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GENDER ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND WEALTH CREATION: A FEMINIST STUDY OF MNGUEMBER VICKY SYLVESTER'S LONG SHADOWS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines Mnguember Vicky Sylvester's novel, Long Shadows, within a context and analyses the social status and entrepreneurial activities of women characters like Ayima, Awange, Mary and Maria, Mnguemo, Dooshima and Torkwase. This is in order to reveal their position and contribution to society and how they function alongside men seeking for gender parity. The paper reveals that the women characters are represented with honour and integrity. They are industrious and enterprising and do one business or the other to create wealth and support themselves and their families. They are financially, socially and mentally independent. Their relationship among themselves is cordial and they support and encourage one another. Their interaction with men is both positive and negative. They accept and compliment men who are rational and who treat women fairly and see them as complete people. On the other hand, they have no regard for roguish men who maltreat and subdue women. Such men are seen as enemies and are treated with disdain. The paper concludes that the novel upholds the ideals of the socialist feminists that seek for equality between women and men. It promotes and empowers women with ideas to establish their authority and seek for equality with men. The paper is a contribution to gender concerns and it suggests that gender entrepreneurship, gender equality and balance and women's empowerment will make a better society.

Keywords: Gender, entrepreneurship, wealth creation, feminism, socialist feminism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of gender is inter-disciplinary and that is its key strength. It has the most profound impact on contemporary theory and attitudes to the production of knowledge (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Gender studies was developed after the Second World War around the 1950s. Ever since, it has continued holding sway as an academic field of study. Its methodologies are diverse involving approaches from various disciplines. Its basis is to evaluate the position and perceptions of women, men and the queer group. It therefore involves women's studies, men's studies and the queer people (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender).

According to Bressler (1994),

...the goal of gender studies is to analyse and challenge the established literary canon. Women themselves, gender specialists assert, must challenge the hegemony and free themselves from the false assumptions and long held prejudices that have prevented them from defining themselves. By involving themselves in literary theory and its accompanying practices, gender specialists

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believe women and men alike can redefine who they are, what they want to be and where they want to go.

Bressler's opinion provides the goals for the study of gender. However her view is biased towards women. This is for the fact that it encourages the woman to break free of their subjugation and misrepresentation by patriarchal induced cultural constructions. This is the core of women studies which seeks to reposition women from the shackles of patriarchy. More so, Bressler's opinion put forth that if women and men hold truthfully to the ideals of gender theories, they (women and men) would be able to forge better relations and enhance a better future together.

The development of gender studies is also triggered by second wave feminism (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Therefore feminism remains a central perspective for the study of gender relations, reminding us that this discipline emerged from the identification that women as a group were misrepresented in both the public sphere and in the conception of their real natures (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Feminism has deep roots in literature. This is where women writers and scholars rose up to condemn the portrayal of women in literary texts by men as being weaker sex and inferior to men. It also looks at the neglect of literary texts of women by male dominated critics who prefer texts by men regarding them as great. It sought for the revaluation of old texts by women which were neglected including the representation of women characters in good light in literary texts.

In the aspect of entrepreneurship where wealth is created for economic power, gender performances and successes have been unequal in favour of men. There are many reasons why very few women get to start from pole positions in life's race to wealth. These include the three Cs. The three Cs summarise the key barriers to wealth creation; children, the capacity to earn, and confidence (Rasheed, 2019). Children affect both immediate income and longer term savings in the form of superannuation. It is one of key reasons why men usually have twice as much superannuation as women. Capacity to earn is another key. Research done by AMP found that even younger women aged under 32 earned 15 percent less than the average man of same age. It was also found that women were underrepresented when it came to senior level management roles. Confidence is also an area where women are slightly behind their male counterparts, but this is improving. A report released this month by the Financial Literacy Foundation found that 63 percent of women say they have the ability to invest, compared with 95 percent of men (Rasheed, 2019).

In the same vein Leadem (2017) in an article reveals that even when it comes to age, men seem to start their entrepreneurial journeys before women. Forty percent of male respondents said they started a business before they turned 35, while only 33 percent of women said they did. Perhaps that is because women are still busy playing the role of caretaker in most families. Women spend more time with their family on a daily basis, according to the survey. In fact, 56 percent of men spend at least half their days working on their start up or venture, while 45 percent of women said this.

Nevertheless, women-owned businesses are one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial populations in the world. They make significant contributions to innovation, employment and wealth creation in all economies (Brush et al, 2009). The rising economic clout of women is perhaps one of the most significant economic shifts of recent decades. Not only are women generating and managing an increasing amount of wealth, they are also directing the economy itself - heading up major corporations and pivotal economic players like the International

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Monetary Fund. Throughout the global economy, women are starting and running new business at a rapid rate. Coupled with the accumulated effects of five decades of increasing female participation in the workforce, this translates into real financial power: Globally, women held 30% of all wealth controlled by individuals or families in 2015, up from 28% in 2010; 44% had grown their wealth independently as entrepreneurs. By 2020, women are expected to control US\$72 trillion, 32% of all wealth and up from US\$51 trillion in 2015 (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2018). It is estimated that women-owned business account for over one-third of all firms, and they are the majority of business in the informal sector in African countries (Bardasi, Blackden & Guzman, 2007).

This paper contains the introduction, review of literature, theoretical framework, synopsis of the studied novel and the analysis of the novel, where the portrayal of women characters, female mutual bonding and gender relations is evaluated, and a conclusion.

