to high school and support them both. (Twongyeirwe, 2009. p.114)

Kirabo's grandmother is thus depicted as empowering, encouraging, and supportive to her daughter. She doesn't chase the granddaughter out of her home because she is pregnant, but rather

supports her education which motivates Kirabo. Similarly, in Anyango's *Reconstruction* (2015), the narrator describes her mother as her only best friend who has stood by her more than her husband. Even though she had disrespected the mother and married against her wish, the mother comes back when the daughter faces challenges in her marriage. She takes care of her, empowers and builds her confidence so that she can survive on her own. The narrator's mother uses her example, of how she supported herself during the completion of her Ph.D. course even when the husband was against it:

I decided to go back and finish my studies when you were about a year old. Your dad didn't want me to go, but I did anyway. Things changed after that. (Anyango, p. 122)

The fact that the narrator's mother insists on going for her PhD even when the husband is against it, shows her confidence, and boldness. She thus uses her example to encourage, empower, motivate her daughter that there is life ahead even after Ally, the husband has abandoned her. In *My Fault* (2015), by Mpambawashe, the counsellor motivates, encourages, and empowers the protagonist to believe in herself and be the source of her own happiness, instead of accepting blame for whatever she goes through. It's because of this empowerment that in the end, she realises that she has nothing to do with whatever happens in her life:

I have wasted too many years on self-pity. I have a lot of happiness to catch up on, laughter to let out and smiles to flash. I have plenty of love to give and receive. His family and everyone else will not be happy about that. But that is not my problem and definitely not my fault." (Cheru, p.135)

Through the narrator's words, it is now clear that she has developed confidence in herself and she knows that by accepting all the blame put on her, she remains an unhappy person because she will always be made to feel inferior and unsuccessful. It is thus the role of women to empower, encourage, support, and motivate fellow women, so as to successfully achieve unity in fighting for gender equality.

In addition, FEMRITE authors portray women who are cooperative, considerate, respectful, committed, merciful, and sympathetic, as portrayed in Munyarugerero (2009) where Mbabazi's mother sympathises with her sick daughter who has returned home. Her mother pleads with the husband to allow Mbabazi to remain with her until she breathes her last:

“To Mbarara! Where in Mbarara? Please do not take my daughter to die among strangers. Allow me to nurse her to the end,” his wife pleaded. (Munyarugerero, 2009. p. 61)

Since Mbabazi’s mother is merciful, sympathetic, considerate, cooperative, respectful, and committed she is willingly interested in standing by her daughter rather than allow her to die in the hands of strangers. In addition, Anyango (2015) presents women as merciful, sympathetic, considerate, cooperative, respectful, and committed. The narrator describes how her mother sympathised with her when she was sick and abandoned in hospital by her husband. She describes how her mother comes to her rescue:

My mother, who I have been at loggerheads with from as far as I can remember, is my true friend, and a husband I fought for and defended and married against the wishes of practically everybody I know, is not. She has taken me in and given me a comfortable place to stay. She has made sure I get treatment; using her doctor connections to make sure I am treated by one of the top oncologists in the country and then driving me to every single radiation and chemotherapy session, and also bullying and bribing the nurses to make sure I never have to queue. She has made sure I get nourishment: feeding me all manner of herbs and vegetables in a concoction so pungent, I have to drink it from a closed bottle with a straw so I do not have to smell it. (Anyango, 2015. p. 109)

Though the mother had thrown her out of the house because she had preferred to join music rather than university, she later comes to Mbabazi’s rescue when she learns that she is sick and the husband has abandoned her with no one to take care of her. In Makhosazana’s *People of The Valley* (2015), women who call the radio station to offer advice are also depicted as cooperative, considerate, respectful, and committed. They do not blame Matron Langa but rather respect, consider her valuable contribution to their community and call for cooperation in delivering equal justice to all criminals. This indicates how women empathise and sympathise not only with their children, husbands, and relatives but also all community members. Women are depicted as: merciful, sympathetic, considerate, cooperative, respectful, and committed considering the way they support the suffering in times of need. In the same regard, Shrivastwa’s (2020) analysis of *The Color Purple* states that women turn to women for support and creating identity. The help that women render to their fellow women shows their considerate, cooperative, respectful, committed,

sympathetic and merciful character which is one of their positive stereotypes. In being sympathetic and merciful, women have helped, and encouraged other females to realise their worth and go-ahead to fight for better treatment in society.

In order for female authors to enable the feminists' project of building community and providing solidarity, they create amiable, fair, and loving, women characters as depicted from the way they relate with their friends, relatives, and other members of the community. They, for example, give pieces of advice to their friends and relatives in time of need, share the little they have together, especially ideas concerning their daily life. They also comfort, and provide for the needy. By describing how Sheila advises her best friend Joyce against cross-generation marriage, Obonyo (2009) succeeds in portraying her amiable and noble character. Sheila advises Joyce not to be materialistic and marry a man who is not only old enough to be her father but whose children are almost the same age as her:

“Joyce, he is over fifteen years older than you. What will you talk about? Besides, you are only a few years older than his eldest child. Have you thought about it?” (Obonyo, 2009. p. 63)

Her honest and realistic advice to Joyce portrays Sheila as an amiable, loving, kind, and friendly character who wants the best for her friend. This implies that women in society endeavour to help other people achieve success by sharing with them whatever little they have; be it knowledge, advice, or money. It is through their friendly character that a community develops with well brought up citizens. As Asiegbu (2020) points out, being loving as one of the character attributes of most women characters in female written texts is a gentle approach to the struggle for female emancipation. Funmilayo Anikulapo-Kuti, a Nigerian feminist's love admitted the impoverished, illiterate market women to the Abeokuta Ladies Club that was initially for western-educated women, a gesture that pushed ahead the struggle for gender equality effectively. Had it not been for her love for other women regardless of their status in the community, she wouldn't have allowed the poor market women to join the club that was initially for the elite women only (Ward, 2013).

4.2 Roles of Female Characters in FEMRITE Short Stories

This section presents analyses and interprets data to answer the second question, “What roles do FEMRITE authors assign to female characters in the short stories studied?” Gender theory, which unpacks beliefs about who we are and how we should perform our identity, was used to present, analyse and interpret data on the roles and responsibilities assigned to female characters in the short stories. Gender roles are a socially constructed set of practices that men and women engage in daily. Gendered actions are thus not innate, but rather learned and performed, encompassing a range of behaviours and attitudes that are considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for a person based on one’s biological or perceived sex. Asante (2015), in her essay ‘*Taking Charge, Fictional Representations of Female Sexualities: 2nd Easter African and Cultural Studies Conference*’ notes that men usually act as fathers, breadwinners, achievers, and masters of family households, while females remain in forms of nurturing, subservience and obedience. The specifics regarding gender expectations vary among cultures and influence a wide range of human behaviour, including the clothing a person chooses, the profession a person pursues, and the personal relationships a person starts. To Kita (2015), the suburban domestic atmosphere to which women are confined leaves them trapped in domestic routine, which makes them lose all senses of identity because they have no opportunity for self-realisation. Thus, in the struggle for gender equality, female authors assign roles to female characters in both public and domestic spheres, unlike the pre-colonial male authors who only depicted women in the domestic sphere.

The portrayal of women in the public sector by female authors is attributed to feminist movements that have led to efforts aimed at changing prevailing gender roles. These roles are believed to be oppressive and inaccurate. To change the oppressive and exploitative situation in Africa, African feminists rose up to advocate for a rise in women’s living conditions and eliminating poverty. This is led by Funmilayo Anikulapo-Kuti of Nigeria, Meaza Ashenati who not only defends sexually harassed Ethiopian women in court but also gets them into the formal financial system by starting for them a bank. Female writers depict women performing roles in the domestic domain, such as mothers, wives, advisors, caretakers, and providers. In so doing, they lean towards depicting the challenges women encounter while confined or oppressed by such roles as well as advocating for change so that women can have a chance to perform public roles. In the public domain, women

have proven to be leaders, directors, comfort providers, counsellors, advocates, activists, and educators.

By performing extraordinary duties traditionally relegated to men, they are seen as courageous and possess a sense of heroism. In most cases, women effectively perform their duties if given a chance and can successfully use their talents. A case in point is Meaza Ashenati, a women's activist who was appointed as the first female chief of the Federal Supreme Court of Ethiopia. Ashenati successfully fought for state laws to protect Ethiopian women from men in their lives. Such examples of real-life women in the public domain provide an important social context for contemporary FEMRITE authors.

In the FEMRITE stories analysed for this study, women sometimes play an advisory and guidance role in society. They give pieces of advice and guidance not only to fellow women, but also to children and men who encounter problems in their daily endeavours. In "The Sacrifice" (2009), by Constance Obonyo, Joyce's mother gives advice to her daughter before and after she gets married to Mr. Opendi. She advises and guides her to be patient and accept the marriage. Still, in the same story, Sheila advises Joyce her friend against love for materialistic gains that might make her accept to marry a man capable of being her father:

"Joyce, he is over fifteen years older than you. What will you talk about? Besides, you are only a few years older than his eldest child. Have you thought about it?" (Obonyo, 2009. p. 63)

However much both Sheila and the protagonist's mother offer advice to Joyce, it is conflicting advice that the author uses to show the end result of materialism. The author uses this as warning to women who might think of being in relationships for material gains. Sheila represents the contemporary women who encourage and motivate women to work hard and not get involved in relationships because of materialistic reasons. That is why the author presents Joyce's bad ending as a lesson to the readers.

