



POST-MALE DOMINATION AND INTRA-FEMINIST RESISTANCE: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SELECTED NARRATIVES OF THE URHOBBO PEOPLE

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Abstract

This study is an analysis of intra-feminist resistance in a post-gender equality struggle period. Feminist resistance is well documented in pre-colonial literature of Africa. The performers of Urhobo narratives even go further than just portraying the feminist resistance to male domination to providing futuristic models of the post-male domination resistance time when women would have achieved equality with men in political, economic and social spheres of human existence. In the analysis of the two models chosen for this study –The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives and The Virtuous Wife stories, the paper argues that in the eventuality of the attainment of power by women, there is still feminist resistance; this time it is intra-feminist resistance. Adopting cultural studies as a framework, the paper discovers that through the motifs of inequality, incompatibility, struggle, division and revolution, the intra-feminist resistance in the post-male dominance period still lead to either peaceful or violent change in leadership. As the narrators grapple with these themes, they objectified their models with the techniques of parallelism, mask, magic realism and symbolism to show that in the reign of women, the major antagonists are also women. The study concludes that women are the major challenge to the successful attainment of the reign of the woman and that feminist resistance will be a continuous struggle.

Keywords: domination, feminist, incompatibility, intra-resistance, revolution.

Introduction

This paper interrogates the post-gender equality struggle and feminist resistance; the struggle to resist the whims and caprices of women in position of power by other female followers. As the struggle for gender equality and that of overthrowing the patriarchal system gains traction, some women have been able to rise to the pinnacle of positions hitherto occupied by men. The crux of the issue is that once these women have attain power, the management of such powers and their relationship with fellow women have not been subjected to intensive academic scrutiny. This is the focus of this study. Since most studies have focused on masculinity and the ways women are resisting patriarchy, it is imperative that the post-struggle feminist narrative of the management of the leader-followers relationship amongst women should also be investigated. This paper therefore, foregrounds the fact that one of the most pressing challenges facing the women is their ability to negotiate the murky waters of women interpersonal relationship in both family and the public space.



The literary canon has not been favourable to the woman; it is dominated by men's work. Moreover, the female characters projected in most stories are women who play subservient roles. This male dominated canon and characterization is not limited to one culture. Therefore, the need to refute the subjugation of women is universal. One of the major conflicts between male and female writers rests on the denigration of the female by the male in both the number of works accepted into the canon and the picture of complete submissiveness and near absence of 'strong' female characters in the work of most male writers. This bias stand has relegated the achievements of women over the years to the shadows. This in turn, has led to the struggle for female affirmative consciousness. The necessity to refute the stigma of subjection of women in male literary works is not limited to written literature but also finds an outlet in the oral arts Bressler (2003) refers to this as the "false standards and beliefs about women, both in their lives and in their portrayal in literature" (141/144). The urge by female content creators to compose feminist stories or themes in tales is geared towards demystifying male domination. This adheres to the trend left by Elaine Showalter's strand of feminism called gynocriticism.

In Africa, the work of Davies (1990) seems to re-negotiate the balance of Showalter's stance when related to African tales. Davies argues that "the available research makes it clear there was equal billing for male and female in the oral literary tradition and that while there was specialization in certain genres according to gender; there was no large scale exclusion of one group from the creative process" (2). This is in contrast with the male dominated literary canon which excludes most women's works. As a result of this fact, Robinson (1994) notes that "an already recognized woman author has been denied her rightful place, presumably because of the general devaluation of female efforts and subject" (155). This line of thought forms the basis of the study by Sakshi Semwai (2022) where he investigated "what accounts for the eventual shift from minimal roles of women in *Things Fall Apart* to central roles in *Americanah*" (307). According to Semwai, "in early African fiction, the narrative of the woman is mostly that of a second-class citizen ... in this masculine world, wife is ranked with other property" (307).

In portraying the female character as undergoing restructuring from being treated as part of household objects in Achebe early novels to its present status of an independent character in the modern African novels, the bane of the woman as represented in those novels is the patriarchy or masculinity. This is what Eida Hungwe and Chipso Hungwe (2010) describe as the "problematic of the African tradition of masculinity which fosters the marginalization and subordination of women ..." (3). In detailing the stance of Achebe in his novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, the Hungwes argues that "Achebe acknowledges that the malaise Africa is experiencing results from excluding women from the scheme of things" (3). In presenting the utopian picture of the woman, Achebe's vision, according to the Hungwes, "is the inclusion of all social classes in matters of the state with women on the forefront on the road to freedom" (4). In so doing, the men "are presented as a fragmented lot who jostle each other to win favor ... against the preferable scene of women in solidarity" (4). Thus, in the view of the Hungwes, in the preceding period before the attainment of power, the women are united while their traducers, the men, are at each other's neck.