2.REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gender entrepreneurship involves the participation of both women and men in entrepreneurship. Bardasi et al (2007) undertook a study on gender, entrepreneurship and competitiveness in Africa and posit that there are three main reasons why gender matters. First, women are major players in the private sector, particularly in agriculture and in informal businesses. It is estimated that women-owned business account for over one-third of all firms, and they are the majority of businesses in the informal sector in African countries. Second, the ability of women to formalise and grow their business, to create jobs, and to enhance productivity is hampered where legal and institutional barriers exist that affect men's and women's enterprises differently. Third, there is evidence - especially at the micro level - to indicate that gender disparities not only disadvantage women but also reduce the growth potential of the region as a whole. The existence of gender-related barriers can thwart the economic potential of women as entrepreneurs and workers, and such barriers have an adverse impact on enterprise development, productivity, and competitiveness on Africa.

Brixiova & Kangoye (2015) in their research on gender and constraints to entrepreneurship in Africa: new evidence from Swaziland, the empirical analysis confirmed the critical role of start-up capital for sales performance of both men and, under various model specification and throughout the sale distribution. In Swaziland, women entrepreneurs have lower start up capital and more limited access to finance it from the formal sector than men entrepreneurs, even when sectoral differences are taken into account. The result suggest that policy interventions aiming to promote entrepreneurship in general and female one in particular, should go beyond strengthening the overall business environment and include proactive measures such as subsidies or loan guarantees for start-up capital. As well as being an economic phenomenon, entrepreneurship can also be read as a cultural one. Entrepreneurial action is an archetype of social action, and as the institutionalisation of values and symbols it can be related to gender for a cross-reading of how gender and entrepreneurship are culturally produced and reproduced in social practices (Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2005).

In Nigeria the economic activities of most women are based on the informal sector of the economy both at rural and urban areas. The reason may be because entry to informal sector is easy, and open to all categories of people. It includes hairdressers, fashion designers, beauty and skin practitioners, tailoring, crafts making among others. The informal sector is characterised by reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership of enterprise, labour-intensive and adapted technology, unregulated and competitive markets and skills can be

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acquired outside the formal educational system. Most women are predominantly in the informal sector because it does not require any minimum level of education as in the formal sector. Second, they can combine their activities with domestic responsibilities and third is that it requires little capital to establish most businesses in the informal sector (Taiwo, Agu, Adetiloye & Afolabi, 2016).

On the other hand, the novel, Long Shadows, portrays the socio-political events in Tiv land in Nigeria - that heralded independence. The novel brings to the fore the activities of women in Tiv land and their contribution to the socio-political and economic life in the late pre-independence era. In discussing the novel, Nyitse (2019) states that other nationalities in Nigeria have done very well since the coming of the colonial masters to document their experiences whether in fiction or non-fiction, the Tiv have not so fared. It is to this darkness that Sylvester's Long Shadows sheds light through the personal histories of individuals and Tiv people caught in the throes of what has been tagged culture clash. Nyitse (2019) further comments that the novel, Long Shadows, being a fictional reconstruction and adopting historical material has used the initial contact between the British colonial masters, their local collaborators - Damkor and Jukuns, and the Tiv of central Nigeria, one of the many ethnic minorities in the country to recreate history while at the same time challenging previous narratives. Shija (2016) says of the novel that it is a story of power and disillusionment. It is the story of the Tiv, a highly decentralized people and late comers in the Nigerian amalgamation. A group of people without a common agenda and strategy to encourage other ethnic nationalities in the new nation. These critical views on Long Shadows by the foregoing critics have majorly highlighted the historical and social-political concerns of the novel. However, they do not focus on the position of women and gender relations in it. Therefore this paper studies the portrayal of women characters and their entrepreneurial engagements and gender relations in the novel.

3.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper involves Feminist Literary Criticism as its theoretical framework. Feminist criticism is informed by the ideals of feminism. The word feminism itself originated from the French word 'feminisme' in the nineteenth century, either as a medical term to describe the feminization of a male body, or to describe women with masculine traits. When it was used in the United States in the early part of the twentieth century it was only used to refer to one group of women. Namely, that group which asserted the uniqueness of women, the mystical experience of motherhood and women's special purity (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Later on, a group of women identified themselves as feminists and commit to challenging the treatment of women by men. Thus in the feminist movement, politics and ideology collapsed and merged (Nnolim, 2010). The goal of feminism is to achieve equality between women and men and shape a positive relationship. Women need fair and equal opportunities just like men at home and in public sector; political, economic, social, work and education. There should be gender equality by recognizing equal rights for women. Feminism is subdivided into different strands. This is as a result of the deliberate reluctance of feminists to agree on all-inclusive definitions of feminism and its concepts which has led to the emergence of various strands and versions of feminism (Bossan, 2014). These brands of feminism include social feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, liberal feminism, womanism, motherism, cultural feminism among others.

Feminism has evolved through the centuries and it has been categorized into waves based on approach and aims. There is the first wave feminism where the struggle for voting

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and property rights for women and access to education was the main concern. Its focus was on inequalities between women and men. This was pioneered by Victoria Woodhull and Susan Anthony among others. Also, Mary Wollstonecraft's publication, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Mary Ellman's *Thinking About Women* (1968) among others contribute to the expression of feminism at this period (1700-1900). In literature, the focus was on how male authors and novelists view and portray women in their works (Yang, 2019).

The second wave feminism was a period of feminist collective political activism and militancy which emerged in the 1960s (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). It sought to establish equal rights and equal opportunities in work for women. The feminist criticism in this period is also known as "gynocriticism". It was catalyzed by Simon de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxieme Sexe* (1949) and Elain Showalter's *A Literature of their Own* (1977). Gynocriticism examines and recognizes the work of the female writers. It looks at the treatment of women in texts by both male and female writers and explores the cannon of literature written by female writers in understanding their contribution to female empowerment (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). The third wave feminism started in the 1990s. This was conceived by young women led by Rebecca Walker and Shannon Liss. It recognizes the efforts of the second wave feminists for equal civil rights for women but resists its short comings which was its white and middle class based and stance against heterosexuality. Third wave feminists proclaim individual rights for each woman and diversity in views (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004).