In the struggle for women's emancipation, FEMRITE authors assign female characters the caretaking roles to challenge this traditional role and advocate for shared responsibility of the domestic roles. . They thus Advocate for the shared responsibilities so that women can get time to

engage in other developmental and public roles since gendered roles are part of the hindrances to women's active participation in the public sphere. Due to the existence of active and powerful women in African oral tradition (Zulfiqar, 2016), female authors have been motivated by the intellectual strength of their mothers. They too, use their literary works and spread the struggle of breaking away from the patriarchy bondage to gain their freedom (Lomme, 2012). Gothataone Moeng uses her story, in *The Shadow of God* (2012), to portray Kemotho as caring and responsible to show the unfair challenges of traditional gendered roles and advocate for shared responsibility. Pheny'o's failure and inability to take care of his mother is a reflection of a patriarchal society. Kemotho recalls:

“I received a letter from my brother: Mme was old and ill, she needed a woman to take care of her” (2009, 11)

Having received and read her brother's letter, Kemotho decides to move back home and do the needful in caretaking for her mother. Not only are girls often bound to care for their mothers, but also their siblings in the absence of their mothers. Onyinye Ihezukwu's story, *The Absorber* (2012) portrays how girls take up the motherly role in case of death of their mothers, separation of parents, or even work as the narrator points out:

“When you girls were younger, Momie said it was your job to look after your baby sister. She said you had the cooler, better-destined head that God had a reason for bringing you into the family.” (Ihezukwu 2012, 14-15)

By nursing their siblings, girls are being prepared for future motherly roles. Right from girlhood to womanhood, women are caretakers of their siblings, parents, husbands, in-laws, and other community members, leaving little opportunity for them to play a role in the public sphere. This happens while their male counterparts in the community are not concerned about whether children receive care or not. Authors in this study, however, make the case that men and women should work hand in hand to provide care for all members of the family. Caretaking should thus not be considered as only a female role but rather a shared responsibility for both men and women. As Kurika (2011) states, children are taught customs, social behaviour, and societal norms through extended family, and female authors thus use their works to show a need for shared responsibility

of caretaking for either children, parents, or other members of the family and society. Female authors argue that when only women are responsible for caring roles, they may be restricted to the domestic sphere. However, when this responsibility is shared, women have the opportunity to engage in other developmental and public roles and responsibilities. This highlights the importance of shared responsibilities among genders.

In addition, women are portrayed as educators and initiators in the short stories studied. In performing these roles, they help fellow women realize their worth, value, and importance in the community. Mamle Kablu, in *“Beauty,”* (2015) clearly shows how Christine helps the Fulani and Gandi women to realise their worth when she visits their community to find out how women are treated. To her surprise, she does not find any woman in the gathering. Even when she specifically sends for them, they first fear to come and join the men because their society does not allow them to gather with men. Christine helps the Fulani and Gandi women to see their value and know their worth as important people in the communities. She further helps them to see the value of educating young girls and the impact of involving themselves in community activities and gatherings. This role is similar to the one identified by Shrivastwa (2020) in her analysis of Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*. In the novel, Sofia and Shug Avery educate and encourage Celie to transform herself from a passive to an active female character, who is able to survive the abuses of a racist and sexist culture. In a patriarchal society that is misogynistic in nature, women are responsible for fighting and advocating for their rights and freedom.,

In the opposite case, when women characters initiate other women to fulfil traditional roles, the FEMRITE authors use these examples as cautionary tales of confinement in the domestic realm to change women’s status in society (Kita 2015). Three of the fifteen short stories studied show women as trainers and initiators of young girls and brides into marriage by teaching them how to behave; and treat themselves and members of their families. Rhoda Zulu’s *The Knife Pleat Skirt* (2012) portrays how Mama Miya prepares her daughter Namapeta by taking her to older women who are initiating the girls:

“One day she returned from school and found that her mother had hastily arranged for her initiation ceremony. That was strange because initiation often usually took place during

holidays. Mama Miya invited elderly women, "the anankungwi", to take Namapeta and four other girls to a bush along the riverbank." (Zulu, 2012. p. 117).

Here, Namapeta and her friends are initiated into womanhood by elderly women in the community who are traditionally meant to initiate the young girls. This training and initiation affect Namapeta's life negatively, especially her studies, as she can no longer concentrate and she ends up dropping out of school to get married. The author has thus used the story to criticize the negative effect of such traditional feminine roles. Had Namapeta not been initiated, she perhaps would have concentrated at school as usual, and become successful in her education, marriage, and life. Another example is from *The Drinking Jar* by Philomena Nabweru Rwabukuku (2009) where mothers are responsible for teaching their daughters how to treat the family members and how to handle every situation that arises in the family:

"My daughter, her mother had told her, handing her the jar, "now that you are getting married, you must always brew and keep this jar full of your dear one's favourite drink. Never allow it to dry up, nor allow anyone else, man or woman, ever to drink from it. And listen carefully, my child. This shall be your love potion, your gourd full of love." (Rwabukuku, 2009. p. 86)

Herein, women are depicted as trainers and initiators of new brides on how to run their families successfully, which is also reflected similar to Kurika's (2011) findings which state that children are taught customs, social behaviour, and societal norms. Namirembe (2007) also asserts that children were taught about morality and how to address their relatives and give respect to other people. In relation to Kurika's (2011), and Namirembe's (2007) findings, female authors encourage and show the need for all the parents to share the responsibility of nurturing and grooming all their children be it boys or girls. The training of children should thus not be considered a feminine role like it had always been in a patriarchal society. Further still, the training should cater for both girls and boys so as to create a society and community with well brought up people. Female authors thus emphasise equal responsibility in the training and nurturing of children of all sexes. The sharing of such responsibilities will eventually see women in the public sector, for they will have enough time to participate in roles in the public sphere, rather than be confined in the domestic world. The training of both sexes will lead to a fair society free from

exploitative, oppressive, and monstrous men who have always made women suffer physically and psychologically in their communities.

Female authors continue to assign women characters roles and responsibilities of providing comfort, solutions, safety, protection, and guidance, to the children, friends, relatives, and other members of the community in order to build and develop the community. Mothers continue to help and provide for their children even after marriage, as exemplified by Mama Miya in “The Knife Pleat Skirt,” when Namapeta faces challenges in her marriage due to her failure to have children. She runs to her mother for comfort and help that she indeed provides. Her mother promises to help her to end her suffering and misery (Zulu, 2012.p. 121). Mama Miya thus proves to be a source of comfort and solution to her daughter. She is willing to do anything possible to help her daughter to gain happiness in her marriage. In *The Sacrifice* (Obonyo, 2009), when Joyce faces hardships in her marriage and is considered a witch, she turns to her mother who advises and comforts her (Zulu, 2012.p. 67). Kabu (2012) represents a mother’s comfort and love towards her daughter in “Beauty.” Christine’s mother comforts her when she returns from her research trip where she had gone to find out about the treatment of women amongst the Fulani and Gandi communities. The Fulani and Gandi women envy her and call her beautiful, which affects her emotionally, because she wonders why women are segregated, discriminated and not valued in the Gandi and Fulani communities. Daving described her trip, Christine is comforted and helped to overcome her worries by her mother. Christine’s mother explains to her that the Gandi and Fulani women envied her for talking to their men as an equal, being in leadership and having the freedom to travel, learn and pursue her own goals, being herself, despite being a wife (p. 161).

In “Walking the Familiar Path” (2012), Nakisanze Segawa shows how a woman saves Namujju, who is about to be raped again when a strong man approaches and grabs her thinking she is a prostitute on the street (p. 28). All these examples depict women characters who provide comfort, safety, and protection to fellow women to make them feel loved, protected, and valued in their communities. Female authors thus call on women to avail support for their fellow women in need be it economic, social, or political. . It is through being providers of comfort, solutions, and safety that women will be united to effectively advocate for social, economic, and political equality in their communities.

FEMRITE authors present women who serve several different traditionally recognised masculine and professional roles throughout the studied stories. Makosazana Xaba's story, *People of the Valley* (2015), for example, features Matron Langa a midwife and a health worker in the community:

“She came to the valley fifteen years ago and has done amazing work at Philani Community Health Centre, a 24-hour clinic, first of its kind in the whole region. Children who were born when she first came are now going to high school. She delivered many of them, many of us, I should say.” (Makhosazana, 2015. p. 30)

Matron Langa is not only a midwife, but also a leader. She has contributed so much to the lives of the people of the valley. She has carried out many developmental activities in the community. As a leader, she has gone ahead to advocate for the extension, renovation, and upgrading of the state of Philani Clinic:

“Matron Langa had the vision that led to the renovation, upgrading, and extension of Philanic clinic. She knew how to talk to government people. She knew how to talk to people. She was tireless in her efforts. She came from the mountain but once she was in the valley, she became one of us, the beautiful people of the valley. Some people say that without her, we would still have a small clinic that only opens during the day. The staff has increased from four to twenty. There is a three-bed maternity ward and a casualty unit that opens all night. We even have an ambulance now that we share with people of the Njoko clan on the other side of the mountain.” (Makhosazana, 2015. p. 30-31)

Matron Langa's achievements show that women have contributed wholeheartedly to the development of their communities, hence improving the livelihood of people even in a patriarchal society. This might be undervalued, invisible, underpaid, and marginalised because as Thurman (2010) states, females have been inferior by nature and gender representation in roles is usually patriarchal. In the same story, women are heads of institutions of learning, act as lawyers, and directors of schools. Mrs. Khanya is the principal of Vulamehlo Primary School. She is doing her best to calm down the situation concerning the accusations of Matron Langa keeping placentas in a freezer. She appeals to the media to calm down the parents who have started coming to pick their

children from school. Mrs. Khuzwayo is a lawyer who advocates for equality in punishing criminals. Ma Nkosi is a principal and owner of the Creche. Nomali Mnikathi is a representative female lawyer who advises the people of the valley on legal matters. She advises that other staff not just women but also men be checked to find out what they have in their freezers:

“I would like to know what else is kept in freezers by all the nurses who work at Philani Health Centre. I have also heard many stories about people trading in human organs and researchers acquiring body parts without permission. If the police were to go and check all the freezers of the staff who live in the boarding house-how many are they, ten? -who knows what they would find?” (Makhosazana, 2015. p. 47)

By recommending that all the freezers of staff at Philani Health Centre be checked regardless of gender and position, Nomali Mnikathi’s calls for gender equality and fights against segregation and discrimination in society. . She requests that for justice to prevail, all freezers at Philani Health Centre be checked to ascertain what they store there other than only condemning, and blaming Matron Langa. All health workers should be treated equally as one of the goals preached by feminists. Women authors have thus successfully used women characters to advocate for gender equality.

