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EXPLORING THE DOUBLE MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN IN JENNIFER MAKUMBI'S A GIRL IS A BODY OF WATER

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ABSTRACT

This research makes an attempt to unfold Nego-feminism in Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi's novel A Girl is a Body of Water. Nego-feminism is the feminism of negotiation, also stands for 'no ego' feminism and is structured by cultural imperative. This term was proposed by African feminist writer Obioma Nnaemeka. When it comes to setting up decisions, most African civilizations use negotiation and compromise. Negotiations perform the function of giving and taking in nego-feminism. This research will further analyze the vigor and strength of a young girl who is in search of her origin that who is her mother, the identity that she has lost because of patriarchal culture and tradition. This research intends to unmask the behaviour of women towards other women that how some women make others to suffer. In an effort to achieve challenges, African feminists must compromise or sometimes negotiate enough just to acquire freedom, whether it is social or sexual freedom. Stella Ting Toomey's Identity Negotiation Theory, proposed in 1986, will be used in this study. The methods through which people strive to accomplish decisions on "who is who" in their interactions are referred to as identity negotiation. This theory stresses the paradoxical conflicts that minorities, particularly women, face when they move from the familiar to the unknown. In clear words, the focus of this research is to investigate how women will use the negotiation culture to undermine patriarchy for their own sexual and social advantages.

INTRODUCTION:

In this research, researcher will explore how women will challenge the hypocrisy of male-dominated society by adapting the culture of negotiation through Stella Ting-Toomey's Identity Negotiation theory. Basically, The Identification Negotiation Theory (INT) focuses on the significance of negotiating personal identity and socio-cultural participation issues in intergroup communication contexts especially, problems with cultural identity in patriarchal settings. Nego-feminism is the feminism of negotiation, also stands for 'no ego' feminism and is structured by cultural imperative. This term was proposed by African feminist writer Obioma Nnaemeka. When it comes to setting up decisions, most African civilizations use negotiation and compromise. Negotiations perform the function of giving and taking in nego-feminism. In an effort to achieve challenges, African feminists must compromise or sometimes negotiate enough just to acquire freedom, whether it is social or sexual freedom. In the Identity Negotiation Theory (INT), "the word identity refers to an individual's multidimensional cultural, indigenous, religious, social group, sexual identity, sexual preference, skilful, family/relational role, and subjective images based on the self as well as other social construction processes" (Toomey,2021, p. 2).

A Girl is a Body of Water usually starts in a small Ugandan town called Nattettah. A twelve-year-old girl is confronted with a penetrating question that has tormented her childhood: who is her mother? Kirabo wishes to reunite with her mother, despite the fact that she was raised by many women in the small hamlet who cannot fill the role of her mother in her life. She wants to know about the woman who birthed her. Provided love in heart-warming excess by her family, Kirabo enjoys a happy rural childhood in the Ugandan village of Nattetta yet she cannot shake her sense of longing for a mother she doesn't know. Kirabo's loneliness is further complicated by a discovery; she possesses a rebellious second self that does mad things and flies out of her body in episodes of uncontrollable deviance. Connecting this troublesome development to her mother's absence, Kirabo seeks answers from a local witch, Nsuuta. Kirabo is lucky, the witch insists because the second self is the nature of the first woman, which most women no longer possess. Nsuuta lures Kirabo with the promise of finding her mother, teaching her about the rebellious start of all women and the power of myths. What ensues in Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi's novel is a richly complex journey into girlhood and womanhood, set against the backdrop of a changing nation. While reconciling her family's expectations with her desire to find her mother, Kirabo must also confront the idea of being a woman. *A Girl is a Body of Water* is based on the Ugandan creation story of the first woman. It is a sweeping yet deeply personal novel about longing and rebellion, steeped in old traditions and feminism.

A kind of optimism can be observed in Jennifer's style of writing. *A Girl is a Body of Water* implicitly or explicitly has something to link with Makumbi's real life. She never actually met her mother until she was maybe ten years old, so she's always had to wonder about that. She grew up living with her father, but when Idi Amin's rule brutalised him and he became insane, she moved up with her aunt at around age 10. She was interested in exploring the notion that

if you don't have a mother, you can invent one for yourself and elevate her to the status of a perfect goddess. Kirabo laments the death of the mother she had invented when she finally meets her own mother. She was prepared to deal with those setbacks. This novel is a wonderful mixture of Ugandan folktale and present concepts of negotiation culture. Patriarchal system seems to be uninterruptedly working against women and even women are forced to do polygamist marriages. In order to subordinate women to men in all spheres familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal, cultural, and artistic—African civilisation was developed and put into practise with a discreetly concealed goal. In patriarchal societies, it is held that women's physical and intellectual capacities are inherently and unavoidably inferior to men's. Women have assimilated patriarchal standards and beliefs as a result of this cultural process.