According to Tyson (2014) "Feminist criticism examines the way in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social and psychological oppression of women". This reveals that feminist critics look at how women are relegated to the background from main issues by men in literature. Feminist criticism aims to reinterpret the old texts and establish the importance of women's writing to save it from being lost or ignored in the male dominated world. It also seeks to establish female perspectives as being of equal importance relative to male perspectives (Yang, 2019).

Feminist criticism evaluates the portrayal of women characters, the disposition of the text's language to women, the attitude of the author towards women and the relationship between female and male characters. The core of feminist criticism is women's oppression by patriarchy, women being considered as second class citizens and cultural discrimination against women. This paper is however situated on socialist feminism which seeks for equal opportunities for women in work, politics, economy and social life. Also it revolves around the second wave feminism which was after the empowerment of women and their equal opportunities with men.

Synopsis of the Novel

Sylvester's *Long Shadows* (2015) is a novel that is narrated through the third person point of view. It is set in Tiv land in Nigeria in the period between late pre-independence and early independence. It reveals the status and activities of women in the turbulent pre-independence socio-political environment. The women characters such as Ayima, Awange, Mary and Maria, Mnguemo, Dooshima and Torkwase engage in entrepreneurship and social mobilisation of women for economic and social independence and security of women's' lives and personality.

The Feminist Portrayal of Women Characters in the Novel

Women characters in the novel, *Long Shadows* (2015) are represented in a positive light. The author uses fiction to empower and promote women. The women in the novel have

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a major say at home and in public issues. They determine their future. They have self-respect and a high sense of rationale and are economically independent. They are determined, assertive, and hardworking to create wealth to support themselves and family. By this, they strike a balanced relationship with men and resist subjugation at home and in public. The women have a philia bonding among them and support one another. The major women characters in the novel are; Ayima, Awange, Mary and Maria, Mnguemo, Dooshima and Torkwase.

The Character Ayima: Ayima is represented as an enterprising woman. She is a committed mother, wife and family person. She has a loving relationship with her husband, Jime. The relationship is not a boss versus servant one but complementary. She is a good seamstress and makes clothes and sells to women at home and surrounding markets. She attains education to be able to read and write. She could have attained more but was dropped for her male siblings. She encourages women around her, both young and adults to acquire education, take up vocations to support themselves, not to tolerate abusive men, thus she is a role model and an inspiring figure to women especially those around her.

While Ayima is living with her husband, she does tailoring to support herself and the family. At a point, her husband lost his job as an N. A (Native Authority) staff as a result of a political crisis between the UMBC (United Middle Belt Congress) party supporters and the NPC (Northern Peoples Congress) party supporters. Also, he flees to Jos for dear life as a result of death threats from political thugs for being a strong member of the UMBC leaving his family behind. Yet Ayima takes care of everything including financial responsibilities. This is due to her strong moral character and enterprising personality. This passage in the novel reveals thus:

Ayima, a general peace maker and a creative woman as the townspeople described her. She had young children with flourishing tailoring business and the women respected, her (sic) and took her views seriously. Unlike most of them, she was lucky to have had some little education but enough to read a simple book before she had to give way to her brothers (41).

In her home town she attends markets, makes cloths and sells to people and earn some income. This is seen where on Ayima's arrival in the market, one of the twin women ran to collect her child and within minutes, she was surrounded by women who collected their made attires, examined them, stretched them across their bodies and tucked them away in their plastic bags or under their armpits. They brought out a note and or shilling coins from their brassiers or waist bags. Ayima observed the women, counted the coins and put them away or gave the required change before fetching another from the bag (119-120).

At the height of the political crisis, Ayima's husband arranged for her to abscond to Makurdi for her safety and the children while he was in Jos. Therefore Ayima does make it to Makurdi safely. However, Makurdi is strange to her as she remains in hiding for fear of attacks. And without support from her husband and absence of her business and with children to feed and put to school, life would have been miserable. But her savings and tailoring skills and hard work saved the situation. This is where she meets a tailor, Ene, when she goes to make school uniforms for her children. Ene allows her to use one of her machines and her skill and energy marvels her. Therefore, Ene asks her to work with her in her shop and share her earnings. This is because Ene believes that if she works in her shop, she would attract more customers with her skills and speed. Thus Ayima settles in and makes enough money to support her children. This can be seen in this extract:

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I want to make three school shirts for my boys and a school dress for a three year old. Will it be possible as they will use them to school tomorrow?... My two apprentices sent word they will not be here early. And I have emergency work; then I can be your apprentice today,... (216).

In less than an hour, Ayima was through with the cuttings, threaded the machine with the right colour and began to sew. The seamstress who had been watching from the corner of her eye was impressed. She noticed that the woman knew her children's sizes and cut smartly. Before midday, Ayima had finished with the shirts and Erdoo's dress. While she was on the third shirt, Ene had gone to urinate and on her way back, picked the shirts and hung them in a conspicuous place before setting down to line the bride's maids' silk dress she had been working on all morning (217).

When Ayima left to go for the evening mass, Ene escorted her. Could she partner with her if she had no place of her own? She admitted that she was not ashamed to say she will also learn a few tricks from Ayima. For any sewing Ayima made they would share sixty-forty (218).