Twongyeirwe in *The Pumpkin Seed* (2009) employs the narrator, Lyn, who performs the traditionally masculine roles. Lyn narrates how she works more than her husband to plan and budget for the success of their wedding party. Lyn states that:

If my husband didn’t feel as tired, that is ok. After all, I did most of the preparations. I could have left him to take on the bulk of it but most of what he did turned out to be disastrous. (Twongyeirwe, p.18).

Lyn’s statement shows that she was the main planner of their wedding and she did all the budgeting, not the man who the patriarchal society sees as the best planner. The author uses such an example to show that women can perform roles considered as masculine better than men. This shows that women are smart, intelligent and the best at planning and budgeting. Given a chance therefore, they have the capacity to perform masculine roles in a patriarchal society.

In essence, women characters in the short story anthologies are portrayed realistically. It is not fiction that women characters are development specialists, educators, activists, and trainers. Women thus play a bigger role and responsibility in society and thus need to receive equal treatment like men. Since feminine liberation does not mean the rejection of men or the complete repudiation of a woman's role in the family, FEMRITE authors clearly reveal the feminists' goals by assigning the female characters both the domestic and public roles, challenging restrictions placed on them in either domain. By presenting female characters taking care of their husbands and all family members, these authors do not deny their female characters a chance to develop, , their career, for example. Some of these authors present husbands working together with their wives to provide for their families. By presenting female characters serving as wives determined to improve their careers and men helping women in the domestic sphere, FEMRITE authors have effectively shown a need for sharing responsibilities and advocating for equality in role distribution, including allowing women to also access in the public sector. The FEMRITE authors studied develop heroic women characters through the actions in their families and societies in the short stories studied thus serving as examples in support of women's emancipation.

4.3 Thematic Concerns in FEMRITE Short Stories

This section presents, analyses and interprets data to answer the third question: What are the female related themes depicted in FEMRITE short stories.? FEMRITE authors are concerned with several themes that affect women both negatively and positively. Writers use women characters to portray the themes through their actions, experiences, and reactions to different situations in society. The dominant themes in FEMRITE short story anthologies are: male chauvinism, patriarchy, segregation and discrimination, tradition and culture, love, torture and mistreatment, as well as exploitation and oppression, plus women emancipation.

Female authors use literary texts to depict the patriarchal system where tradition and culture as themes hinder the development of society by being exploitative, oppressive, and discriminative in nature. Tradition and culture enslave women in traditional gendered roles and responsibilities, thus denying them a chance to be fruitful in the public world. To advocate for women's emancipation, female authors depict the theme of tradition and culture to ironically show its ills and how culture and beliefs enslave women. The stories show how women prepare girls for marriage, by educating

them about what to do after marriage and how to treat themselves and their husbands. Zulu (2012) shows how older women initiate Namapeta and the other four girls (p. 117). The initiation negatively affects Namapeta psychologically and she can no longer concentrate in class, which leads to her dropping out of school to get married. The author uses such an example to call for an end to such initiations since they affect girls and are a hindrance to acquiring education. The story further shows how the elderly women camp at the new bride's home late in the night to confirm that the newly married bride is still a virgin at the time of her marriage:

“The families and guests had a feast in Mposa's father's home. They danced and made merry late into the night. After all the guests had left, two elderly women perched on the veranda of the small house where the new couple slept and waited for Mposa to inform them whether he had found Namapeta still a virgin or not. It took a while before he came out, but when he did, the smile on his face told of a fulfilled man. The elderly women went away to their beds, satisfied.” (Zulu, 2012. p. 120)

Namapeta's tradition requires that elderly women camp at the new couple's home to get first-hand information from the husband if the bride was still a virgin. They return to their beds only when the husband has confirmed to them. In return, the girl's home receives more respect and rewards for keeping their daughter safe until her marriage night. This shows the discriminative nature of the patriarchal society that sees only girls who do not preserve their virginity till their marriage as being impure (Aaron, 2012, Feree 2010, MC Daniel 2008). Similar to the Victorian era, only girls would be blamed for being a disgrace to their families as Server and Yurdakul (2001) state that women who didn't retain their virginity were chastised and marginalised.

Oliver's mother in 'Oliver Twist' escapes from home when she gets pregnant so that she does not bring shame to her family. Tess in 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' is not forgiven by Angel Clare when she confesses about her past experience with Alec. These examples reveal the extent to which patriarchal society exploits and oppresses the female gender by considering the preservation of a woman's virginity till marriage, as the most important feminine virtue (Abigail, 2013). As one of the feminists' goals is to end discrimination, female authors use such examples to show a need for fair and equal treatment of all sexes.

To further reveal the theme of tradition and culture, Neliya's (2015) story reveals how tradition requires that girls be betrothed to their husbands when they are still young and men have to pay their bride price:

“Getemani and I were betrothed a few years after my initiation ceremony; I remember how young and innocent I was then. He was my hero, impressing the elders in my village near the Mozambique border, by bringing them large baskets of fish and dried game meat. He also paid the dowry without questioning the amount as other men usually did.” (2015, 78)

This also explains how girls get their husbands. They do not make their own choices but rather society, family, and community members help them to get spouses. However, female authors of the stories advocate for freedom in the choice of marriage partners by depicting the negative consequences of early forced marriages. The arrangement of marriage is one of the social aspects that clearly explains the status of women in an African patriarchal society. Female writers create scenes of arranged marriages, where even the girl has never met the man supposed to be the husband to preach against the custom that puts women under the authority of their fathers or guardians and husbands to choose their partners which results in unhappy marriages. It is thus important for women's sentiments to be considered when planning such marriages to end the oppression through marriage institutions which are generally caused by the fact that negotiation of marriage is done by fathers without consulting the women involved.

In line with Wasike (2009), Kita (2015), and Mushengyezi (2003) who establish that women are portrayed as sex objects, thus depicting the theme of sexual exploitation, female authors of the stories studied depict the same theme. Men, including relatives sexually abuse women especially those placed under their care. A case in point is Nakisanze (2012) who depicts how Namuju's biological father rapes her:

“The next thing I saw was his hands on my breast. It happened so fast that I did not see his hands move towards me. Was Taata going mad? I immediately tried to pull away, but he was strong. He pinned me down and made it impossible for me to escape him.” (2012, 20)

Namuju like other girls is a victim of sexual harassment imposed on women by males. Instead of her father taking care of her, he rapes her. Even when Namuju escapes from home and spends the

night on the street, she meets a man who sexually harasses her. The stranger thinks Namujju is a prostitute and is about to rape her again when an old street woman intervenes and rescues her. . The drunkard does not first inquire from Namujju why a young girl of her age should be moving on the streets late in the night, but is rather determined to take advantage of her and use her for his sexual desires (p. 28). In a similar incident, Gothataone (2012) portrays Kemotho who is defiled when she gets lost during the welcoming party of Seretse. These examples depict the theme of sexual harassment women experience at the hands of males. In addition, Makhosazana (2015) through Mrs. Khuzwayo while talking on the radio reveals how men rape women and go unpunished:

“I want to ask the people of the valley two questions. One: how different is this Matron Langa story different from the thousands of stories of rape of girls and women we hear about all over the country?” (Makhosazana, 2015, p. 39)

Like Meaza Ashenati an Ethiopian lawyer and women’s rights activist defends the sexually harassed women, Mrs. Khuzwayo advocates for equal justice to women, as well as the men who commit crimes, especially sexually abusing women. She wonders why the rapists go unpunished yet the act takes away women’s dignity and self-respect. . This shows that there are many sexually abused women. Most of the stories indicate that women irrespective of their ages are sexually harassed by their relatives, teachers, bosses, and even husbands who either defile, rape, and forcefully have sex with them without their consent. FEMRITE authors through their literary texts are advocating for respect and justice, in our contemporary society where men sexually abuse women and go unpunished.

In support of Aaron, (2012), Feree (2010) and Daniel (2008) who present the theme of segregation and discrimination because women remain confined in societal norms and beliefs, female authors portray the same theme in the short stories used for this study. When Mrs. Khuzwayo calls the radio station, she points out the segregation as depicted in punishing only Matron Langa, yet very many other people have committed crimes:

I want to ask the people of the valley two questions. One: how different is this Matron Langa story different from the thousands of stories of rape of girls and women we hear about all over the country? (Makhosazana, 2015. p. 39)

I want to ask the people of the valley two questions. One: how different is this Matron Langa story from the thousands of stories of rape of girls and women we hear about all over the country?

Mrs. Khuzwayo is against segregation and discrimination in society. She says that all criminals should be taken to court and convicted if found guilty. Discrimination and segregation are also depicted in Tindyebwa (2009) when Kirabo writes a letter to Zawadi, her friend narrating to her how her life has been. She describes how she was discriminated against at school when she got pregnant:

“But I cannot forget how everyone treated me. You would think that I had rabies or something worse! My poor grandmother, after pleading that I should at least be allowed to complete these exams, was instructed to come with me to school every day and wait for me to finish the papers so that she could take me away with her! Zawadi, was I going to contaminate anybody just because I was pregnant?” (Tindyebwa, 2009. p. 113-114).

Zawadi is discriminated against when she becomes pregnant, as if she was going to contaminate the people around her with her pregnancy. To make matters worse, men who make the girls pregnant are unpunished. Kirabo’s statement in her letter explains:

“In all this, they did not try to ask about which man was responsible. It made me realize that this was a grand plan to protect him” (Tindyebwa, 2009. p. 114).