Analyzing Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi's *A Girl is a Body of Water* might be advantageous in two ways. It has the following theoretical and practical advantages: This study could add to the body of knowledge in the literary realm that will be useful to other researchers in the future. This study includes some information that can be used as references by other studies that wish to investigate the same topic. The author herself benefits from this research as well. This study will include some literary-related information. This study draws on the author's knowledge of literature. In other words, by conducting study, the author can enhance her literary understanding.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The current research aims to answer the following questions;

- How nego-feminism can truly confine the problems of African women in the novel *A Girl is a body of Water* through Identity Negotiation Theory?
- How does negotiation culture affect different female characters in Ugandan Culture through novel?

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Alkali, Talif and Jan (2013) in their article “Violence and Sexual Harassment in Nigerian Novels: The Nego- Feminist Option” investigates that the exploitation of women is illegal in most modern legal contexts. Unwanted sexual advances were often accompanied by different degrees of violence. Such benefits range from sexual abuse or assault to forced marriages and petty transgressions involving simple teasing, casual remarks, or isolated minor incidents in a woman's life cycle, as shown in *The Bride Price* (1976) by Büchi Emecheta in which Emecheta strongly back lashes at the male class. Whereas another novel that has been taken under study is *The Triumph of Water Lilly* (1996) in this writer Ify Osammor has evolved feminism certainly discrediting the strangeness of man, but in a way that seems to get better results. This article has used the approach of nego-feminism to explain different aspects of feminism in different novels. (Alkali,M, Talif,R, Jan, Jaraih, 2013).

William Gudykunst, (1994) in "Bridging differences: Effective intergroup communication" studies that situational identities can influence people's perceptions of themselves, either positively or negatively, through competent or incompetent communication skills. These identities are held by individuals either consciously or unconsciously. What identity or identities they highlight depends on the situation they are in. When this person is in his or her own culture, his or her cultural identity is usually not as important as when he or she is interacting with someone from another culture (Gudykunst, 1994).

Adrian Toomey, Tenzin Dorjee & Stella Ting-Toomey (2013) in their article, *Bicultural Identity Negotiation, Conflicts, and Intergroup Communication Strategies* investigates that the significance of bicultural identity and intergroup-intercultural communication is investigated in this qualitative study. This investigation into the meaning construction of "bicultural identity" of Asian/Caucasian individuals and their intergroup communication strategies is guided by Ting-identity Toomey's negotiation theory and Giles' communication accommodation theory. Bicultural identity formation is a multifaceted and complex lived experience.

Purnama (2022) in a study titled as, *The Impact of Discrimination From Legitimate Power Leads Andrea Sach to Experience Identity Negotiation Through fashion in The Novel The Devil Wears Prada*, states that Ting-Toomey, identity negotiation theory highlights the dialectical tensions and problems that immigrants and minorities face when crossing cultural boundaries from one setting to another. In the many cross-border journeys of individuals, the theory emphasizes the importance of negotiation of socio cultural belonging identity and personal identity traits. It can be caused by personal identity and social identity. In Lauren Weinberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) this negotiation of discrimination takes place in the workplace, where pressure and work environment play a significant role in Andrea Sach's fashion changes.(Purnama.A,2022)

According to Bethanne Patrick, who writes in *The Washington Post* that "Makumbi's novel is a poignant coming of age tale about women's hard-won wisdom". She also speaks about the hypocritical nature of the society where women can't even win, if the system is prepared to deny or accentuate them. The patriarchal framework appears to be constantly working against the women's entity. Nsuuta and her grandmother Alikisa are forced to marry polygamists, according to Kirabo. Nnambi, Tom's wife, is scared of Kirabo's mother and perhaps even Kirabo herself, even after her privileged city background. One of the novel's most painful moments is when Nnambi encourages sixteen year old Kirabo to lie in her father's bed, claiming Kirabo is his actual wife. Envy-fuelled aggression serves as a warning of the increasing chasms that can emerge between groups in oppressed cultures, such as our own. Discrimination, on the other hand, may often ignite ties. Patrick has given her views about the novel but did not talked about how identity negotiation theory is used to explore nego-feminism in the novel *A Girl is a Body of Water* (Patrick, 2022).

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi reflects the relationship of a young girl with her

Self and with the patriarchal society. Her Self, who has the ability to fly out of her body and move to numerous areas, frightens her. She believes that she is possessed and feels it is bad. The protagonist's transformation from a terrified and enraged kid in the presence of her stepmother to a sympathetic and caring young lady, who subsequently inspires her to care for her stepmother after her husband's death, when she is practically expelled from the family. The novel's most notable characteristic is arguably its link to mwenkanonkano (feminist) ideals as well as the importance of language and expression.