Ayima's husband, Jime, settles in Jos and comes to Makurdi and moves his family to Jos away from the crisis in Tiv Division. Immediately, the family got settled in their new environment and Ayima being a brilliant person made good friends with Mrs. Young, a white woman, her neighbor, whose husband, Mr. Young is Jime's boss in the mines. She tells Mrs. Young that she is a seamstress and Mrs. Young gives her a sewing machine that she is not using and yards of fabrics to make dresses for her. From there she began making dresses for other white women too earning enough income to support her family. This is divulged in this excerpt:

I have a good sewing machine here you can use if you want to. Someone gave me some knitted beautiful stuff which will make a good camisol and bolero. I can show you some designs. Ayima was relieved. She may have seen a bolero but she didn't know what it was. Mrs. Young went in and brought out a magazine and flipped through, then showed Ayima women in small tops she called half jackets. There were long sleeves, half length sleeves and short sleeves. Mrs. Young pointed to a short-sleeved one. Ayima liked it. It was simply cut but would look elegant on a good body. 'Yes I can make this bolero,' she said, pronouncing the word slowly (274).

.... She was making another bolero for the white woman's friend. She now had a lot of white customers, especially those who wanted dresses made of the cotton wax and local prints (277).

The Character Awange: Awange is a powerful business woman and a social mobiliser that is also well travelled. She is very informed about the socio-political situation in Nigeria at the time. This is because in her business of selling drinks, she interacts with top politicians and through her travels, she encounters powerful women of the moment. She met the Funmilayo woman of Abeokuta (41), and she shaped her consciousness for self-respect and support for other women. The Funmilayo woman of Abeokuta in the novel represents Chief Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti. Chief Ransome-Kuti was a leading women's activist of the preindependence and early independence in Nigeria. She fought for the educational, political, social and

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economic rights of women. She campaigned for women's political representation, voting rights and access to education. She founded the Abeokuta Ladies Club which later became the Abeokuta Women's Union that aimed at sensitising women and uniting them to fight for their rights and injustice.

Awange kills a thug who rapes her in a political uprising. "She sighed again remembering the hooligan she had stabbed in the last uprising as he raped her. He had indeed had his last come and died by his own knife which she had taken at his vulnerable moment. He had moaned as she crawled and made away while his two friends waiting their turn, had laughed and shouted at him to be fast about it" (42). She exhibits a strong desire to protect her dignity, promote her integrity and maintain her self-respect. Therefore she does not tolerate any form of abuse or subjugation from men. Also, she does not tolerate men who are rude to women. One scenario that shows this is where "Awange brushed past the town news crier without acknowledging his rude greeting. He was one of those who had to make do with disrespect to women to confirm their masculinity. Awange had no time for such insecurity especially in men in these uncertain times" (42). This refflects her independent personality and self-esteem as a woman.

As Awange operates a bar, different people gather in her place and discuss various social issues. Thus, she is always well informed and current in issues of the moment. Therefore she gets information that there will be a political uprising and she mobilises the women to inform and give them words of caution. Awange carries out this task with Ayima, another well respected woman in the town who is also concerned for the welfare of women and the girl-child. Therefore these two experienced women meet and seek for safety measures for the women in case of the rumoured political uprising. They decide they will gather all the women in the community and give them safety tips for them to be able to cope in such a rough situation in case it arises. Thus they call all the women and had a brief but important discussion. This is revealed thus:

Awange often sat with Ayima to discuss the women they admired like the Fumilayo woman of Abeokuta and often sighted her as an exemplary woman doing what they should also be doing even though the issues were slightly different, but at this moment, Awange was sure the women needed some talking to and Ayima would serve the purpose. The women had to plan strategies to protect themselves first before their children (41).

You know the men like to talk and we listen. Often, they talk about important and dangerous things without doing anything until it is late. All day today and yesterday I have listened to unpleasant news from Makurdi, news about party followers, about registration and coming elections. I heard of brigades and their members. There are people who have no jobs, who do not want to farm anymore but who want to have money. We have experiences that make us sensitive....'I know some of you are preparing the evening meal' Ayima said gently after Awange stopped talking. 'Awange is our ear and she has a disarming ear you all know. When she worries I worry. You all have children and must protect them and our families. But we must learn to protect ourselves first, then our families. You must not be weak. Tears are not for these times. You don't cry when a man wants to rape and perhaps kill you. What will you do in situations like this? We must be sensitive to sounds, strangers and even our neighbours,

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dark bushes, shades, trees (sic). Tomorrow is Ikyurav (market), be on the lookout' she looked at their faces (45).

Awange makes money from her sales in her bar. She uses it to provide for herself and her family. This places her in social limelight and her fight for the cause of women which earns her a special recognition. A glimpse of her earnings is stated in the story; "Awange lit a lamp and opened the box where her cash sales for the day was kept. She counted a few notes and some coins, put the notes in her breast and the coins in her purse, locked the door and wished a good night to the men who were still seated talking quietly" (46).

The Characters Mary and Maria: Mary and Maria are presented in the novel as twins. However, they are not twins in the biological sense but by mutual friendship. They became friends in their childhood, loved each other so much, bear rhyming names, do almost everything together and wished to marry very close friends like themselves so that they will stay close to each other. They have been supported by Ayima all along their childhood through to adulthood. They respect her and consider her a role model. They follow Ayima's enterprising footsteps and have become independent financially. They attend markets and trade in various commodities to gain income. Their identity is revealed hither:

Two women talked without looking at each other, standing aside. Both were about the same age, early thirties, good bodies, neat buttocks, chocolate brown, smooth, flawless skin, a little anxious. They were childhood friends who had deliberately chosen to marry two friends from the some locality (sic) so they could be together with their families. Over time, they had grown a lot like the other in looks and the way they talked, so much so that strangers often mistook them for sisters. They had their baptism on the same day and called themselves Mary and Maria (66-67).