Discrimination and segregation are also dominant themes depicted in the short stories studied. Women are discriminated from men at home, work, school, and society in general. The roles they play in society also indicate the same. The act and practice of favouritism and discrimination are preached against especially where education of male children is considered more important than that of girls due to a belief that sending girls to school is a wastage of time. However, this shows the bias against women’s education and ignorance about the need to educate the female child

considering the notion that women will finally move to their husbands' homes and neglect their parents. To support Wollstonecraft's (2017) assertion that society is wasting its assets if it retains women in the role of convenient domestic slaves and mistresses, female writers advocate for girl child education. They do this by continuously educating the public about the value of education through portraying parents who are having a good time with female educated children and presenting women equally holding many positions of responsibility like their male counterparts.

Male chauvinism/ male dominance and patriarchy is another theme depicted in women's short stories as portrayed from the way men dominate in everything in society and women are considered as complete beings due to the attachment to men (Beyendeza, 2003). Society marginalises and presents women as inferior to men. Munyarugerero (2009) portrays how the education of girls is not valued. Mbabazi stops at Primary Seven, which she had completed with the help of a Universal Primary Education programme. Though she was intelligent and loved at school, she did not join secondary school. She had to start the daily routine of planting and cooking. Tindyebwa (2009) shows Zawadi's father who does not allow her to first finish her O'level, but rather marries her off implying that he does not consider her education as important:

“Papa,” I pleaded, “Please let me finish school, I have only two years left to do my O’levels,” I reminded him as if he could have forgotten. He stared at me for a minute, as if he was considering the options. I cried even more. Then he spoke, his voice like that of a wild beast: “Get away before I beat you in front of everyone!” (Tindyebwa, 2009. p. 115-116)

It is thus clear that men still have a belief that women should have babies instead of getting higher education. Rita's father and husband in *Educating Rita* have the same thinking and they are against Rita's education. They instead want her to have babies. Female authors thus strive and wish to free women from oppressive gender roles that are used as an excuse or justification for giving women lesser places or no places at all in the academy, the forum, and market place. Women characters, consequently know that having a successful life starts with acquiring education, the reason why Zawadi secretly goes for computer lessons without her husband's knowledge. Zawadi believes that a journey to a meaningful and fruitful life begins with getting an education. Similarly, Rita in

'Educating Rita' secretly uses contraceptives to delay the pregnancy in order to first finish her education and improve and develop her career.

In addition, the fact that women have little say in decision-making in the family also depicts the theme of male chauvinism. They remain in the kitchen as only the husbands make family decisions. Men do not listen to women even when they have constructive ideas. Tindyebwa (2009) explains how wives do not take part in decision-making, because in a family it is considered a man's responsibility. Zawadi does not get the help she expects to get from her mother when she pleads with her to talk to her father on her behalf:

“I went to my mother and told her. ‘Mama, help me. Hide me or kill me, but don’t give me to these strange men.’ At first, I wondered whether she had heard me because she just sat there as if lifeless, tears just rolling down her cheeks. Then I realized that she was incapable, absolutely powerless to change the decisions taken by my father and my uncles.”
(Tindyebwa, 2009. p. 116)

Zawadi fails to get the help she expects from her mother whom she thinks is capable of advising the husband and making him change his mind so that she can first finish her O’level. Zawadi is however surprised to see tears rolling down her mother’s cheeks, hence understanding that her mother is a powerless as she is before her father. Female writers however believe that in decision-making, there should be no party that dominates, solutions should always follow the principle of finding a concrete decision, and the status quo be maintained if a disagreement occurs.

In line with Asiimwe’s (2011), Ikiror’s (2013) and Bwambale’s (2013) reports of torture, mistreatment, and suffering of women as themes in the oral literature of Bakiga, Langi, and Bakozo cultures respectively, female authors depict the same themes in the short stories in this study. Women, especially those who fail to conceive in their marriages experience a lot of torture and mistreatment from their husbands, in-laws, and other members of the community. Most of the in-laws mistreat their brother’s wives after the death of their husbands. The in-laws chase the wives out of their homes, take their property, and in most cases, wives are accused and blamed to have had a hand in their husbands’ death. Cheru (2015) portrays how women are beaten, tortured, mistreated by their husbands, and then blamed for everything. A case in point is when a woman is

beaten over simple issues like a missing button on a shirt, or receiving a call from a male colleague asking her to cover for him the following day or asking why her husband has come home at dawn. Female authors thus use such examples in their literary works to preach against such ill-treatment of women in society. Fayaz's (2017) shows that males and females are both the better half of the dynamic care of society and equal counterparts in society. Men and women should thus trust one another and work together to make the development journey of a community smooth not tiresome and cruel (Jenkins, 2017). Jenkins further argues that the notion of womanhood is as important as manhood, and the role of giving birth to children is a delicate business that preserves the human genes in society, so men and women have both equal partnership in society building and preserving the human race. Therefore, females should not be blamed when a couple fails to have a child.

For women to achieve success in the struggle for equality, female writers expose the patriarchal problems experienced by female characters in literary works by creating characters through which they communicate their literary experiences and traditions. The chapter has thus presented, analysed, and interpreted the data collected on the depiction of women in female-authored FEMRITE short story anthologies. It has focused on presenting, analysing, and interpreting data on traits of female characters, roles, and responsibilities assigned to female characters. The themes are depicted using both feminism and gender theories. Women characters are depicted to be self-reliant, independent, rebellious, determined, courageous, motivated, decisive, bold, intelligent, loving, and amiable. Women characters are assigned roles in both domestic domain and public domains. In the domestic sphere, women act as mothers, wives, advisors, caretakers, and providers. In the public domain, women are leaders, directors, comfort providers, counsellors, advocates, and activists. The dominant themes depicted are; male chauvinism, segregation, and discrimination, tradition and culture, love, torture, and mistreatment, women's emancipation plus exploitation and oppression.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This research focused on the depiction of women in contemporary FEMRITE short story anthologies. This chapter discusses the findings on the three research objectives: to analyse the traits of women character, to examine the roles assigned to women characters and to establish female related themes. The chapter thus answers the research questions by discussing how FEMRITE authors portray the female character's traits, assign roles to women characters and the female related themes as depicted in three FEMRITE published short story anthologies studied.

5.1 Analysis of Female Character Traits

This section discusses findings on the first objective: to analyse the female character traits in the selected FEMRITE texts. The study established that most of the FEMRITE writers depict women positively. Positive traits from the feminist point of view are those characteristics females possess that enable them in their struggle for women's emancipation. They are portrayed as: self-reliant, independent, rebellious, determined, courageous, intelligent, motivated, empowering, aggressive, encouraging, decisive, bold, strong, respectful, committed, and cooperative. This portrayal of women is in line with Halirova (2016), Mushengyezi (2000) and Lorraine and Kimberly (2000), whose reports depict women in possession of positive character traits as well as formally stereotypically masculine traits like being strong, aggressive, rebellious and wicked.

In addition, the study has ascertained that women are portrayed as decisive, self-reliant, independent, courageous, bold, and determined. This is depicted by Anyango (2015), where the narrator's mother insists on going for further studies even though the husband and in-laws are against it. Also, Dhilwayo (2015) presents Chenge's determination and courage when she insists on pursuing her career abroad even though Antonio is interested in settling in Zimbabwe. This description of women's determination is similar to Halirova's description of Jane Eyre who does not need a man to make her feel worthy, instead her self-worth and determination. and Novianti (2008) who employs Mary's example, to depict women as good negotiators, courageous, decisive, and obstinate. Segawa (2012) portrays how Namujju is determined to seek justice when her father

rapes her, which is similar to Naula et al (2018) description of Nkwanzi's determination to report her rape case to police against her mother's and aunt's wish. Namujju's decision to report the case to police even when her mother advises her not to do so shows her determination and courage. Through determination, other women have left abusive marriages where husbands torture and mistreat them, as Munyarugerero (2009) narrates. Mbabazi goes back to her father's home because she cannot stand the mistreatment inflicted on her by her mother-in-law. This same determination is described by Laudita (2019) in presenting Ritah as a determined, smart, and educated actor who takes all the precautions of not having a baby until she finds her true self. No matter the oppression Rita receives from her environment, especially her father and husband, she does not give up her dream of attaining higher education.

The study further finds out that FEMRITE authors develop female characters who neither depend on, nor are completely controlled by other people or things. Women characters portrayed in FEMRITE authored short stories possess a decisive and independent character. Even though men exist in women's lives, such as fathers, brothers, and husbands, whom traditional society expects to have authority over them, women do not fail to choose what they want and like. This shows that women possess good conviction so they should not be influenced by anyone or anything in making decisions even though in female characters' lives there exist other people like husbands and fathers, female characters do not allow their thoughts and actions to be controlled. This desire emanates from the women's self-consciousness of feeling they have the right to choose their desires. They thus have the freedom and independence to run their lives as they desire and wish.

This is in agreement with Kiyimba's (2008) description of Cassandra's determination from the start, which helps to shape what she becomes in her life's struggles. It is thus clearly portrayed that it is the brave personality, decisive and independent nature of female characters that allows them to make decisions and solve the entire challenges encountered in their lives. In the same regard, Halirova (2016) portrays the creation of Jane Eyre as a plain, modest, morally strong, and intelligent girl who does not need a man to make her feel worthy; instead, she carries her self-worth in her mind and determination. This concurs with Shrivastwa's (2020) depiction of Shurg Avery as an independent, self-guided and motivated lady.