The Hungwes success in portraying the figure of women in solidarity is limited to the period of the struggle for gender equality. But what happens to the women when they finally succeed in attaining power. The Hungwes do not explain. This is what this paper is set out to achieve. This paper uses the postcolonial studies to argue that once women attain power to govern a nation or an entity, women become the major challenge of the woman in achieving the glorious equality they seek. It is observed that most times, the relationship between female leaders and female followers is messier than that between women and the opposite gender. In this regard, there is a noticeable resistance between the women in the followers group and the woman at the helms of affair. This situation is further complicated when there is rivalry and competition for a position of importance between two or more women. In these situations, the reactions of women as they struggle for and resist each other are a fascinating area for content creators and critics. In portraying the divisiveness of women once they attain power, this study draws illustrations from two models preserved in the oral narratives of the Urhobo people. The two stories are *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives*



(Avwebo and Avwierovwe) performed by Mrs. Sarah Abohweyere of Olomu and *The Virtuous Wife* narrated by Mr. Cousin Onofekohwo of Kokori. Both stories are narrated in the Urhobo language.

The Urhobo people are found in the Delta Central senatorial district of Delta State, Nigeria. They share a common boundary with the Benin people; this allows them to share both ideas and goods. G. G. Darah recorded the story *Avwebo and Avwierovwe*, which is translated as *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives* as part of his scholarly research work. In Urhobo marital relations, the word “Avwierovwe” refers to a disrespected or neglected wife and “Avwebo” means a favoured wife. The plot of the story is developed on the folk conflict and antagonism that the two names connote. The story is about the unhealthy rivalry amongst the numerous wives of a king in a large, fictional town in the ancient Benin Kingdom. The story deals with the intrigues and domestic schisms engaged in by members of the Oba’s (King) household and it ends with the triumph of a section. Metaphorically, the design of the tale also details the harsh experiences of Avwierovwe in the hands of her mate Avwebo and her rise from obscurity to importance and the reverse for Avwebo. At the same time, the story is a representation of the recurrent disunity among those in power and their followers. It should be noted that in Urhobo story tradition, the Tortoise motif evokes images of tricksterism, greed and selfishness.

The second story, *The Virtuous Wife*, is a thirty minutes story performed by Cousin Onofekohwo. The story is about the internal struggles and squabbles in the pre-Oranmiyan Benin Empire. This is the era of the Ogiso (King) dynasty. This particular King is polygamous. The struggle among the wives for dominance, knowing that the Kingship is primogeniture in pattern leads to malicious intent and murder. Inarhe, the eldest wife connived with Tortoise, a power broker in the kingdom to murder Jateme the second and most virtuous wife of the King. Still bent on eliminating Omovodjotu, the only son of Jateme and the heir apparent, Inarhe and her cronies met their Waterloo, when Jateme resurrects to lead a revolution. Both King, Inarhe and their cohorts died in the putsch and Omovodjotu is installed as the next king. Therefore, the tale can be interpreted as the struggle between the ruling class and the dominated class. The choice of both tales is influenced by their length, complex plot and the need to capture the subjective effect of the idiosyncratic characterization by the narrators as it reflects on the idea of intra-feminist resistance. The model of women in power designed by the two narrators of the selected stories enables the analyst to contrive a utopian environment of the post-struggle for equality. The resulting friction among the leaders of the revolution and women followers which leads to a counter-revolution propels the analyst to the realization of his argument that the change in the leadership structure of an entity from men to women does not lead to a lull in feminist resistance.