Khadija Bajabar in her review published in *The New York Times* points out the troublesome development of a young girl in the absence of her mother. She explores the behavior of women towards the same sex; women make other women suffer. She aims to tell how the author has artistically explained the mind-set of an African young girl who possesses a rebellious second self that does mad things accompanied by new self-discovery. Moreover she is of the opinion that *A Girl Is a Body of Water* is about mythology, the need to examine existing myths and, more importantly, the urgency of inventing new ones. Makumbi forbids the reader from focusing just on the myth without also taking the mythmaker into account. This potent work explores the world of power in relation to sisterhood and love. In *A Girl is a Body of Water*, there are a lot of Ugandan myths. We learn about Luzze and Nnambi as Kirabo gets knowledge of many mythological characters from Ugandan folklore, and we see as Kirabo turns one story against another by threatening that person with becoming the villain. The conversation has unmistakably Ugandan connotations, as evidenced by one letter that declares, "These news are so scorching that is a surprise the paper is not on fire." As Kirabo matures from her youthful cleverness to her adult ingenuity and wisdom, readers will enjoy witnessing her growing self-awareness and understanding of her place in the world. As Makumbi's character develops; her voice changes naturally and flawlessly. What ensues in Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi's novel is a richly complex journey into girlhood and womanhood, set against the backdrop of a changing nation, suffused with glimpses of Uganda's own second self the traditions before Christianity, before colonialism, before Idi Amin and many of the "before" that time has subdued but not quite erased. Bajabar has explained the behavior of the African women in her study but did not explain what this research has to offer (Bajabar, 2020).

Jill Owens in an interview with Jennifer Makumbi published in the *Powell's City of Books* talks about the artistic style of Makumbi that how she has artistically portrayed a variety of the experience of womanhood across generations and personalities. Nego-Feminism is the central point of this novel. When she is young, Kirabo lives in rural Nattetta with her paternal grandparents. Her father, Tom, a prosperous businessman in Kampala, pays sporadic visits. Despite being well-liked, Kirabo is curious about the mother who left her when she was a kid. When Kirabo reaches the age of twelve, Nsuuta, the village witch and her grandfather's lover, asserts that Kirabo represents the "original state," or the energy and strength that all women once held before being diminished by culture and traditions. In order to prevent Kirabo from experiencing the unavoidable rejection that comes with admitting a child born outside of marriage, Nsuuta also counsels her from looking for

her mother. Kirabo's grandmother sends her to Kampala when her meetings with Nsuuta are found, but Tom's wife won't care for another woman's child, so Tom sends her to a girls' boarding school where she excels academically, experiences loneliness, and finds love. Kirabo, a powerful, compassionate protagonist, exposes a culture in which women are frequently discriminated against or silenced. A fascinating dissection of societal beliefs of women's duties and capabilities is presented in this magnificently illustrated story. Moreover, Jill has also appreciated the language that the author has used. Jill also admires the beautiful relationship she has built among different characters. Owens talks about the artistic style of Makumbi but did not talk about the culture of negotiation that is found in African culture that is explored in this research (Owens, 2020).

Aaron Coats in his review published in Chicago Review of Books says that "Trading stories are foundational to Ugandan culture (n.pag.). Makumbi begins by introducing her young protagonist in this manner, as if she is about to tell a story she has been practicing. Kirabo, a twelve-year-old girl who inspires the teenagers of her community in storytelling by ensuring a cultural etiquette that they must obey in the company of adults, is the protagonist of the novel. Against her grandmother's wishes, Kirabo uses stories as an incentive to get Nsuuta to discover about her absent mother. Kirabo's father brought her to reside with him and his family, and stories keep her connected to her family in Nattetta, but storytelling also allow her to discover her Self, even when they aren't intended for her. The novel treats Kirabo and Nsuuta, as well as Kirabo's grandmother Alikisa, with such gentleness that when the two elderly women are dancing in the rain in the final sections, you can nearly hear the splashes and feel the soil. Kirabo evolves from a timid and sceptical girl to a courteous and sympathetic young woman who, following the husband's death and subsequent expulsion from the family, permits her to consider about her stepmother. Coats argues how Makumbi used the art of story-telling through her character Kirabo but does not explore how the culture of negotiation effects women in Uganda (Coats, 2020).

Kirkus has been an organizer and chief in the Publishing Industry and it calls Makumbi's *A Girl is a Body of Water* a jewel. A fascinating novel set in Uganda under Idi Amin's regime. A brilliant and independent little girl named Kirabo lives with her grandparents in a small village. Kirabo does not know who her mother is, and her father is busy in the city. Even worse, nobody wants to inform her. Kirabo begins to seek information from the neighborhood witch; Nsuuta. There is yet another problem to solve. Kirabo occasionally gives the impression of leaving her body and viewing herself from outside. Nsuuta instructs her, "Listen." "You leave your body because you contain our original state," What was that initial condition? Nsuuta explains to Kirabo that it was "the way women were in the start," when "we were not confined inside, we were large, strong, brazen, loud, proud, fearless, and autonomous. However, it proved to be too much for the world, so they got rid of it. The work masterfully combines contemporary feminism with Ugandan folklore. Afterwards, Kirabo is accepted into a prestigious girls' school where she learns from the more experienced students not to hide herself but to take pride in her appearance. The characters of Kirabo, Nsuuta, and her best buddy are all

fantastic. But Sio, the young man Kirabo shows interest in, never really comes to life. There are times when the characters' conversation seems coerced, as if the author were forcing her own political opinions into their mouths. These are very minor drawbacks; overall, the book is a colourful, winding thrill. Makumbi's style can be rhythmic and lyrical or gently instructive depending on what her story needs (Kirkus, 2020).