More to that, the study establishes that FEMRITE authors create rebellious, aggressive, obstinate, and strong women characters. Zulu (2012) depicts Namapeta as rebellious and aggressive when she reacts to her husband's mistreatment by pouring hot water on him. Makhosazana (2015) presents Matron Langa and Singabakho as rebellious, aggressive, and strong having killed their husbands who were torturing and mistreating them. FEMRITE authors show that women are obstinate, as depicted by the way they handle challenges they encounter in life like: deaths of their husbands, husbands eloping with other women, and mistreatment from their husbands, family, and society. However much the female characters undergo despair, they immediately find strength in themselves to survive and cheer up their family members, especially children after realizing that these children still need them. Similarly, Brooke (2004) states that Carter manages to assign her heroines characteristics of violence, aggression, rebellious, disobedience, confidence, self-sufficient fulfilled and free nature.

Furthermore, the researcher ascertained that FEMRITE authors depict women as committed, cooperative, considerate, merciful, and sympathetic. Munyarugerero (2009) presents Mbabazi's mother as a cooperative, considerate, sympathetic, and merciful woman who is committed to taking care of her daughter Mbabazi when she returns home. She pleads with the husband to allow her remain with her daughter until she breathes her last. In addition, Anyango (2015) presents the narrator's mother as sympathetic, merciful, cooperative, considerate, and committed because she stands with her daughter when she is sick and abandoned in hospital by her husband. Shrivastwa (2020) holds the same representation of women in the analysis of "The Color Purple" by describing how women turn to women for support and create an identity that shows their cooperative, committed, sympathetic and considerate nature.

In this study, it was further established that women are portrayed as amiable, fair, loving, and friendly in FEMRITE authored texts. Obonyo (2009) presents Sheila as a friendly, fair, loving, and amiable character who openly advises her friend Joyce against cross-generation marriage. Sheila tells Joyce not to be deceived into marrying a man capable of being her father by materialistic gains. . This is similar to most female authors like: Adeyemi and Ajibade (2009) who condemn and caution against the tendency of women enormously inclined to material wealth and lust for money. In the same regard, Novianti (2008) presents Mary the ambassador as a fair, loving, and amiable character who saves Hannah Murphy from imprisonment.

As Lommel (2012) notes that women's unity and intellectual potency is a tool to gain freedom from patriarchal tendencies, the researcher found out that FEMRITE writers create women characters who are inclusive, supportive, empowering, encouraging, and motivated to help in the struggle for women emancipation. Tindyebwa in "Gift of a Letter" (2009) represents Kirabo's grandmother as encouraging, motivating, supporting, and empowers her granddaughter to complete her studies. She even goes ahead to help take care of her granddaughter's children so she completes her exams. Also, Anyango's "Reconstruction" (2015) reveals the narrator's mother as inclusive, supportive, empowering, and encouraging to her sick daughter that has been abandoned by Ally the husband. She motivates and encourages her daughter to support herself without her husband's help. The counsellor in Mpambawashe's "My Fault" (2015) empowers the protagonist who in the end believes in herself and sees her worth. The findings concur with Shrivastwa's (2020) study that depicts Shurg Avery as independent, motivated, and self-guided woman who creates her own identity. Female authors thus encourage, empower and motivate fellow women to realise their worth, be a source of their happiness and also fight for their emancipation.

The researcher established that the FEMRITE authors develop women as the main characters with traits like intelligence, empowered, bold, rebellious, courageous, obstinate, decisive, and all other characteristics that the feminists consider for all women in the world. Consequently, women can be in the same position as men, to stand up and be proud of themselves. Female characters are used to fight against patriarchal domination that believes women to be inferior having gained education. Female characters are thus presented with the ability to make decisions in their lives, families, and workplaces. Neither other people nor families influence female character's decisions. They are thus assertive and can carefully make good decisions to lead them to successful and fruitful lives. These traits reflect an ideal postcolonial feminist who does not need to depend on men but rather be economically independent because they can earn money, and take care of themselves without men. FEMRITE authors develop heroines who are fearless, firm, independent, and do not need to depend on any man either financially, socially, or politically. The characters thus advocate for equality, true love, dignity, respect for the female gender. Women are portrayed as firm, independent heroines with strong desires of providing fulfilment in their lives and concentration on living life by their own rules focusing on respecting themselves, rather than on what society dictates. Even when decision-making makes them feel miserable, betrayed and brings

overwhelming sorrow, the heroines still go ahead and make better decisions to free themselves from the bondage of patriarchal societies.

FEMRITE authors and publishers like other feminist writers for example, Buchi Emecheta and Flora Nwapa have ably presented intelligent, self-reliant, empowered, courageous, aggressive and bold women who are determined to achieve equal treatment. In the same view with Anilkumar (2021) who identifies feminism in Elisa's character as of being a strongly independent and hardworking woman, FEMRITE authors also develop intelligent, self-reliant, empowering, courageous, aggressive, and bold women characters who fight for their freedom. This representation of women is in line with Kilel's (2019) suggestion that women's self-determination, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem are the major contributors to the psychological empowerment of women that reduces stress and increases satisfaction. This concurs with Elda and Chipppo (2020) who point out that Achebe has presented the power of a woman through Beatrice who regards the view that 'every woman wants a man to complete her' as a piece of male chauvinism bullshit.

5.2 Roles Assigned to Female Characters

This section covers the discussion of results on the second research objective, to examine the roles assigned to female characters in FEMRITE selected works in reference to gender theory. This study has established that FEMRITE authors advocate for sharing of responsibilities, where both parties participate in domestic and public roles.

Most FEMRITE authors assign women characters roles, both in the public and domestic spheres which helps to expose injustices in a patriarchal society. With such representation of women, FEMRITE authors advocate for women emancipation, where no gender dominates in decision-making, and the status quo is maintained in case of a disagreement. This concurs with Ludmilla (2017) who notes that contemporary female writers encourage and support their female characters to defend their own space. In assigning the domestic roles like acting as mothers, advisors, caretakers, and providers, the FEMRITE authors' interest is to depict how the suburban domestic roles as Kita (2015) states confine women in the domestic routine that makes them lose all senses of identity because they have no opportunity for self-realisation. In the public domain, women are

leaders, directors, advocates, activists, and educators which is similar to Nabiryo's (2018) findings on the representation of women in Shakespeare and Ruganda's plays. FEMRITE representation of gender role is in line with most contemporary literature that is viewed on the integration of roles, where both men and women receive equal professional opportunities. This is because profession and career are as equally important to women as they are to men. This is in relation to the US Department of Labour (2002) report that indicates women's increased participation in the male-dominated roles like assuming more responsibility for the economic support of the family. Diekman et al (2000), Goodfriend et al (2004) believe that the change in roles and characteristics will see women assume even higher levels of traditionally recognised masculine roles.

This study generally established that women are portrayed as caretakers. FEMRITE authors assign women characters caretaking roles to challenge the traditional roles and advocate for shared responsibility of the domestic roles. The study also reveals that the gendered roles are also a hindrance to women's active participation in the public domain. Gothataone (2012) presents Kemotho as caring and responsible, when she comes back home to take care of her sick aged mother even when her brother Phenyoy was at home. Ihezukwu (2012) portrays how girls take care of their siblings in the absence of their mothers but in the presence of their father. Asante (2015), Bond et al (2003) also observe that mothers perform one-third more housework than the fathers, since they shoulder the majority of cooking and childcare responsibilities. Just like (Zulfiqar, 2016) and Lommel (2012), FEMRITE authors use their intellectual strength to produce literary works that spread the struggle of breaking away from the patriarchy bondage to gain freedom. FEMRITE authors thus advocate for sharing of responsibilities within a family, community, and society, so that women also get a chance and time for self-realization to participate in the public world rather than be confined in the domestic world. This relates to Kita's (2015) assertion that the suburban domestic atmosphere to which women are confined leaves them trapped in domestic routine. They are, therefore robbed of their identity because they have no opportunity for self-realisation.

This study further found out that FEMRITE authors depict women as trainers who teach customs, social behaviour, and societal norms to children. FEMRITE authors thus use their stories to advocate for shared responsibilities and roles of nurturing and upbringing of children in African families and societies. Women in patriarchal societies have always been confined in traditionally recognised feminine roles and blamed for any misbehaved member in a community claiming that

she resembles the mother. This is confirmed by Turner-Shults (2002) and McDaniel (2008) findings in their qualitative interviews that depict female addicts who blamed their mothers for failure to fulfil their roles of nurturing them. In line with Naula et al (2018) who states that in a patriarchal setting, women are expected to be the only parents responsible for nurturing children, however, FEMRITE authors employ such women confined in traditional feminine roles of being mothers who produce and nurture children to preach against it and advocate for the role to be played by both parents- sharing of responsibilities.

Gothataone (2012) shows how Mme plays a motherly and nurturing role when she advises Kemotho to plan for her future by attaining education so that she can be successful in the future. Zulu (2012) shows how Mama Miya prepares her daughter Namapeta by taking her to older women who initiate the girls. Nabweru (2009) presents Nyoza's mother teaching her how to perform domestic chores. By presenting women nurturing and training children as Namirembe (2007) argues that children are taught about morality and how to address their relatives by their mothers, FEMRITE authors use their stories as cautionary tales of confinement in the domestic sphere. The writers thus advocate for sharing of all roles of nurturing, training and also emphasise educating all children both boys and girls by both the parents.

In addition, women are portrayed as educators and activists who help fellow women to realise their worth and importance in the community in FEMRITE short stories. Kablu's "Beauty" (2015) clearly depicts how Christine is used to help the Gandi and Fulani women to see their value, importance and realise their worth. Christine also helps the women to see the value of educating young girls and the impact of involving themselves in community activities and gatherings like the men. This finding agrees with Shrivastwa's (2020) analysis of Alice Walker's "The Color Purple" where Shug Avery and Sofia educate and encourage Celie to transform herself from a passive to an active female character who can survive the abuses of a racist and sexist culture.