Resisting the Other in Oral Narratives

In Urhobo tale’s cosmogonic sphere, several figures of women are identifiable. There is the aristocratic class of women. This group is dominated by women who are overtly ambitious and, in most times, act as power brokers in the society. Then, there is what Propp (1968) refers to as the ‘helper’ in the form of Old Woman (*mama, nene* or *omomare*) figure. This image depicts an old woman who has experience in socio-political issues. In the two stories under consideration, the method of analysis establishes the idiosyncratic interest of each narrator as objectified in the narratives. Then, as the interest of the protagonists and antagonists of the stories, and that of the performer play out, the analyst is opportune to subject these to critical experimentation, compared and contrast them, and deductions are made. The first comparative factor in the two tales is that both stories project accomplished women as astute state administrators who assist the King in the fictional kingdoms. The King in *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives* is so pleased with the stability in the kingdom that he leaves the day-to-day running of the kingdom in the hands of Avwebo (his favoured wife among the royal harem). Avwebo takes this advantage and with the assistance of Tortoise and others in the government becomes the de-facto ruler of the kingdom. In the other story, *The Virtuous Wife*, the King is supported by Inarhe, the eldest wife. Once again, Tortoise is among those assisting in the enactment and implementation of the royal court’s decisions.



Apart from these characters, there are other women in the stories. In the *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives*, there is Avwierovwe, one of the many wives of the King. There is also an old woman, and later in the story, Ubiurumagbe, the daughter of Avwierovwe appears in the story. In *The Virtuous Wife*, there is Jateme, the second wife of the king and the women ancestors who assisted her later in the story. In these instances, there is the use of parallelism in the presentation of Avwebo and Inarhe as aristocratic while Avwierovwe and Jateme are portrayed as ordinary women. Therefore, a paradox is established whereby Avwebo who is considered aristocratic and ambitious is pitted against Avwierovwe, a noble woman; and, Jateme, an exemplary wife is paralleled against Inarhe, an oligarch. The principled portrayal of Avwierovwe and Jateme enable the analyst to understand the role of these women in political matter. Their loyalty to constituted authority is overwhelmingly contrasted with the duo of Inarhe and Avwebo's lust for power. This establishes the conflict between the two groups in the narratives.

It is pertinent to observe that Avwebo and Inarhe as women could not choose other women as colleagues in the administration of the kingdom. Instead, they find political adviser and tactician in the person of Tortoise. In Urhobo tales, through anthropomorphism, narrators usually mask the image of sycophancy and betrayal in Tortoise; he is also presented as a male character. Another angle to the complexity surrounding the involvement of Tortoise is that Tortoise is an executive member of the King's administrative council. He is ably portrayed as Minister of Information or in a dictatorial setting, a propagandist. But in this scenario, instead of Tortoise reporting to his boss, the King, he usually waits on Avwebo or Inarhe in both tales respectively.

The Concept of Incompatibility

In highlighting the conflict between the two groups of women, the motif of incompatibility is objectified. The narrators of the tales take the advantage of the idea of incompatibility in advancing the notion of the inability of women with different ideologies to exist together. According to Osakwe (2002), incompatibility in literary stylistics refers to "set of item where the choice of one excludes the use of all the other items from that set" (14). In the tales under analysis, several women figures are presented by the two narrators. However, in their categorization, a sense of incompatibility occur when a woman is projected as Avwebo (favoured wife) and another as Avwierovwe (disrespected wife) in *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives* tale; and the ambition of Inarhe is pitted against the reserved nature of Jateme in *The Virtuous Wife* story. In the indigenous semantic understanding of marital parlance, the term Avwebo or Inarhe connotes exclusiveness, especially in a polygamous setting like the King's harem. So, labeling one wife as Avwebo or Inarhe necessarily excludes the other women in the royal house. Moreover, naming one wife Avwierovwe or the virtuous wife excludes all other wives as overtly over-ambitious women. Therefore, the idea incompatibility enables the narrators to inculcate in the psyche of the audience the fact that Avwebo and Inarhe on the one side, and Avwierovwe and Jateme are incompatible nor will they be able to co-exist, thus setting the stage for the eventual conflict and intra-feminist resistance that engulf everybody in the tales.

Intra-feminist Struggle

In order to capture the intra-feminist struggle in a post-gender equality setting, the narrators use the idea of disunity to connect the audience to the sequence of events in the stories. In the *Favoured and Unfavoured Wives*, the schism between the two groups of women is established when Avwierovwe decides to abjure the status-quo in which Avwebo and her cronies are enjoying as the only dominant force in the kingdom. In rejecting the admission into the cabal, Avwebo and the King acting on Tortoise's advice confined and silenced Avwierovwe. The narrator explains the situation this way:

The Oba (King) asked the latest wife, "What is your name?"

She said, "Avwierovwe" (An Unfavoured wife)...

The Oba asked in surprise, "You, so beautiful, are you Avwierovwe?"

She confirmed it so.



Tortoise heard and said, “Avwierovwe is her name, *ehen*, then show her the attitude meant for Avwierovwe.”