Jennifer Nansubuga is a recognized writer worldwide. The main focus of Makumbi's tale is a young girl and her family, including who they are, what history has taken from them, and most crucially how they come back together. In her thirteenth year, Kirabo must face the searing query that has dogged her since she was a young child: who is my mother? The loss of her mother haunts Kirabo despite the fact that she was raised by women in the small Ugandan community of Nattetta, including her grandmother, best friend, and numerous aunts. As Kirabo reaches adulthood, she experiences the formation of a strange second self a brazen and perplexing power inside of her at odds with her lovely and submissive nature—which complicates her emotions of rejection. In search of clarification, Kirabo starts spending afternoons with the local witch, Nsuuta, sharing tales and learning more about the power that gave birth to her, who she discovers is still alive but not yet ready to meet. Nsuuta goes on to say that Kirabo possesses a trait known as the "first woman"—an independent, pioneering state that women have all but lost.

Kirabo's quest to integrate her rebellious past with her desire to follow her family's standards, as well as her yearning to reunite with her mother, is steeped in Ugandan mythology and a striking examination of what it means to be a modern girl in a society that seems intent to silence women. The brilliant work by Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi is a powerful illustration of the ties that exist between history, custom, family, friends, and the hope for a new future.

METHODOLOGY AND PLAN OF THE STUDY:

The research methodology applied in writing this research is the qualitative research method and it is based on a thorough understanding of the text, a detailed textual analysis, an in-depth reading of relevant books and scholarly articles cited from reliable resources and the peer reviews published in international newspapers and magazines. The primary text that is under examination is *A Girl is a Body of Water*. The theoretical framework of this paper is modelled upon the theory of Stella Ting-Toomey's Identity Negotiation. This research analyses this theory by keeping in focus its views on the text. By focusing on the character of Kirabo, the basic purpose of this research is to highlight how women negotiate and do compromises in the patriarchal society. Based on Toomey's views, researcher have tried to clarify my point of view that negotiation has its own importance in a society, without it an individual is unable to secure his identity and especially when it is related to women's identity. The female is typically defined as an "Other," or sort of "non-man," while the male is typically viewed as the human standard. The social construction of women as merely the opposite of man, the "Other," who is seen as the dominant "Subject" and is taken to represent all of humanity: Humanity is therefore primarily male, and man defines woman not in herself but rather in relation to him. She essentially presents to the male as a sexual

entity. She is the “Other”, he is the Subject, and he is the Ultimate. But through negotiation with the male dominated society, women are supposed to get rid of the status of “Other.”

The theoretical framework of this paper is modelled upon Identity Negotiation Theory, Nevertheless, the language as we know it today only appeared in the field of communication through Stella Ting-Toomey`s work(1986). The phrase "negotiation of identity" is a general view that has existed for as long as there have been intergroup and intercultural disparities. The identity validation model (IVM), which has three dimensions, including one for communication, was developed by Ting-Toomey in 1986. The "identity-negotiation process between the self and relevant people" is what is meant by the description of communication as a vital component” (p. 123). It is essential to discuss this important concept first. In the Identity Negotiation Theory (INT), “the word identity refers to an individual's multidimensional cultural, indigenous, religious, social group, sexual identity, sexual preference, skilful, family/relational role, and subjective images based on the self as well as other social construction processes” (Toomey, p. 2). Each person's hybrid identity has implications for their personality, interrelation role, and group identity. People essentially acquired their hybrid identities through regular interpersonal and collective encounters, individual experience, and cultural assimilation.

The deliberate selection of one of numerous role identities to interact with within a specific communication setting is referred to as the identity negotiation framework. This line of reasoning is continued and expanded upon by Ting-Toomey (1999) in her ensuing book-length explanation of identity negotiation as a theory. She argues in her outstanding work that identity negotiation is about the decisions cultural interactions make to protect their self- image or defend their position. One of the earliest interpretative frameworks discovered in the literature that not only indicates that identity is relational but also clearly notes that identity is produced via a negotiation process is Ting- identity Toomey's validation model and the accompanying identity negotiation theory. We are utterly dependent on others to play a role in how we define ourselves and why we define ourselves as we do from the moment we are born and given a name by our parents. As a result, encounters with other people shape and mould our identities. We make implicit and occasionally explicit "contracts" with others (individuals and organizations) that specify how we will move forward with our interactions in addition to using others as models for normative behavior. According to Fisher (1998), since each person is unique, people are incompatible by nature. Every relationship therefore experiences conflict at some point; once more, the importance lies in how the participants manage that disagreement. Remember that conflict and difference need not be bad; they just indicate that two ideas or aspects aren't identical or the same.