This study established that women are depicted as providers of comfort, solution, safety, protection, and guidance to their children, friends, relative, and other members of the community. Namapeta's mother in the story "The Knife Pleat Skirt" Zulu (2012) comforts and guides her daughter when she faces challenges in her marriage. Joyce's mother in the sacrifice guides her daughter before her marriage and provides comfort, solution, guidance when she gets married and

encounters hardships in her marriage. Kabu's (2015) "Beauty" shows how Christine's mother comforts her when she returns from her research trip where she had gone to find out the treatment of women amongst the Fulani and Gandi communities. Segawa (2012) shows how a street woman Namujju hardly knows protects and saves her when a strange strong man approaches and grabs to rape her. Similar to Asante (2015) and Akite's (2019) findings that women characters come out as active agents of protecting their families and the entire society, FEMRITE authors just like other feminists call upon women to be available and provide guidance, comfort, protection, support, and solution for other women in need.

More to the above, this study found out that FEMRITE authors depict women as more capable than men in handling daily challenges. The study revealed that women in FEMRITE's literary works act as leaders, agents of development, and healthcare providers who assist their community members particularly other women during childbirth. Makhosazana (2015) presents Matron Langa of Philani Community Health Centre who has assisted many women to deliver. Matron Langa portrays women's leadership roles. She has contributed so much to the lives of the people of the valley. She has carried out several developmental activities in the community, and has gone ahead to advocate for the extension, renovation, and upgrading of the state of Philani Clinic. This concurs with Goodfriend and Goodwin's (2004) argument that women will assume even higher levels of masculine characteristics.

Matron Langa's achievements show that women have contributed wholeheartedly to the development of their communities hence improving the livelihood of the people. In the same story, women head institutions of learning, and act as lawyers. Mrs. Khanya as the principal of Vulamehlo primary school does her best to calm down the situation of the accusations of Matron Langa for keeping placentas in a freezer. She appeals to the media to calm down the parents who have started picking up their students from the school. Mrs. Khuzwayo is a lawyer who advocates for equality in punishing criminals. Ma Nkosi is a principal and owner of the Creche. Nomali Mnikathi is a representative female lawyer who advises the people of the valley on legal matters. She advises that other staff not only women should be checked also to find out what they have in their freezers. Similarly, Lommel (2012) shows how female characters were able to break away from the patriarchy bondage to gain their freedom, which also relates to Wollstonecraft (2017) who advocates for gender equality.

Although traditional society as exposed by pre-colonial male authors proposes that women only be good wives and mothers who stay in the private and domestic sphere to take care of the household, the contemporary female authors present women who acquire higher education to support them in their careers in the public domain. Women's role in society cannot be overshadowed; they are portrayed as builders and keepers of homes responsible for overseeing and ensuring that peace and tranquillity reign supreme in the family and society. Women also advocate for equality of rights and opportunities in all areas of life. Simply put, women should have opportunities in all sectors like politics, economy, and social life.

In support of Shrivastwa's (2020) assertion that Walker in "*The Colour Purple*" defies the patriarchal marginalisation of women and gives masculine roles to female characters, FEMRITE writers as feminists, struggle to destroy the patriarchal system which they believe is the root cause of women's oppression. Feminist ideology emphasizes the need for education for all. Society must provide equal education to men and women since all humans have the right to expand their intellectual and moral capacities. Female authors of the short stories studied demonstrate that education can empower women to lead successful lives. Women have the ability to acquire jobs and excellently perform with the help of education. Female writers have presented short stories that portray women enjoying and advocating for their rights. The writers show how female characters are struggling to gain equality and grow successfully. This struggle is evidenced by women's presence in the public sphere as they struggle for their rights, identity, and independence.

Since this research was inspired by experiences presented in short stories using the lens of female authors, the stories are considered influential in the emancipation struggle because they portray the modern women's view of their position in society. Female authors are thus depicted through their texts to be at the forefront of fighting for women's values. They do this by addressing the issues of sexual equality and emphasising the need for women to break free from the conventionalities and customs that patriarchal societies set in their lives.

5.3 Female Related Thematic Concerns

This section examines the female-related thematic concerns in the selected FEMRITE short story narratives in relation to feminist and gender theories. This study has ascertained that most

FEMRITE authors are concerned with issues that greatly affect women both positively and negatively. This matches with Benstock (2002) who states that most women writers dwell on the subjects of relationships between women and men who prize independence and are committed to feminism and social reforms. The dominant themes depicted are; male chauvinism, segregation, and discrimination, tradition, and culture, love, torture and mistreatment, exploitation and oppression, plus women emancipation. This is in line with Ludmilla's (2017) observation that contemporary African women's literature is filled with thematic tones of refusing to be seen as docile, self-effacing, and passive observers in a male-driven world.

The researcher ascertained that FEMRITE authors portray the theme of women emancipation, gender quality and education in the short stories examined. FEMRITE authors have created women characters who fight against the patriarchal tendencies of devaluing women. This is similar to Muzdeka (2016) presentation of the theme of women emancipation where the heroine in "The Tiger's Bride" pursues her needs, accepts her natural, dissocialises self, and embraces the inner best side of her personality. In line with Jenkins' (2017) and Everett's (2009) arguments that patriarchy can only be dismantled when women are empowered, FEMRITE authors develop independent, courageous, strong, motivated, and empowered women who according to Hook (2013) are causing the crisis to males because they are challenging male supremacy in questioning to share the public reins which men can't bear. As Zulidyana (2020) recommends education as crucial in deconstructing the binary oppositions and marginalisation of women in general, women have fought to be educated, liberated, and become effective leaders in their societies thus developing their communities which is in support of Fayaz (2017) portrayal of woman as a paragon of perfect world order.

The researcher proved male chauvinism, male dominance and patriarchy to be the dominant themes satirically and ironically depicted in FEMRITE short stories. Munyarugerero (2009) portrays how the education of girls is not valued. Mbabazi stops at primary seven and does not join secondary though she had loved and wished to do so. Mbabazi's father instead marries her off. Tindyebwa (2009) depicts how Zawadi's father does not allow her to first complete her O'level. He forces her into marriage, which shows the less value attached to the education of girls. This relates to Sweetman (2000) who warns of underdevelopment if girls do not get a chance to access education for, they will get married at a young age and give birth to children who will die

in the infancy stage. This is in agreement with Zola's (2010) findings that female's views and ambitions are not considered which depicts the themes of male chauvinism, male dominance and patriarchy.

The researcher found out the portrayal of the themes of tradition, culture, and chastity in the short story anthologies studied. This is in agreement with Zulidyana (2020) who notes the persistence of patriarchy in the society where gendered binary opposition marginalized women and Yaoye's (2021) portrayal of women's persecution and discrimination that forces them into a submissive position. Zulu (2012) shows how Namapeta and the other four girls are initiated and prepared for marriage by older women who are meant to teach the young girls the dos and don'ts in marriage. In the same story, women camp at the new couple's home late in the night to confirm that the newly married bride is still a virgin at the time of marriage as required by tradition. Server and Yurdakul, (2001) also agree that a woman who does not retain her virginity is chastised and marginalized because a patriarchal society considers the preservation of a woman's virginity till marriage as the most important feminine virtue (Abigail, 2013). Neliya (2015) reveals that tradition requires that girls be betrothed to their husbands when they are still young and men have to pay their bride price. However, FEMRITE writers use their short stories to show how the patriarchal society exploits and oppresses women by not allowing them to choose their own husbands. Therefore, the writers use their literary works to call for fair and equal treatment of all sexes. In the same regard to Aaron's (2012), Ferree's (2010), and McDaniel's (2008) findings, women's feelings are suppressed and confined in the patriarchal society's belief and norms.

The researcher further establishes that FEMRITE writers present the theme of segregation and discrimination where women are confined in society norms and beliefs similar to Aaron (2012), Ferree (2010), McDaniel (2008), Kita (2015) and Mushengyezi (2003). Makhosazana (2015) uses Mrs. Khuzwayo to point out the segregation depicted in punishing only Matron Langa yet very many other people have committed crimes. Tindyebwa (2009) uses *Zawadi* to show how she is discriminated against at school when she becomes pregnant yet the man in question is not receiving equal treatment. To fight for gender equality from Kiamba's (2008) revelation as societal conventions regarding gender and leadership traditionally excluded women and viewed top leadership as masculine domain plus Deikman's (2000) view that men lead and women follow, which explains the traditional belief that leadership is masculine. FEMRITE authors present the

negative impact of segregation and discrimination. Wollstonecraft (2017) shows how society is wasting its assets if it retains women in the role of convenient domestic slaves and mistresses, FEMRITE writers advocate for girl child education through sensitizing parents on the value of education.

To fight the sexual exploitation in African society as Kita (2015) confirms its existence when he states that the female's body is used by men in society, the study has established that FEMRITE authors criticize the acts by depicting the theme of sexual exploitation in the short stories studied. In the same regard with Naula et al (2018) who depict how Rex rapes Nkwanzu who is being prepared for marriage, FEMRITE writers of the short stories studied portray different ways how female characters are sexually abused. Namujju's father in Segawa (2012) rapes her biological daughter, Namujju. The man Namujju meets on the street also sexually harasses her. He calls her 'malaya' a prostitute and is ready to use her to satisfy his sexual desires forcefully, had it not been for the intervention of an old street woman. Gothataone (2012) presents Kemotho who is raped and impregnated. The findings concur with Wasike (2009) who reports that female characters' bodies are symbols of sexualized identity and contradictions. All these incidents of sexual violence lead to the misery and suffering of the victims and their families. Naula et al (2018) depict how Nkwanzu's rape results in an unhappy marriage contrary to the long-awaited and anticipated happy marriage between her and Genesis. Similarly, Okuyande (2015) presents female characters who suffer partial dementia from childhood as a result of genocide and sexual assault.