They, like Ayima, run to Gboko with their husbands from the political crisis in their community. In Gboko, they establish restaurants and earn income from the sales and live happily with their families as the novel reveals that:

That evening, Mary took some foodstuffs to her restaurant. These included some good yams and bush meat her mother had sent through Maria. She uses this yam for special customers who knew good food and were prepared to pay for it. Business was good in Gboko, at least much better than at Adikpo with the insecurity in the surroundings. She and Maria now had bank accounts with good savings (237).

Mary is bold, independent minded and smart. She knows what she wants and goes for it courageously. She has been aware of the kind of husband she and her friend wish to marry and the very day she spots two able young men with integrity, she approaches them and identifies with the one she likes and ran home to inform Maria of the other young man who bears the features she craves for in a man. This is presented thus:

She (Mary) had seen two young men off-loading household furniture that had some sophistication. Out of curiosity, she had put down the basket she had in her hand and move closer to find out who the new arrivals were. Then to her surprise, a man came out of the house with cup in his hand. He was not a common face around the town and was not young either, perhaps about

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thirty...." 'How was the journey?' Mary asked.He was about to answer her question when a second man about the same age, dark and very good looking stepped out... (146-7).

When she returned, the men were still in the same position and she offered them fruits. Each picked two mangoes but not the oranges. She ask for a knife and peeled three handing two to John and one to Peter who protested loudly. She smile at John, picked the bowl, placed it on her head and with a straight back, walked home satisfied. She wanted to create no misunderstanding about where her interest lay.... She ran off to find Maria, her childhood friend and led her to eat some fruits with her, talking quietly but animatedly. She advised her to make a quick move at Peter before some girl did. Maria watched the two men and then went over to greet Mary's father and then, Peter and John.... She went back to Mary and told her he was just the right colour. She wanted her daughters, fair skinned and daughters had a way of looking like their father's (149).

This shows Mary's action might be an indication that when women have reached the age of marriage, they can identify the kind of men they want for marriage and boldly initiate courtship. This is against the norm where men usually list the kind of features they want in women for marriage, identify such women and arrange for marriage to the women through their parents without recourse to what women want or expect. This is because women are traditionally expected to be docile and claimed by men for marriage while men are to be active and claim women for marriage at will. However, Mary and Maria have risen above this norm to resist advances from men they do not like and patiently wait for their choices. These choices are the ones they expect they can cope with. They are hopeful for relationships that they will have the freedom to pursue their goals and achieve them desirably. This is their motivation in smartly approach John and Peter, two young friends, new in the community, gentle, humble, good mannered, very enlightened and with promising future, who they feel would not marginalize their women unnecessarily. And they get their wish of marrying men of their choices, friends from same area to live close to each other. Mary and Maria in the novel have risen above patriarchal norms to think and act independently for their good.

Maria's restaurant business flourishes in Gboko and she lives happily. However she later discovers her passion for arts and wishes to trade in art crafts such as beads. She feels her involvement in art entrepreneurship will provide her with the opportunity to appreciate art better and encourage others to patronize it. Also, she would love to write and portray stories of the political crisis and displacement in Tivland and its perceived root cause, jealousy (Iyuhe). She would want to collect Tiv art and cultural materials for promotion and preservation. Therefore, she would need to advance her education. If she does it she will have the opportunity to write and either work with the Arts and Culture in Jos or the NBC (National Broadcasting Commission). This passage portrays:

In fact, Maria had her own reason too. Even though she was making some money from the restaurant, she preferred what Dooshima was doing (making and selling of beads). The task was in marketing but she could handle that. Indeed, she liked talking to people, convincing them to see the beauty of art. If she had more education, she would have convinced Jime to get her a job with the Arts and Culture in Jos or NBC. In fact, she would have liked to write. There was so much to write about. She liked songs, she liked dancing. Everybody

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listened when she sang; even in church the choir felt a little empty when she was not there (238).

She learnt yesterday that there was an evening school for adults.... She wanted to learn enough English to write books, what Kilpatrick called poetry. She was sure in a year or two she would be set to go. She would set up something and when she was through with her learning, she would get her husband to move to Jos where she was sure to find a way to the NBC. She was not going to have any more children. The grass tea she took was affective enough and she would have time to write when the children would have gone to boarding schools (240).

This passage reveals the personal development of Maria mentally, socially and intellectually. She makes her plans devoid of her husband as an individual woman. She dares to dream and takes necessary steps toward achieving it. She is incharge of her body and controls her child bearing rate. She is independent and makes plans for herself, her children and husband. She plans to educate herself and work where her passion lies, enroll her children in a boarding school so that she will have the time and space to work promptly. And also achieve her desire to write and move her husband to Jos, a location she is sure would favour her plans. This shows an empowered woman who has broken free from the constraints of patriarchy. Else her husband would have been incharge of her body, birth rate, dreams, thoughts and any intended move and in the process limiting her chances of existing, developing and achieving as an individual person let alone moving him to Jos where she would be the one to work.

The Character Mnguemo: Mnguemo is portrayed as hard working and a sister to Joseph Suswam. She is married and lives in Makurdi with her family. The presence of her husband is not clearly indicated. She lives independently with her children. She is portrayed as having an amazing physical stature and a kind heart. It is revealed thus: "Tall, dark and beautiful, she (Mnguemo) looked very much her brother's sister" (10). The quotation shows Mnguemo's superb physique in parity with her brother, Suswam. She is not a famous social activist and a pioneering politician like her brother. But she is industrious, a successful home builder and an entrepreneur whose products fulfill people's desires. "The anger (native cloth-Mnguemo's brand) was of great social significance for marriage ceremonies, events of honour, burials (sic)" (9). Her fame in weaving clothes rings through Makurdi and beyond. Mnguemo's kind heart is revealed,

Whenever she did that, (working and forgetting herself) it ended up with her lunch and she would have to call a child who was not in school to eat it. There were several children in the neighborhood who were brought in from villages as helps and stayed home while the children of home went to school. She often told such people whenever she had an opportunity that it was not the best thing to do (8).