Ting Toomey`s identity negotiation context is applicable to Kirabo, the way she negotiate with Nsuuta, shares her secret of other self wither. Kirabo knows that Nsuuta can understand her better than her grandmother. Kirabo`s grandfather called her special and she began to think that maybe she is witch

having another Self but negotiation with Nsuuta clarifies her misconceptions. She absolutely depends on Nsuuta. She discovered her identity through the negotiation process with Nsuuta. According to Stella Toomey, "The concept negotiation in the Identity Negotiation Theory refers to the interchange of verbal and nonverbal communication between two or more negotiators in order to maintain, undermine, or elevate the numerous socio-cultural group-based or distinctive subjective identity perceptions of each other in spot" (2). What defines the correct manner to convey identity confirmation and consideration, however, differs depending on the cultural setting. The Identity Negotiation Theory emphasizes the importance of various identity dimensions in shaping people's daily relationships. Negotiating cultural identity is simply one tactic for minimising conflict.

Ting Toomey (1999) expanded on her earlier usage of the phrase "cultural identity negotiation" to cogently explain how public self-images are influenced during interpersonal interaction by putting on or showing weakness and by being conscious communicators. According to the Cultural Contracts paradigm, intercultural relationships may or may not be organized depending on the factors involved (such as power, boundaries, cultural loyalty, group identification, maturity, etc.). Following a preliminary consultation with the self, this coordination is started. To put it another way, identities, whether social, cultural, or otherwise, has significance for the person when they are first individually negotiated. Despite the fact that a person may be conscious of the cultural prejudice that classifies her as Black, the significance of that identification signifier is only realized when it is discussed internally. Sometimes that procedure is swift and/or subconscious. Once one has made intrapersonal modifications to accept, reject, or compromise one's worldview or elements of it, this ontological orientation is carried over into interpersonal interactions, where difference takes centre stage. In an international relationship, differences do not necessarily lead to conflict, but frequently, just like in a new marriage, participants must accept differences in values if the partnership is to succeed.

It's crucial to understand that the word "cultural" used in cultural contracts is intentional. Culture is necessary for existence. There are nevertheless cultural patterns of interaction, standards, and conventions that shape daily conduct even if one is unable to articulate the specifics of the cultural value system to which he or she belongs. Culture is essential to human existence and serves as the fundamental building block of social interactions (Toomey). Although the idea of identity negotiation is straightforward, there are times when it is unclear what exactly is being discussed, especially because identities are immaterial. Identity is dynamic, not stable, and it is altered by social contact (Jackson). People express how they view the world and their identities every time they speak.

Women make up over half of Africa's population and are known to perform important roles as mothers, workers, administrators, community developers/organizers, and so on. Because of their combined responsibilities in the productive and reproductive domains, female contribution to society's socio-economic development is more than half that of men. Nonetheless, their

engagement in official and informal systems and processes, where decisions about the use of society resources generated by men and women are decided, is minimal. The patriarchal aspect of African society is a fundamental element of a conventional civilization. "It is a pattern of social interactions with a material foundation that allows men to rule women" (Stacey). It's an identity-based system of social distinction and discrepancy that gives men substantial advantages while limiting women's responsibilities and activities. By implicitly accepting domestic and sexual abuse and allowing uneven compensation for comparable or equivalent work, patriarchal culture provides the framework for women's fundamentally unequal position in households and markets. For generations, men and women's relationships have been regulated by tradition, society, and religion, and male dominance has been ingrained in the framework of social organization and structure at all levels of hierarchy. "Women's marginalization in education, the economy, the job market, politics, business, family, domestic concerns, and inheritance is justified by patriarchy" (Salaam).

This patriarchy culture is also very strongly influenced by the domination of males over women, which leads to men sitting back in the family to maintain their family name and ancestry growing as women get married. As a result, men are groomed for leadership roles while women are relegated to domestic chores; duties attributed to them by culture that influence them later in life, causing them to lose self-confidence/worth and have low levels of self in their professional careers, including politics. "The patriarchal fabrication of the distinction between gender and femininity is the political difference between freedom and subjugation" (Pateman, 2018, p. 22). In feminist theory, patriarchy refers to all of the societal systems that perpetuate and maintain male supremacy over women. Patriarchy is often described by feminist theory as a social phenomenon that can be overcome by exposing and critically evaluating its representation.

Even after the continent's inclusiveness, as Daniel Etounga-Manguelle so accurately points out, there are mutual interests that can be used as organizing principles in discourse about Africa: "The variability vast number of cultural groups in Africa is unquestionable, but there is a basis of common values, behaviors, and organizations that connects together the nations south of the Sahara, and also north in many aspects" (p. 67). According to Nnaemeka, African studies' emphasis on the concept of Africa instead of the actuality of Africa is similar to women's studies' emphasis on the concept of the African woman instead of African women's nature (p. 8). One could claim that African natives both monogamous and polygamous share insufficient living space because it is all they can manage. We blame their cultural polygamy rather than their socioeconomic position when bad policies and practices combine with discrimination to create a lower class of poor, unemployed families.