Then, they locked the door of the kitchen (laughter).

They built a house for the woman; they built it near the toilet, where excreta are passed...

They told her to move into the house.

In this situation of obscurity, Avwierovwe is removed from the scheme of things in the palace; she is abandoned and alienated. But in this state of depression, a slave boy in the palace who is also discontented with the abuse of absolute power by Avwebo (favoured wife) arranges for Avwierovwe to meet the King in the nuptial chamber, a preserve for only Avwebo. In order to achieve this feat, Avwierovwe has to be disguised as Avwebo. Avwierovwe’s successful outing with Avwebo’s disguise invokes suspicion on the part of Avwebo, and being the favoured wife, she wants to know who slept with the King the previous night. This is natural, since most nights she always shares the bed with the King. But it is also unnatural since the King is supposed to be entitled to all his wives. The significance of this part of the narrative is that while Avwebo, the powerful female ruler is keeping tabs on the male as the probable source of threat to her lordship, it is her fellow woman who has started the coup that will remove her from power.

In the other story, the split in women’s solidarity materializes when Inarhe (the favoured wife) is projected as the mother of deformed children. In contrast, Jateme (the virtuous but unfavoured wife) is childless. According to the narrator, the schism between the two women started this way:

As for Inarhe (the favoured wife), her advice to the husband is what he always adhere to.

Jateme (the virtuous but unfavoured wife) was the only presentable wife of the man that can escort him to any occasion.

She has diverse personality and good conduct.

Not knowing that in the marriage,

Since Jateme came into the family compound

Her mates have been envious of her.

The worst was Inarhe

Inarhe has about nine children in the compound

But none of the children is useful.

In this scenario, the conflict between the two women, though covert, is simmering. The division is further heightened when Jateme gave birth to a boy child who is unequivocally the heir apparent.

As things begin to fall apart, the narrators employ the motif of revolution to portray the climax of the schism between the women in the stories. Certain events uncontrollably lead to the bloody change in the status-quo. In the story of the *Favoured and Unfavoured Wives*, Avwierovwe uses the disguise of Avwebo to sleep with the King. The result is the birth of a baby girl named Ubiurumagbe. Through the effort of the slave boy, the knowledge of the birth of the child is concealed from Avwebo. This is because, Avwebo is barren and any news of the birth of a child for the King by another woman will be considered a treasonable offence. In these dangerous times, the child, Ubiurumagbe, begins to ask questions about her identity. At the end, through the technique of masking, the child is reconciled to the King. With the introduction of Ubiurumagbe as the heir apparent, the major conflict is revealed. It is the struggle for power between conservatives led by Avwebo and Tortoise and the progressives led Avwierovwe, the Old Woman and the Slave boy.

The same situation is obtained in *The Virtuous Wife* story. After the birth of the male child, Omovodjotu, Inarhe became restless, deflated, furious and unpredictable. She bewitched and killed Jateme. Thereafter, she began to torment the heir apparent, Omovodjotu. An opportunity presented itself when the King married a new wife. Inarhe demanded for sacrificial offerings to be provided by each of the King’s children for welcoming the new wife, the failure of which is to be punished with the death penalty. Omovodjotu who has no one to provide for him looked up to his father for



protection. But Inarhe barred the King from providing for any of his sons. In this dreadful scenario, Omovodjotu goes to his mother grave to cry for assistance. Mysteriously, there is provision from the world of ancestors. The boy repeatedly goes to the grave to cry and the mother delivers fowls, goats, rams and bulls for him. In spite of these, Inarhe demanded for the audit of the King's wives. Any child whose mother is not alive is to be sacrificed. Omovodjotu went to his mother's grave and cried for seven days. In representing these events, the narrator of *The Virtuous Wife* story resorts to the technique of magical realism when he miraculously links Omovodjotu with her dead mother. The story continues:

Narrator: Immediately he stopped uttering these words.
The child talked to his mother.
The mother did not respond.
The mother then summoned those with her in the ancestral world.
She said, "You saw how I was bewitched to meet you here; are they still determined to send my son to meet me here? Can you give me some time-off so that I can take the fight to the family on earth?"
As for her guardians in the spirit world, they granted her request.
She said to her son, "Give way".
The child gave way.
When he gave way, the grave tore *ghrwo-oooo*.
She rose from the dead.
She wore flowing white linen from head to toe *vouiii*.
She rendered a tune.
She called her son, "Son, don't get close to me, just follow the path", while she was leading the song....