Furthermore, there is a theme of torture and mistreatment. Cheru (2015) portrays how Ray's wife is often beaten over simple issues like a missing button on his shirt, or receiving a call from a male colleague asking her to cover for him the following day or when she asks him why he comes home at dawn. This is similar to Corbett (2009) who observes that relationships between males and females are often characterized by physical and psychological victimization where women become victims of political intrigue as men always attack them.

The study establishes the theme of love in the short narratives as portrayed by the way women love their children, parents, husbands, and other friends. This is depicted when Sheila advises Joyce against marrying Mr. Opendi who is much older than she is. It is because of love that Sheila shares with her the negative consequences of marrying an old man hence depicting the theme of love.

Gothataone (2012) through Kemotho portrays love for her aunt by welcoming and giving her something to eat when she visits. Love is still portrayed when Kemotho goes back home to take care of her old and ailing mother. Anyango (2015) depicts love through the way the narrator's mother takes care of her when she is sick and abandoned by her husband. Ihezukwu (2012) uses Uche to show love for Ezinne when she listens and comforts her as she narrates her problems. The representation of love holds the same view as Ahlberg (2009) who asserts that love is a powerful means of political and social change. FEMRITE authors thus present the theme of love which is a powerful means of advocating for women's emancipation. Amba (2019) confirms that during FEMRITE workshops, women participants have produced works that confidently represent and analyse issues that affect women hence acting as agents of change in bringing transformation to the struggle to combat gender stereotypes and inequality.

Halirova (2016) notes that Charlotte Bronte contradicts Victorian society while speaking for the oppressed and disrespected women. Likewise, most contemporary FEMRITE authors and publishers use their works to achieve feminist goals. In line with Nnaemeka's (2021), Shah's (2008), Asaah's (2011) arguments that female authors write about women using the experiences encountered, FEMRITE authors have clearly presented the life of an African woman describing her daily activities and the challenges she encounters in life and how she manages to speak for herself. As Ludmilla (2017) states that contemporary African women's literature is filled with thematic concerns of refusing to be seen as docile, self-effacing, and passive, FEMRITE authors create women characters who fight for their suffrage, education, equal opportunities, and independence. In an attempt to communicate better social position in society, female authors portray demands for equal education, job opportunity, and equal pay which concurs with Sweetman (2000) and Wollstonecraft (2017) who advocate for gender equality and girl child education to guide in society development. To conform to Ludmilla (2017) who states that the female contemporary authors encourage and support their characters in defining their own space, the researcher established that FEMRITE authors depict themes that reflect feminism theory ideologies, which often focus on analysing gender inequality, and themes like discrimination, exploitation, oppression, patriarchy, tradition and male chauvinism. Post feminism theory was employed to enrich the study's knowledge about experiences, needs, and life of women by analysing the FEMRITE authored texts and focusing on gender stereotypes. The female characters

reflect ideal feminism, and with their experience of life journey whether bad or good, they finally achieve their targets and prove to the world that to acquire feminist goals, action is required.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

The chapter summarises and concludes the findings of the study. It re-states the problem, purpose of the study, the major objectives, and the hypotheses found in the first chapter before giving a summary of Chapter Four. The chapter further underscores recommendations and areas for further research based on the study. The purpose of this textual analysis of the depiction of women in contemporary female-authored FEMRITE short story anthologies varies from the pre-colonial presentation of women by pre-colonial male authors.

Research questions seeking resolution were:

- 1) What traits of female character do women possess?
- 2) What roles are assigned to female characters?
- 3) What female-related themes are depicted?

To answer these questions, the study set three objectives:

- 1) To analyse the traits of women character,
- 2) To examine the roles assigned to women characters,
- 3) To establish the female related themes.

The study at the outset identified a gap in women's representation in FEMRITE short story anthologies. The study thus set out to examine the "depiction of women in contemporary female-authored FEMRITE short story anthologies, an area that previous critical studies have not adequately explored. The study used five short stories in each of the three FEMRITE published short story anthologies selected for the study; *Pumpkin Seeds and other Gifts* (2009), *Summoning the Rains* (2012), and *Nothing to See Here* (2015) in analysing women characters assigned roles, developed women character traits, and gender-related thematic concerns depicted. The researcher used feminism and gender theories to achieve the targeted objectives and in presenting, analysing, and interpreting data for the research questions. The study used a basic plan, strategy, techniques,

tools, and procedures as shown in chapter three to arrive at its results. This chapter summarises the research findings.

6.1 Summary and Conclusion of the Findings

The research successfully achieved the set objectives of its study. The study found out that FEMRITE authors create women who possess positive character traits that are traditionally recognized as masculine traits in a patriarchal society. Female character's stereotypes are self-reliant, independent, smart, rebellious, determined, courageous, empowering, cooperative, aggressive, supportive, motivated, intelligent, loving, and amiable.

The findings of the study revealed that FEMRITE writers portray women who are actively assigned roles in both domestic and public domains. In the domestic domain, women act as mothers, wives, advisors, caretakers, and providers. In the public domain, women are assigned traditional recognized masculine roles as leaders, directors, comfort providers, counsellors, advocates, activists, and educators, planners.

The study has ascertained that female authors are concerned with many issues in society, especially those that greatly affect women negatively. The dominant themes depicted are; male chauvinism, segregation, and discrimination, tradition and culture, love, torture and mistreatment, exploitation and oppression plus women emancipation.

should engage scholars like Oyeronke Oyewumi, Chandra T. Mohanty, Gloria E. Anzaldua, Nakanyike B. Musisi, Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, and Sylvia Tamale.

6.2 Recommendations

The researcher makes s the following recommendation;

The works of female authors should be made available and accessible to the public since they create a positive representation of women.

The publication of more female-authored literature should be supported since they can be used to sensitise the population about issues of gender equality and human rights.

More reviews need to be written about the FEMRITE short story anthologies which is currently a research area without much scholarly attention to provide critical pathways in how the texts can be discussed by scholars and students.

6.3 Areas for Further Research

More research in the process through which FEMRITE selects and accords space for female writers is required. The research needs to look at the struggles – financial and editorial, that the organization faces in its bold move to make the voices of women visible. The research would thus have to understand the collaborations that the organisation undertakes to ensure the successful publication of its writers in residency.

More research on how female-authored short stories navigate contemporary discourses on identity politics is needed. This research did not engage the whole matrix of gendering as is being explored by scholars such as Judith Butler in her *Gender Trouble*. Further research also needs to explore the question of decolonisation and investigate whether female-authored short stories from Africa are conscious of the struggle to decolonise the epistemic construction of gender. The research to come

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APPENDIX 1
TEXTUAL CHECKLIST

The Depiction of Women in Female-Authored FEMRITE Short Story Anthologies

Part 1: Traits Attributed to Female Characters	
1.	Self-reliant
2.	Independent
3.	Bold
4.	Rebellious
5.	Determined
6.	Courageous
7.	Motivated
8.	Empowering
9.	Encouraging
10.	Decisive
11.	Intelligent
12.	Amiable, loving and friendly.
Part 2: The Roles Assigned to Female Characters in the Primary Texts	
1.	Educators
2.	Leaders and directors
3.	Counsellors
4.	Advocators and planners
5.	Marriage initiators
6.	Health care providers
7.	Providers of comfort, protection, piece of advice
8.	Activists
9.	Mothers and wives
10.	Caretakers
Part 3: Female Related Thematic Concerns Depicted	
1.	Male chauvinism
2.	Segregation and discrimination
3.	Tradition and culture
4.	Love, motherhood and marriage
5.	Torture and mistreatment
6.	Exploitation and oppression
7.	Women emancipation

APPENDIX 2

FEMRITE AUTHORS

Below are the profiles of the FEMRITE authors of the fifteen short stories used for the study.

Doreen Anyango is a Ugandan biotechnologist and lover of books. She has always sought to escape the drudgery of everyday life through the written word devouring other people's brilliant tales long before she dared to come up with some of her own. Her work of fiction has appeared in several online publications.

Cheru-Mpambawashe Monica trained as a secondary school teacher and majored in English and Portuguese. She introduced College Creative Writer's Magazine- Panorama. She also worked in the media as a columnist, senior reporter and planning and lifestyle editor. She is a published writer of several short stories. Her short story collection, Chivi Sunsets, was published in 2011. She is a member of the Zimbabwe Writers Association.

Mercy Dhliwayo was born in November 1983. She is a Zimbabwean poet and emerging fiction writer. In 2011, her short story, Ango Leonard's Game, was amongst the 14 stories shortlisted for the Yvonne Vera Award in Zimbabwe. Her works of poetry have featured in various musical compilations. She publishes online and in print.

Gardner Grace Neliya was born in the Katete District Zambia. At school, she particularly enjoyed English and Geography; subjects she has made full use of in her writing and working with children, teaching wildlife and conservation. She has strong feelings about the importance of humans living in balance with the rest of nature. Neliya lives in a suburb of Lusaka. She is an active psychosocial counsellor and works with church groups, particularly those who help the poor.

Xaba Makhosazana was a writing fellow at Wits School of Public Health, co-writing a book on Nursing History in South Africa and at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WiSER) from May 2006 to April 2007 writing a biography of Helen Nontando Jabavu. She is the author of the poetry collection; These Islands (Timbila, 2005) and Tongues of Their Mothers (UKZN press, 2008). She is a coeditor, with Karen martin, of Queer Africa: new and collected fiction (MaThoko Books, 2013) and a collection of short stories, Running and other stories (2013).

She holds a diploma in Journalism and a MA in creative writing. She is the winner of the 2005 Deon Hofmeyr Award for Creative Writing.

Moeng Gothataone is a journalist and short story writer based in Gaborone, Botswana. She has short stories published in *Lemon Tea* and other stories from Botswana, *Long Time Coming* (Zimbabwe) and *The Bed Book of Short Stories* (South Africa).