This shows her consideration for the welfare of people around her and her disposition against families ill treatment of children of relatives brought in to assist in the home.

Mnguemo is very skillful and focused on her vocation. She does her weaving with tenderness and utmost carefulness. She makes good clothes and has a good relationship with her customers. Therefore she receives good patronage and commendations. The novel presents her influence thus:

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When Suswam arrived at the home of his sister's husband, she was just settling to her weaving of *anger* after her husband and children had eaten and left for work and school. He pulled a chair noisily which distracted her attention and she lifted her face with a frown. She turned quickly but held onto her wool and on beholding her brother, she smiled her welcome. Suswam knew Mnguemo made the best *anger* and her reputation had reached the railway station from where he was just coming. Many travelers liked the two he had seen this morning asking the seller if the cloth was from High Level, and Gums and himself who were busy in conversation could not help smiling knowing it was Mnguemo's *anger* the customers were asking for. Some bought to resell in Jos and Kaduna and others as gift for their white bosses in the offices or the church. Her regular customers were those who made orders for different events of honour, marriage or burial (8).

It can be seen that Mnguemo's products are well liked and get large orders both within Makurdi, where she resides, and other big cities like Jos and Kaduna. She makes the Tiv, both within the Tiv Division, and outside proud of their traditional attires because of her prodigy. She puts her mind into her weaving and never fails her customers' orders. She is prompt in weaving. This can be seen in the novel where,

Mnguemo had requests from a neighbour's friend for *anger* pieces for both mother and father of the bride and also the bride and groom. She had four days to make the delivery and could not wait to get her husband and children to work and school that morning. They seemed to take ages eating the breakfast she had put together very early that morning. While preparing breakfast, she was in the habit of doing several things so that by the time the others were ready, her narrow hand loom was in place with the spun cotton beside it (8).

More so, Mnguemo is presented as making her deliveries and earning some cash thus: "The cousin who came in later morning hours arrived as Mnguemo parcelled off the two caps and neck scarves for the man who had just come for his order. He paid with neatly folded five shilling notes and drove off gently..." (12). The customer here is not disappointed as he has rightly had his order. This can be seen as he drives calmly out of Mnguemo's place.

Mnguemo's crafting of *anger* clothes is not just for the sake of selling and making profit, it is also for building human dignity especially that of the Tiv and promoting humanity. This is why she visualizes her family and customers through her weaving aiming at putting joy on their faces. Thus her humane and motherly instincts come to bear on her craft as the novel portrays,

Whenever she spun these colours, she watched them come alive, her thoughts one with them. She would think of the person she was weaving for and the event and the atmosphere and warmth it would give. She would conceptualize the people who would admire the wearer and a smile would appear on her face. When it was a burial cloth, she would spin the threads carefully, a sad look on her face. This was the cloth the person would be joining the ancestors in. It had to look good. She knew that the *anger* was not just a piece of cloth but a distinct mark of identity. Its colours and design specified its purpose (9).

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Whenever Mnguemo turned the yarn and fitted it to the loom to weave a cap, she felt her motherhood, a tender and warm feeling, touching the head of a child with a feeling of care, of protection (9).

This shows that through her weaving, Mnguemo extends her love and warmth to her customers whom she considers as her kith and kin who deserve humane service to live peacefully. She desires to bless and protect them with her *anger* clothes which is a symbol of their existence.

Through her weaving, Mnguemo captures and preserves the history and genealogy of the Tiv in the *anger* cloth. This she relays to children around her both the younger ones and the grown ones:

Whenever the children stood by her while at work, she would tell them a few things about *anger*. When she fitted the colours to their admiration, she would explain, 'anger has two symbolic lines of black and white which represent the two Tiv sons, Ipusu and Ichongu. All Tiv trace their lineage and history to these two sons. The black and white colours represent the bones of the ancestors which were exhumed and cremated so as not to leave them behind after the Tiv ran away from their enemies. Their spirits are preserved in the weaves which also capture Tiv unity wherever they find themselves'. When the older children were by her, she would say something significant. Mnguemo knew much about the political crises in the land and she would say to the boys, 'Tiv unity could neither be broken by Griffith nor Lugard and so, Damkor cannot achieve it no matter how hard they work at it' (9).

Mnguemo's role as a mother (who educates the children) is exposed in this excerpt including her deep understanding of Tiv history and efforts to promote it. By telling the children about their history and importance of traditional symbols, Mnguemo is helping them to have a clear picture of the socio-political unrest around them so that when they grow up and become adults, they would understand why their fathers had to fight against political domination of foreign tribes. This will make them take better decisions and make progress in a positive direction that will benefit their people. This is because the children are leaders of the future and the better orientation they have, the better they will grow in thought. This shows Mnguemo's consciousness and significance to the struggle of her people, the Tiv.

Mnguemo's significance in the novel goes beyond capturing and promoting the Tiv history. She is a symbolic figure. The idol of unity and continuity of the Tiv. This is seen as she dedicates her vocation to the promotion and maintenance of Tiv culture, traditions, values and philosophy. By her vocation, she unites her people, and links the dead with the living and the unborn. "Each cloth Mnguemo made generated a bond, one with the people, the ancestors, and the world before them, the earth and the future. Her thoughts were one with the universe, with creation. She understood why she, like all other Aondo's (sic) creation, was one with him..." (9). She believes in humanity and the forces of the Supreme Being.