Jateme resurrects from the dead and leads a campaign that resulted in the putsch that sweeps out Inarhe and the King from power.

In the *Favoured and the Unfavoured* story, the narrator tied the idea of revolution to the resolution of the conflict of the story. Immediately Avwebo is brought to speed about the existence of Ubiurumagbe, the daughter of Avwierovwe and heir apparent, she schemes with Tortoise to have the child killed in a mysteriously way. Avwebo instigated Tortoise to tell the Oba that the oracle, the mouth piece of the gods and a source of intelligence report has discovered that Ubiurumagbe's destiny is to kill the Oba. A special tribunal convenes to try Ubiurumagbe for treason. When all are seated, the King asked Tortoise and Avwebo that:

"Who consulted the oracle?"
They (Avwebo and Tortoise) answered, "It is an oracle."
They (the Oba's (King's) council) asked further, "Was it in this town belonging to the Oba?" They answered in the affirmative.
"Go bring the diviner", they directed. "Bring the diviner so he can consult the oracle", they ordered.
Tortoise said he could consult the oracle and the court agreed, saying: "This is even a quicker solution".
They urged Tortoise to cast the lots. Tortoise brought out the lots and hit them *ko-ko-ko-ko-ko-ko-ko-ko*. He invoked the powers of the oracle thus: "Oba's daughter Ubiurumagbe, said she would cause the father's death. My oracle, is it the forecast?" *Ghwra-aaaaa*, he casts the seedlings.
The oracle said, "It is not true"
Confused, Tortoise retorted, "Are you dreaming."
He resumed the casting process.... At this point, Avwebo exclaimed: "Ha, Tortoise, you don't know how to cast lots again. This was not how you cast them the other time."



“You come and cast them yourself. Avwebo said she knew how to cast lots. Did we even cast lots?” Tortoise said angrily.

“Were you not the one who came to me to say that the destiny of Ubiurumagbe would lead to the father’s death?”

When the supreme council of the land demanded Tortoise to cast the lots as he is a notable fortune teller, he is not able to get the dubious result in the presence of other experts. Thus, the narrator uses magic realism to tie the sub-plots of the tale into a whole without the audience discovering or questioning her artistry.

The significance of the use of magic realism in the overthrow of the conservatives and the resolution of the plot of the stories is that it helps to disable the audience’s inquisitive faculty. This conforms to the words of Broderick (1977) that “it is the denial of beliefs that gives the art form its freshness, its spontaneity and its entertainment appeal besides reinforcing the ethical codes of the people and at the same time protecting its survival from one generation to the other” (224,225). Apart from the above application, magical realism also enables the narrators to project magical orality in the capture, suspense and dispense of the audience in a storytelling performance. This means that man, always fascinated by the unknown is always at the mercy of the elements of nature. Therefore, when a storyteller merges the natural realism with the meta-physical fantasies in a story, the result is absolute concentration and denial of what is real on the part of the audience and at the same time the narrative will not lead to a state of confusion.

The rivalry and antagonism generated by the two groups of women in a post-struggle for gender equality period is geared towards the argument that in the time when women have finally achieved the gender equality that they seek, the major resistance will not come from the men but it will be spearheaded by the women against their kind. In portraying this futuristic setting, the narrators of the two stories present change as a major idea that advances the plot of the story. As the events play out, the impunity of Avwebo and her group in *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives* and Inarhe with hers in *The Virtuous Wife* make the eventual putsch inevitable. This is another area of convergence in the two tales. In *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives*, the palace revolution is spearheaded by Ubiurumagbe, the daughter of Avwierovwe with the help of some elements who are underlings in the drama of Avwebo’s control of political, economic and social powers. In *The Virtuous Wife* the revolt is championed by Jateme, the dead wife who was killed by Inarhe and her agents. She resurrects and with the uncommon support from the ancestors, possibly women ancestors (*Eghweya*), undertakes a political and spiritual cleansing of the empire. The point being made here is that both group of women are ambitious and are prepared to sacrifice everything they have to hold on to the existing balance of political power or to change the status-quo and acquire power for themselves.