Culture is important to the extent that its significance, progress, and transformation are derived from people's interactions with and negotiations with it in the context of traditional norms. In African culture, negotiation has its own significance because this concept has discriminated African patriarchal culture from others. In other cultures, resistive behavior of women against

patriarchy can be seen but in this African context negotiation determines passivity of women's behavior. In supporting the various aspects of African feminism, Nnaemeka says in order to explain the phenomenon called African feminism; it is not to Western feminism but rather to the African environment that one must refer. African feminism is proactive and has a life of its own that is rooted in the African environment (9). Its distinctiveness stems from the cultural and ideological peculiarity of its origin.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

In Makumbi's *A Girl is a Body of Water*, Kirabo is presented as a sign of hope, whose self is not like other women. She did not know about her origin that who is her mother? This quest of knowing her origin makes her different from other women living around her whether it is her grandmother or Nsuuta. Where is she? What does she look like? How does it feel to have a mother? But whenever she asked about her and family said, "No one knows about her" (Makumbi, 2020, p.7). Her mother's absence, though, haunts her like a nightmare. Kirabo learns about the lady who gave birth to her while seeking answers from Nsuuta, the local witch, and uncovers that she is alive but not ready to meet her. Nsuuta also assists Kirabo in comprehending the formation of an enigmatic second self. Negotiation is a key factor in order to avail the opportunities. For women living in an African patriarchal society, negotiation plays a vital role but in case of Kirabo lack of negotiation exists in her family.

In many respects, African culture maintains to encourage patriarchy, preserving women's inferiority. The subject of violence against women is a big concern in Africa. Exploitation of women and children remains highly prevalent and supports male supremacy culture and tradition. Women are more likely to be exploited at work, in the society, in their homes and in their personal lives since they are still denied rights and considered as lesser human beings. Women are considered to be the property of men, first of their fathers and later, when they marry, of their husbands. This promotes male supremacy, as well as increasing and inciting violence towards women.

Gender and language negotiations are also embedded in native societies: "African patterns of feminism can be seen as having developed within a context that views human life from a total, rather than a dichotomous and exclusive, perspective. For women, the male is not 'the other' but part of the human same" (Steady, p.8). Each sexual identity is the crucial part that completes the human being. Each sex is not perfect in itself. Despite possessing distinctive characteristics, everybody has and requires a counterpart. Each gender constitutes the critical half that makes the human whole. Neither sex is totally complete in itself. Each has and needs a complement, despite the possession of unique features of its own. The eagerness and willingness of African women to negotiate with or around men, especially in stressful situations, is widespread. Negotiation, adaptation, and compromise are all part of African feminism's struggles.

"Though Nsuuta was practically blind, behind her blindness she could see. But Nsuuta was not just a witch she was Grandmother's foe" (Makumbi, 2020, p. 18). Kirabo seeks help from a woman who has a great conflict with her

grandmother. Kirabo does not tell her grandmother for seeking help from Nsuuta because she is very well aware of this conflict. This is how even in family how women make other women to suffer. Lack of negotiation can be seen through Kirabo's father who is the main hurdle in search of her origin.

"Right now? Inside me, both. But recently, the bad one keeps flying out. Are there two of you too? Does one of you fly out, does she make you do bad things?" (Makumbi, 2020, p. 23) She requests assistance from Nsuuta, the "village witch." Nsuuta is a wise woman who is also closely connected to Kirabo's family. Both of Nsuuta's high expectations for her young acquaintance are evident in their initial talk. The energetic and intelligent Kirabo is terrified by her passions and goals, which she describes as a second self ready to fly out of her and transgress. According to Nsuuta, this "flying out" is a unique talent that comes from a woman's "natural state." Nsuuta claims that men are terrified of women, which is why they maintain such strict control over them. Nsuuta claims that in a previous era, "we were not confined inside; we were huge, strong, brazen, loud, proud, fearless, and independent." But they got rid of it because it was too much for the world. But occasionally a girl like you can experience that state again. Similar to Nsuuta, Kirabo views herself as a Witch. Nsuuta hears Kirabo proclaim, "I am a witch ." Nsuuta relaxed while batting her eyelids. "A witch?" "Yes." "What kind of witch?" "A real one." "Oh." Pause. "Have you talked to your grandmother?" "How? She would not understand." "And I would?" "You are the only witch I know." Nsuuta's face shone as if it was a compliment" (Makumbi, 2020, p. 22). It also shows the trust of a woman over another woman. That she has shared the secret of herself with Nsuuta. Kirabo has not shared with her grandmother because she considers that her grandmother will not understand her.

Notwithstanding her grandmother's wishes, Kirabo's use of folktales as a bribe to persuade Nsuuta to discover about her absent mother. The concept "negotiation" refers to the transfer of verbal and nonverbal communication between two or more negotiators in order to maintain, challenge, or elevate the various socio-cultural community or distinctive subjective identity representations of each other in spot. Hence, the story is a main tool through which both Kirabo and Nsuuta are negotiating. Negotiation in a patriarchal society does not specially related to men but in Kirabo's case, situation is different. She has negotiated with Nsuuta in order to identify her own self. "Nsuuta, can you find my mother for me?" Nsuuta started. Kirabo did not wait for her to recover. She ran across the courtyard and back into the road. Behind her, Nsuuta smiled, A huge, fat smile" (Makumbi, 2020, p. 24). Kirabo does not know about her mother but she wants to know and that's why she approached Nsuuta because a kind of belief she have in Nsuuta, the way she negotiated with Kirabo. Kirabo wants to know her origin, her identity. In this regard, she thinks that Nsuuta can help her to find her mother. A sort of rationality can be seen in Kirabo's character. Being a girl of 12, she is on the journey to find her second Self and her mother. She knows that through negotiation with Nsuuta, the conflict which she has with her second self can be removed. Meaningful intercultural interpersonal interactions can foster extra emotional stability and trust in the cultural strangers. People typically crave interpersonal connection through close; meaningful relationships (for