The Character Dooshima: Dooshima is a product of inter-ethnic marriage between a Tiv woman and an Igbo man. However, her father, Mbanefo, left her mother to marry another woman in his village leaving Dooshima's mother when she was carrying her pregnancy. Dooshima is very beautiful, hardworking, caring and industrious. She makes and sells beads in markets and makes lot of money. This is captured thus:

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A tall, broad, light-skinned handsome woman with a mane of hair on her head, chin and body seemed the most comfortable woman in the shade. She sat on a flat wood placed on the opening of a metal bowl in which her bag of colourful beads was neatly placed. She had green pencil pants which exposed hairy, shapely legs under her green and spotted wrapper. She had a natural smile line on her lips even when she was serious as she now sat looking at her long shapely and well-curved nails which would be an artist's delight (67-68).

Dooshima loves her husband, cares and provides for him yet he is abusive. He is lazy, jealous and is a serial womanizer. He abuses his wife physically and verbally at the slightest suspicion that she is seeing other men. Situations that lead to such suspicions are when Dooshima goes to supply beads to a noble man willing to take a title on order. Though Dooshima tolerates him a lot, when the abuse gets too much, she beats him to pulp in defense of herself. Dooshima is a strong woman who only tolerates a man as a husband who would recognize her as a worthy human, an equal partner and her efforts as complementary to his. This is seen in this direct quote from the novel,

But Dooshima as she was called was not in the mood they imagined. Her knuckles were in pains from a fight the night before with her husband whom she had beaten thoroughly for abusing her half Igbo lineage. He dared to suggest that she was unfaithful simply because she went to supply beads to Okoro who was planning to take a chieftaincy title with his wife. He went further to her chagrin, to suggest that her mother was a prostitute to have gone to get pregnant for an Igbo man who absconded shortly after their traditional marriage and then refused to accept him when he returned after thirteen years (68).

Dooshima has a high sense of rationale and mental strength. This makes her overlook her husband's insensitivity and small mindedness. She channels her strength to creating wealth and supporting herself and her family. The following extract reveals:

Dooshima was not perturbed at his calling her mother a prostitute. It was a common word with frustrated or failed men. The act of 'sleeping' with a man other than himself made the woman a prostitute but Dooshima had often wondered why people viewed the word prostitute as a derogatory word. The very act that leads to pregnancy and childbearing as far as men were concerned from her understanding was prostitution by women (68).

While her husband is a never-do-well and resorts to abuse, Dooshima's view here provides a different perspective on the concept of prostitution. Whereas it is an act committed by a man with a woman and that is essential for procreation, a man can regard women in intimacy with men other than himself as prostitution with disdain. This shows that some men have chosen to be insensitive and ignorant in the case of intimate relationship between women and men which should not be.

When Dooshima's husband dies, her friends condole with her but have no pity on him. This is because aside not providing for his family he meets his death while he travels with a mistress to Ogoja where he gets caught up in a crisis and gets killed. Dooshima's friends believe that she will cope well after the demise of her husband as the novel reveals that, 'Dooshima will look after herself' she repeated confidently. 'She built that house in Adikpo you know.

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She often gave him money even though she would not talk about it but her mother had scolded her a few times in my presence' (238).

The Character Torkwase: Torkwase is a brave woman. She has royal looks and is brilliant. She knows her self-worth and would not let herself down. It is because of this that she rejects an arranged marriage between her and a short man she does not like. Her family mediated the marriage without her consent and she refused. Her refusal then angered her family especially her father and brothers and they want to force her to marry him because he has given them good gifts with lots of other promises. As a result, Torkwase flees to her aunt, Ave, in a distant community. The narrative portrays,

Torkwase, a tall beautiful woman who raised eyebrows whenever she made an appearance.... Torkwase was a nickname which had stuck and most people hardly knew her real name. And she was indeed a royal looking woman as implied by her nickname. She had run away from an arranged marriage and few people would blame her. She often described the suitor with her hand stretched out breast level meaning the man was a short man. She would then smile seductively and ask if she were to back him or fight for him in the event of an assailant (90-91).

This is a bold step by a woman to take charge of herself and do her wish amidst patriarchal demands unfavourable to women. In which case, a woman is expected to be subservient and obey decisions taken for her without her wish. She could be given out for marriage in exchange for gifts without her benefit or consent. Torkwase breaks this norm through discordance and moving out of her community which is a victory for her and other young women who will be facing such fate.

Later, Torkwase gets her wish, she meets a man of her desire and married him in a heartwarming ceremony. "Torkwase had met an equally handsome husband who won over her family with the large peer group he took at the right moment of preparing the fields for the yam heaps" (91). As Torkwase marries a man of her wish, she reunites with her family and everyone becomes happy. She herself began functioning well in the community and lives happily. "It wasn't long before she had made money to begin trade in provision and soon, cloth. And she dressed well too to the admiration of the women around her and the pride of her husband who made cow eyes at her in the presence of his friends" (92). This shows that if a woman marries a man of her choice who complements her efforts and is reasonable, she can function optimally in society and be fulfilled.

Torkwase in defense of her dignity and pride as a woman kills an abusive NA (Native Authority) police officer who attempts to rape her while on a tax raid in her community, Azua. The police officer instead of carrying out his task as a watchman decides to have a cheap lay and meets his end as reflected in the narrative:

And before she could recover from the shock, the man pointed his dane gun at her threatening to shoot if she made any sound.... 'Lie down', the man commanded. She slipped lower down towards him and watched as he unbuttoned his trousers, gun in one hand. Then he stretched on her pushing her legs apart with one of his legs. Torkwase shifted her head a little to the left, pulled the rod and the man saw it just as it pierced his stomach and came out the back (19).