The idiosyncrasies of the performers come to the fore when their bias and emotions necessitate them to inject some significant change in the outcome of the intra-gender conflict in the two stories. In *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives*, the narrator presents Avwebo as a barren woman. In fact, all the Oba’s wives are barren except Avwierovwe. But in *The Virtuous Wife*, the male performer did not present Inarhe as an unfruitful woman. Instead she has stereotypic children. It is in this atmosphere of the inability of these ‘first ladies’ to produce heir apparent to the throne in a primogeniture setup that the narrators take advantage of to insert the other women who both give birth to wonderful kids. In *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives*, Avwierovwe, the disrespected wife gives birth to a girl, Ubiurumagbe, while in the tale of *The Virtuous Wife* by a male narrator, Jateme, the irreprehensible wife gives birth to Omovodjotu, a boy.

The Resolution

The divergence in the gender of the heir apparent is in furtherance of the narrators’ plan to facilitate the resolution of the plot at the end of the tale. The narrator of *The Favoured and Unfavoured Wives*, Mrs. Sarah Abohweyere shares her feminist attitude when she unveils the heir apparent as a girl. But, Chief Cousin Onofekohwo, a male narrator, conscious of the rapid rise of



Inarhe in the political equation of the kingdom, therefore chooses the heir apparent as a male. This conflict of interest between the two performers reflects the continuation of the struggle for women affirmative action in the exercise of political power and scholarship. But for the male performer, there is need to create awareness that women have acquired power but are unable hold on to it due to intra-gender schism and so there is the need to keep them in check.

However, the female narrator of will have none of the change of the gender at the top. Therefore, she depicted the heir apparent as a woman and at the same time, Avwierovwe, the mother of the heir apparent survives the putsch in spite of all the maltreatment, torment and bashing at the hands of Avwebo. More so, the narrator caused a stir when the Oba (King) survives the dethronement of Inarhe and her political cronies. The question is, why put Ubiurumagbe, the female heir apparent under the image of her father, the Oba when the opportunity to dethrone the Oba and Avwebo presents itself unobstructed as the male narrator of *The Virtuous Wife* did when both Inarhe and the King died in the violent seizure of power? Several factors may account for this. The tale was narrated in the eighties. At that time, the fever of feminist ideas is enveloping the Nigerian urban society. Secondly, the removal of the Oba without any man to replace him would have spell doom for the lineage of the King as the citizens may resist the enthronement of the girl, Ubiurumagbe as their new King. So, to achieve balance, the narrator goes for the option of replacing Avwebo with Avwierovwe at the royal court assisted by Ubiurumagbe to act as check against the male power brokers.

Likewise, the same feat is achieved by the male narrator of *The Virtuous Wife* when he resurrects Jateme from the dead to lead the revolution. At the end of the tale, there is no record of the fact that Jateme returned to her ancestors. Thus, Omovodjotu, after becoming King is left in the hands of her powerful, magically and spiritually fortified mother, who in fact, will be the de-facto ruler. It is pertinent to remember that in the story, Omovodjotu has been unable to independently cater for his needs and challenges since the demise of his mother. The argument here is that the male characters that are at the helms of affair or the heir apparent are portrayed as dependent on the women in the story either as their wife, partner or mother. This realistic portrayal goes to solidify the notion that women will continue to struggle to be influential in power politics whether they are in power or out of it.

On a deeper meaning, in the two stories, the images of Avwebo and Inarhe represent the oligarch in power bent on perpetrating their interest and the status quo. The Avwierovwe or Jateme groups are the people clamoring for change to a new order. This is in line with the argument of this paper that in the post-struggle for gender equality scenario when women are in power, the resistance will be between the women as the women will be part of the controllers of powers of the state and, at the same, it is the women too who will engineer the change that may follow. This is what is projected in *The Virtuous Wife* story when the narrator reduces Omovodjotu to a follower who paced after Jateme his mother, who with powers endowed on her, marches ahead to carry out the revolution. The representation of the female gender as winning the struggle for gender equality, taking over the powers of state as de-facto rulers, and also, becoming the eventual champions of the revolution for a better political system is the hallmark of the projection of women on both sides of the socio-political divide as portrayed by the narrators of the two stories used for illustration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the two tales has buttressed the argument that women are major contributors to the political stability of the state through their resistance to absolute male or female subjection and subjugation. As the woman in the twenty-first century Africa have acquired the tools of education, universal collaboration and a heightened sense of purpose procured from the feminist movement, they will continue to work in tandem with their ancestral colleagues who overcame male dominance and affirm their female consciousness in socio-political spheres as presented in the African oral literature models. Therefore, it becomes imperative for the new woman in Africa to balance their urge for political power with a positive, cooperative, and supportive attitude devoid of schism and intra-gender struggle



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