example, close friendship support scenarios). People experience identity constancy when engaging in recurring cultural rituals in a comfortable cultural setting, but they typically go through identity transformation and change—or, to the extreme, chaos and turmoil—when engaging in new or unfamiliar cultural settings (Toomey). This intimate relationship that Kirabo has with Nsuuta gives her not only emotional stability but also a sense of trust in Nsuuta. In order to communicate responsibly, successfully, and adaptively with people from different cultures, it is crucial to integrate the requisite intercultural identity-based understanding, consciousness, and communication skills. Feeling acknowledged, appreciated, and constructively valued are among the consequences of identity negotiation that might be seen satisfactory (Toomey). Through negotiation, Kirabo has found that Nsuuta understands her inner self, providing her a sense of satisfaction that someone is her to understand her situation. “Today, we will go to my house,” Kirabo said. “What do you mean, ‘your house’?” “You mean I have never told you? I have a house. It is big, huge, with a lot of land. My grandfather gave it to me. Come, I will show you.” Giibwa followed Kirabo reluctantly. “Why would he give you a house?” “To belong to me.” “But you are just a girl”, “My grandfather says I am special” (Makumbi, 2020, p.34). In this whole scenario, a taunting conversation was carried out by both Kirabo and her friend Gibwa. Gibwa ridiculously mocked at Kirabo’s dark skin. Your skin is so burned that you will bite both your upper and lower lips to use that Ambi lotion to lighten it. Giibwa acted as though she was scouring her face with effort as she sucked both her upper and bottom lip between her teeth. This time, Kirabo pursued her with determination. Where Kirabo was the breeze, Giibwa was not lissom. Giibwa continued to look behind her. Giibwa flung the doll's body at Kirabo as she was catching up, and Kirabo halted to pick it up. At a safe distance, Giibwa taunted, “All your aunts are sluts.” “What did you say?” “That is why your grandfather gives you property.” “WHAT DID YOU SAY?” “Guy, public bus; your aunt Gayi, village coach. Fancy a ride?” Kirabo stopped chasing and pulled out her trump card. “You know what, Giibwa? It is time my grandfather had a word with your father. You have gone beyond” (Makumbi, 2020, p. 38).” Giibwa’s face collapsed. The consequences were dire. She turned and ran out of sight. Kirabo did not chase her. A kind of racist approach can be analysed through their conversation. This conversation is not carried by adult women but small girls.

Nsuuta and her grandmother Alikisa are forced to marry polygamists, according to Kirabo. Nnambi, Tom's wife, is scared of Kirabo's mother and sometimes even Kirabo herself, although her privileged city background. One of the novel's most painful moments is when Nnambi urges Kirabo, a sixteen year old teenager to lie in her father's bed, alleging Kirabo is his actual wife. “I’m sorry I borrowed your bed. I have a headache; could you sleep with your father tonight? I would like to sleep on my own.” Kirabo stared, unconvinced. “I hope you don’t mind.” Nnambi winced (Makumbi, 2020, p.145). Envy-fuelled violence serves as a powerful reminder of the expanding chasms that can develop between groups in oppressive patriarchal cultures, even our own. Discrimination, but at the other hand, has a tendency to create connections.

DISCUSSION:

Ugandan culture is fundamentally based on trading tales. In actuality, Makumbi uses this opening to introduce her little protagonist, who is anxious to share the tale she has been practising. And the novel is infused with Kirabo at age twelve, whose desire for storytelling inspires her to use cultural etiquette to draw the irritated teenagers of her village into storytelling. In defiance of her grandmother's desires, Kirabo uses stories as leverage to cajole Nsuuta into learning about her missing mother. Stories keep Kirabo linked to her family in Nattetta when her father moves her live with him and his family, but they also help her discover more about herself, even when they're not intended for her. She learns that she was "born on the margins of the family structure, and was consequently marginal, irrespective of her status as the eldest child" after listening in on her "new" stepmother and step-grandmother. Additionally, family members and acquaintances told tales in remembrance of her father, who passed away suddenly in his mid-thirties. The applicability of this novel the principles of mwenkanonkano (feminist) to the significance of having a voice and representation—may be its most significant feature. A sick Nsuuta reaches out to Kirabo after the rain dance and says, "Promise me you will pass on the story of the first woman—in whatever form you desire. It was presented to me by abducted ladies. My grandmothers had a horrible situation of migration. Their act of defiance was to tell origin stories. I merely made minor additions here and there. Stories are important, Kirabo," she proceeded carefully. Someone will speak in our place the moment we stop talking.