Mamle Kabu is the winner of the 2011 Burt Award for Children's Writing and was also shortlisted for the 2009 Caine Prize for African Writing. She is a writer of Ghanaian and German parentage. She has a BA and MA in Main Modern Languages and MPhil in Latin American Studies from the University of Cambridge. She took up fiction writing in the late 1990s and has since published several short stories in various anthologies and journals across Africa, in the UK and the US.

Nakisanze Joy Segawa writes poetry and short stories and was the third runner up of the Beverly Namboze 2010 Poetry Award. She is a counselor by profession.

Onyinye Ihezukwu worked as an actress before she plunged into writing. Her work explores women's lives in the changing Nigerian city, often venturing into taboo territory. She works as a broadcaster in Lagos.

Rhoda Zulu born in Malawi acted as the chairperson of the Malawi Writers Union (MAWU) and works as a broadcaster in development journalism and rural development. She holds an advanced diploma in Community Development with the Association of Business Managers and Administrators (ABMA), a Certificate in Non-Governmental Organizations from the University of London, a Diploma in Education from the University of Malawi.

Winnie Munyarugerero is a published author whose writings mainly explore the position of the woman and the girl-child in Uganda. Her short stories and articles are published in different anthologies, magazines and newspapers. She is especially interested in the education of the girl-child and issues concerning women and children. Winnie is a teacher by profession. She teaches English and French.

Philomena Nabweru Rwabukuku is a Ugandan teacher of English Language and Literature in English. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Literature and Psychology and a MA in Counseling. She is a published writer with short stories and poems in different anthologies. She recites and performs oral literature and is very interested in issues of women and children. She has written several articles on growing up and parenting in different magazines.

Constance Obonyo hails from Uganda, she holds a BA in law. She mainly writes for newspapers and has also published poems in *Today You Will Understand Me* and in *Painted Voices* vol. 1

Lilian Tindyebwa was born in Southwestern Uganda. She is a published writer whose poems and short stories are published in different anthologies. Lillian's instant success as a writer came with her first novel for young adults *Recipe for Disaster* when it was recommended as a supplementary reader for all secondary schools in Uganda. She holds a BA and MA in Literature. She also publishes for children.

APPENDIX 3 FEMRITE EDITORS

Below are the profiles of the FEMRITE Editors of the three short story anthologies used for the study.

Ellen Banda-Aaku

Ellen Banda-Aaku (1965) is a Zambian writer born in the UK, grew up in Africa, and is an author of novels, books for children, short stories published in anthologies, and other readings. Ellen Banda-Aaku's first book, *Wandi's Little Voice*, won the Macmillan Writer's Prize for Africa in 2004. Based on the fact that the author's style reveals a rare gift for revealing the truth and contradictions at the core of human relationships, in 2007 she won the Commonwealth Short Story Competition for her story "*Sozi's Box*". Her first novel, *Patchwork*, won the 2010 Penguin Prize for African Writing and was shortlisted for the 2012 Commonwealth Book Prize. In 2006 Banda-Aaku sat on the adjudicators' panel for the Macmillan Writer's Prize for Africa. In 2012 she was awarded the Zambia Arts Council Chairpersons' Ngoma Award for her outstanding achievements in literature. She has conducted creative writing workshops in Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia. Her short stories have been published in anthologies in Australia, South Africa, the UK, and the US, including in *New Daughters of Africa* (edited by Margaret Busby, 2019). Her Published Short stories include: *Sozi's Box* (2008), *Lost*, in *Jambula Tree* and other stories, "*Made of Mukwa*", in *The Bed Book of Short Stories*, "*Ngomwa*", in *African Women Writing Resistance*, "*87 Tangmere Court*", in *New Daughters of Africa*, 2019. Her Novels include; *Patchwork*, (2011), *Madam 1st Lady*, (2016). Her Books for children are; *Wandi's Little Voice*, (2004), *Yours Faithfully Yogi*, (2008), *Twelve Months*, (2010), *Lula & Lebo*, *Head and Shoulders*, *E is for e-waste*, *Sula and Ja*.

Helen Moffett

Helen Moffett is a poet, freelance editor, academician and feminist activist. She was a President's Fellow at Princeton University and has held post-doctoral fellowships at Mount Holyoke College, Emory University, and UCT's African Gender Institute. Her huge fun producing commercial fiction is, *A Girl Walks* in 'Choose-your-own-erotic-adventure trilogy' where she co-wrote with Sarah Lotz and Paige Nick under the *nom de plume* Helena S. Paige. *A Girl Walks into a Bar*, *A Girl Walks into A Wedding*, and *A Girl Walks into A Blind Date* have been translated into

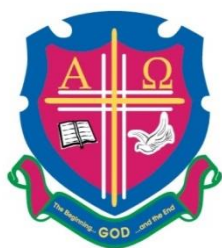
twenty-one languages, including Catalan and traditional Mandarin. She has collaborated with Diane Awerbuck to co-edit a memoir of Rape Crisis Cape Town (the world's oldest independent surviving crisis organisation), *Stray: An anthology of animal stories and poems*, and with Violet Barungi to edit pumpkin seeds and other gifts. As an environmental activist and writer, she has written; *101 Water Wise Ways*, *Wise About Waste* and *150+ Ways to Help Save the Planet*.

Violet Barungi

Violet Barungi (1943) is a Ugandan writer and editor. She worked as a book production officer at the East African Literature Bureau (1972–77), senior book production officer at Uganda Literature Bureau (1978–94), and an editor at FEMRITE from 1997 until 2007, when she semi-retired. She has co-edited for books published by FEMRITE, since her semi-retirement. Her novels include: *Cassandra* (1999), and *The Shadow and the Substance* (1998). Children's books by Barungi include: *Change of Heart* (2011), *Hope Restored* (2008), *Wanda Asks Questions* (2009), *A Lucky Escape* (2009), *Jena Breaks a Promise* (2009), *The Baby in the Forest* (2009), *Our Cousins from Abroad* (2003), *The Boy who Became King* (2003). Her Short stories are: *Impenetrable Barriers* (2010), *Afraid of my love* (2009), *Talking Tales* (2009), *Jago Goes to School* (2003), *The Last One to Know* (1998), and others. Her plays include: *Over My Dead Body* (2008) and *The Bleeding Heart* (radio play). Barungi's edited works include: *Pumpkin Seeds and Other Gifts* (2009), *Talking Tales* (2009), *Beyond the Dance*, *Dare to Say* (2007) *Gifts of Harvest* (2006), *Tears of Hope* (2002), *Words from a granary* (2001) and *A Woman's Voice* (1998).

Hilda Twongyeirwe is a Ugandan writer and editor who taught English language and literature in secondary schools for ten years before she retired to do development work in 2003. She is an editor, a published author of short stories and poetry, and a recipient of a Certificate of Recognition (2008) from the National Book Trust of Uganda for her children's book, *Fina the Dancer*. She is currently the coordinator of FEMRITE, an organisation she participated in founding in 1995. She has edited fiction and creative nonfiction works; *I Dare to Say* (2012) and *Taboo* (2013). She has been a member of FEMRITE since its inception, joining while still a student at Makerere University. She has taken part in several projects by FEMRITE over the years, to promote reading and writing, especially in secondary and primary schools. Her novel is *Fina, the Dancer* (2007) and her short stories include: *Let It Be an Angel* (2012), *And if* (2012), *The Intrigue* (2012), *Till we*

find Our Voices (2011), *Headline* (2010), *This Time Tomorrow* (2009), *Making Ends Meet*, (2009), *The Pumpkin Seed*, (2009), *Becoming a Woman* (1998), *Baking the National Cake* (2013). Her poetry includes: *In conversation*, *New Tarmac* (2014), *I hear your Voice Mama* (2013), *Mama's Garden of Beans*, *Papa's Hands*, *Who Litters?* (2009), *By the Nile*, *Threshold*, and *in Conversation*, *Breaking Order* (2013).



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Dissertation Correction Compliance Report by the Candidate (POST VIVA FORM)

Date: 13th March, 2024.

Name of Candidate: Kansiiime Fortunata **Reg. No:** RJ17M07/001

Title of Dissertation: The Depiction of Women in Contemporary Femrite Short Story Anthologies

SN	COMMENTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	The candidate should concisely report on the key findings in the abstract.	The recommendations were included in the abstract.	Abstract
2	The recommendations of the study should be revisited to match the findings.	The recommendations were edited to match the findings of the study.	Page 89
3	The candidate must proofread the work thoroughly and make sure it is formatted professionally.	The report was thoroughly edited.	All pages
4	The statement of the problem requires tightening.	The Statement of the Problem was rewritten as advised.	Page 5
5	The candidate should add a concluding paragraph at the end of Chapter One.	A concluding paragraph was added.	Page 12

SN	COMMENTS BY INTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	There is need for proof reading and editing the entire thesis.	Thorough editing of the thesis was done.	Thesis
2	The candidate's attempts to write the statement of the problem need to be further dependent.	The Statement of the problem was rewritten as advised.	Page 5
3	There is need to use more recent publications and revised editions of the works cited.	This was done and recent literature was used.	Literature review
4	Broaden the descriptions of what and how what was done was carried out.	Methodology section was edited to give further explanation.	Methodology
5	There is need for the candidate to apply the theory of gender.	Data on female roles was discussed according to gender theory.	Pages 78-81

SN	COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANNEL	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Elaborate on the measures taken to overcome bias in your research	Measures to overcome bias were included and explained.	Page 47
2	Strengthen the justification and significance of your research	The sections were revisited	Problem Statement, Justification and significance
3	Rearrange the structure of your presentation in accordance with the UCU-FORMAT	The structure of the presentation was rearranged	Thesis
4	Review the written to ensure that it adheres to UCU prescribed format.	UCU Research Manual was used to guide on the prescribed format.	Thesis
5	Elaborate on how the stories chosen were selected.	The choice of works used was explained.	Methodology and scope



Kansiime Fortunate

Candidate's Name



Mr. Mugume Peter

Supervisor's Name