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This shows that women cannot tolerate dehumanizing acts on them by men. If such is the case they would have to react in the negative as well. This is why Torkwase kills the officer in self-defense.

Female Mutual Bonding in Long Shadows

Women in the novel have close relationship albeit their different backgrounds and age. They unite, support one another, keep everyone of them informed and pull their resources together to protect and promote themselves and fight a common front. Their enemy is patriarchy and abusive men and they have united to deal with it decisively. Awange and Ayima are very good friends and are financially independent because they do business and earn income. They are always meeting to discuss their lives and that of other women in their community thinking of how to assist them. They will evaluate the position of highly placed women in Nigeria and how they have been uplifting other women and think of doing same."Awange often sat with Ayima to discuss the women they admired like the Fumilayo women of Abeokuta and often sighted her as an exemplary woman doing what they should also be doing even though the issues were slightly different..." (41). In the wake of this, when Awange learns of a lingering political uprising, she meets Ayima and together they mobilized all the women in the community to advise them and give them safety tips in case of any attack. The women are encouraged to look out for each other and kill any man who attempts to ruin any of them in self-defense as men are the perpetrators of political crisis. 'Have something handy and don't be squeamish, a man who tries to rape or kill you is no better than a rabbit. Do with him what you do with a rat' (46). The brisk but comprehensive discussion the women have had helped them when the attacks began.

Mary and Maria are presented as twins though biologically they are not. Rather they have been beloved friends from childhood throughout their lives and are very supportive of each other. They have been bounded by an unending love and support that propels them to progressing together. They have taken Ayima as their role model and she never disappointed them. Ayima on her own supports them with love and kindness, good advice and material resources which have made them independent and contented women. Mary and Maria, Dooshima and Halima have been friends and looked out for one another and also support one another. When Halima is killed in the political violence by a terrorist, Biri, they go to her mother and condole with her. When Dooshima lost her husband, Mary and Maria invited her to Gboko to stay with them and do her beads business which they believe would flourish better in the big town. Awange and Maria later go to Jos to meet Ayima who assists them to settle down and do their business.

Women of Azua have formed the *Ingbianjor* cult, led by Ave, through which they lend their voice to public issues in their community, interrogate their leaders and demand for improvement in the leadership. Ave keeps her niece, Torkwase, who has run away from an arranged marriage despite her sister's husband's protest. This saves Torkwase from an unwanted marriage where she later married a person of her choice and lives fulfilled. Mnena, Jime's grandmother, trains and advices Jime, her grandson, not to be abusive and aggressive to women. She informs him not to be a husband that will beat his wife but support, love and cater for her. And when Mnena was alive, no man dared to beat his wife in her neighbourhood.

Gender Relations in Long Shadows

Gender relations in the novel are dynamic. The women have positive relationship with one another and interact fruitfully. They are united in the face of patriarchal misery. And with

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their unity, they have been able to win battles and stay strong. This circle of relationship goes from Mnena to Ave, Torkwase, Ayima, Awange, Mnguhenen, Iveren, Mary and Maria, Dooshima, Hembadoo and Halima. When Torkwase runs away from an arranged marriage, the women supported her. When Iveren committed suicide in protest against her family's insistence on payment of her dowry before marriage, the women understood with her. When Dooshima's husband died away in a tour with a mistress leaving behind his pregnant second wife, the women pitied the pregnant second wife but had no pity on the man.

The relationship between women and men is both positive and negative. In the positive, women love their husbands or men that are educated, enlightened, reasonable, caring and can defend them. Men with such qualities are cherished by the women and enjoy good relationship with them. The women refer to them as real or good men and promote them whole heartedly. For instance, men like Akosu, Hemba, Jime, Gondo, Suswam, John and Peter are cherished and praised by their wives and all the women in their community. This is because these men are not abusive to their wives and women but are loving, caring and supportive. In the negative, women tend to cut off ties with abusive and aggressive men who maltreat and dehumanize women. They advocate for killing or brutal retaliation against abusive men. In this guise, Dooshima beats her husband who constantly insults her and her mother. Awange kills a thug who rapes her. Torkwase kills an NA police officer who attempts raping her. The women celebrate when they hear that Biri, a terrorist, who specializes in killing women and raping them, is finally killed.

4.CONCLUSION

This paper has done a content analysis of gender entrepreneurship and wealth creation through the feminists' perspective in the novel, Long Shadows. It is discovered that most of the women characters in the novel are presented with dignity, integrity and entrepreneurial drive to create wealth for supporting themselves and family. The women engage in trade and crafts making to create wealth which makes them financially independent. They are mentally independent and have a comprehensive idea of their society which makes them function in it optimally. They do not succumb to male chauvinism but stand up for their dignity and integrity as rational humans. They take charge of their body, giving birth to children, family and dreams. They have good social status based on their courage and hardwork. The women have a common bond among themselves. They interact genially and support one another. They look out for one another in situations of crisis. Thus the interpersonal relations between the women are cordial. While with men it is in two folds. It is hearty with men of integrity who respect women and do not subdue them. On the other hand, it is rebellious with abusive men. More so, the status and activities of women in Tiv land in the colonial period and the early decade of independence in Nigeria is revealed. This shows their position and contribution to society of that period. Overall, the novel upholds the ideals of socialist feminism that seeks for equality between women and men. This comes through the promotion and empowerment of women with mind opening ideas.

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