In African Continent, as well as other parts of Africa, polygamy is extensively prevalent. Therefore, the rules governing it are stringent, and as a result, it is not considered licentious or bad. People become polygamous for a variety of reasons. Many individuals have their own justifications; some are purely coincidental, while others are deliberate and intentional. The dilemma of male child was not only a cause that drove people to polygamy in the pre-modern era; it is now a reason that drives people to take a second wife, either officially or discreetly. This polygamous relationship resulted from two factors: first, the wife was exhausted of bearing children, and second, the stress from her husband's family became too much. These are some of the reasons why Africans often opt to polygamy. "That year, Luzze married another woman. Through time they had many children, but they were all girls. Luzze despaired. Why were girl-bearing women not labelled, so he could avoid them? Still, he married a third woman. She bore him many children, but they too were girls" (Makumbi, 2020, p. 11). His wives being the victims of malevolence thinking are compromising with their lives just for the sake of their children or to secure their identities because whether it is Eastern or Western society, every woman thinks that she is nothing without her master who is her shadow. In most traditional African civilizations, a man feels that having male children improves his status and significance in the society, and as well as his name will be glorified. As a result, if the first wife only bears female children, the temptation will be to get into a second marriage with the explicit intention of producing male children.

Marriage is an approach through which a woman feels secure but the concept

of polygamy even in this novel shows women also negotiate by adopting silence in front of their lords. Through this silent negotiation women want to secure their identity but indeed it is psychological exploitation by their masters. Paradoxically, women's attempts to fight submission and total male domination transformed them into participants with financial interests in the system that exploited them. If we observe Luzze's case his wives can speak against this oppression but they are compromising in this situation in a hope that their identity and protection will be preserved by their husband. His wives through silent negotiation remain passive and neutral.

CONCLUSION:

This research looks at several features of negotiation in a patriarchal African society. The concepts of compromise, give and take, negotiation, and moderation are at the heart of many African civilizations' common values. *A Girl is a Body of Water* is essentially about Kirabo's journey to rationalize and negotiate these thoughts and emotions, as well as her urge to reunite with her mother and respect her family's requirements, and it is rich in Ugandan folktales and an apprehending exploration of what it represents to be an advanced girl in a world that appears decisive to silence women.

The friendships that form between girls and women are closely related to the idea of women as being rootless and belonging to males. In their childhood, Alikisa and Nsuuta were great friends, and because of how close they were, they decided to wed the same man in order for their friendship to endure. As kids, Kirabo and Giibwa are best friends, but their relationship ends tragically. If Kirabo is a feminist, Nsuuta is the original archetype. Nsuuta wants to finish school and become a nurse like the arrogant Asian nurses she meets when she is younger, unlike other women in her community. She is a privileged, intelligent, and beautiful child (the scale involves her light complexion). She is not male, though. Her small village is scandalised by the decisions she made while attending school. When she gets back to the hamlet, she makes the decision to start having affairs in order to fulfil her rather than waiting for her married lover's sporadic visits (his clan had converted to Christianity, making it impossible to take a second wife).

Kirabo's feminism is similarly demonstrated through her free will and decisions. She plans to continue her study in order to become a veterinarian. Her attempts to make peace with her best friend (Giibwa), who betrays her, her confrontation with her birth mother, and her empathy for other women (even her disagreeable stepmother) are all indications of her character and way of life. However, she shares Nsuuta's status, which complicates her friendship with Giibwa, a labourer's daughter. Giibwa reveals the unfairness and socioeconomic divide in their relationship. But for me, the issue is not that a male finger controls the hand; rather, it is that the four feminine fingers are not treated equally. She is particularly troubled by her family's feudal status as farm workers who reside on Kirabo's family's land. The novel promotes female resistance in all of its manifestations, from the conventional woman to the woman who adopts a traditional pose to control her husband to the openly defiant woman. It is not, however, a fairy tale regarding women. Here, negotiation has two aspects in this context: give and take or deal, as well as

manage with efficiently or go around. African feminism, or feminism practiced in Africa, confronts issues through collaboration and negotiation. It recognizes where, when, and how to destroy deadly oppressive lords of patriarchy, as well as when, where, and how to avoid them. In other words, it learns when, where, and how to bargain with or around patriarchy in a variety of situations.

Irrespective of negotiations, African women cannot win in a patriarchal society because the conservatism that has anchored their minds cannot allow the women to build high hopes. Women are “Other” and cannot share the status tantamount to men. Feminism is an attitude that conjures the flexibility and changes of a process rather than the permanence and social identity of a structure, a paradigm, for African women. In order to remind the audience of the value of being able to narrate their own tale, Makumbi knocks their shoulders. A fascinating exploration of an African culture, notably that of Uganda, in which the author uses her talents for writing and storytelling to look at the specifics of a patriarchal culture. The dialects that transition from local and Bantu dialects to one impacted by the entrance of Europeans take pride in how they portray African language and culture. The imprint of Christianity on Ugandan culture disrupts and affects the social and familial systems that separate families, portending a day when culture will be altered by the evangelization it cannot resist. *A Girl is a Body of Water* makes it apparent how important it is to have the confidence to stand up for oneself, whether it's by teaching something new or by erasing something from the past.

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