PRESENTATION OF MASCULINITIES IN SELECTED KENYAN
FEMALE-AUTHORED NOVELS

BY
EDWARD MOOKA
C82/22915/2012

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY (LITERATURE) OF
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

NOVEMBER, 2019
DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature ........................................... Date 12/11/2019

Edward E. Mooka - C82/22915/2012
Department of Literature, Linguistics and Foreign Languages

SUPERVISORS

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision.

Signature ........................................... Date 12/11/2019

Dr. Mbugua wa Mungai
Department of Literature, Linguistics and Foreign Languages,
Kenyatta University

Signature ........................................... Date 12/11/2019

Dr. Paul M. Mukundi
Morgan State University,
USA
DEDICATION

To my sons, Morgan and Roy, and all other men close to me – my father, father-in-law, brothers, brothers-in-law, uncles, and male friends – that you may seek to adopt desirable masculine traits.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to the Almighty God for His goodness and leading. I owe special thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Mbugua wa Mungai and Dr. Paul Mukundi, for their mentorship, unwavering dedication and support, and for their warmth since the initial stages of this research. I have benefited from their analytical and critical skills, vast knowledge of masculinities and expertise in academic writing. I also thank faculty members of the Literature Department at Kenyatta University for their input.

My thanks go to the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton for the financial assistance and to the UEAB faculty members in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences. I thank the UEAB chaplain, Dr. Rei Kesis, for his prayers and inspiration. I am also grateful to my parents John and Deborah Mooka for their daily prayers and constant enquiry into my progress.

I wish to thank my wife, Gladys Seroney, for her unfailing support, for her confidence in my ability, and for her love amid tough times.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge all the people – family, friends and colleagues – who prayed for me, took interest in my thesis and whose comments challenged and inspired me to think and work.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ...................................................................................................................... ii

DEDICATION ........................................................................................................................ iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ......................................................................................................... iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS ......................................................................................................... v

ABSTRACT .............................................................................................................................. ix

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................... 1

1.1 Background to the study ............................................................................................... 1

1.2 Statement of the Problem ............................................................................................. 6

1.3 Research Objectives ..................................................................................................... 6

1.4 Research Questions ....................................................................................................... 7

1.5 Assumptions .................................................................................................................. 7

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study ................................................................. 7

1.7 Scope and Delimitations of the Study ......................................................................... 10

1.8 Literature Review and Conceptual Framework ......................................................... 11

1.8.1 Masculinity studies ................................................................................................. 11

1.8.2 Gender stereotyping ............................................................................................... 17

1.8.3 Critical works on the selected novels ................................................................... 20

1.9 Conceptual Framework ............................................................................................... 25

1.10 Methodology ............................................................................................................... 30

1.10.1 Research Design .................................................................................................. 30

1.10.2 Sampling Technique and Size ............................................................................. 31

1.10.3 Data Analysis ......................................................................................................... 32
1.11 Thesis Structure ................................................................. 33

CHAPTER TWO: MEN’S FUNCTIONS AND RESULTANT MASCULINITIES

2.1 Introduction ........................................................................... 34
2.2 Men relating with women ...................................................... 34
2.3 Men relating with other men .................................................. 43
2.4 Men and Work ...................................................................... 51
2.5 Masculinity and sexual exploitation ...................................... 61
2.6 Men and Sport ...................................................................... 65
2.7 Men and Violence ............................................................... 68
   2.7.1 Interpersonal/Direct violence ........................................... 69
   2.7.2 Structural violence .......................................................... 71
   2.7.3 Institutional violence ....................................................... 77
   2.7.4 Policing masculinities ...................................................... 81
2.8 Conclusion ........................................................................... 84

CHAPTER THREE: GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ALTERNATIVE
   MODELS OF MASCULINITY ....................................................... 88
3.1 Introduction .......................................................................... 88
3.2 Violence as stereotype ......................................................... 89
3.3 Unemotional men as stereotype .......................................... 93
3.4 Men as Rational ................................................................. 97
3.5 Men as Heterosexual ........................................................... 99
3.6 Men as protectors ............................................................... 103
3.7 Men as competitive ............................................................ 106
3.8 Men as independent ................................................................. 109
3.9 Men as unreliable lovers ............................................................ 112
3.10 Feminized men ................................................................. 114
3.11 Colonial/Anti-Colonial Masculinities ........................................... 116
  3.11.1 Masculinities of resistance and anti-colonial nationalism ............. 122
3.12 The New Man ........................................................................ 127
  3.12.1 ‘Attractive’ man ................................................................. 128
  3.12.2 Successful man ................................................................... 131
  3.12.3 Emotional Man ................................................................... 133
  3.12.4 Nurturant man ................................................................. 135
  3.12.5 Gentleman ........................................................................ 137
3.13 Conclusion ................................................................................. 139

CHAPTER FOUR: STYLISTIC STRATEGIES USED TO DEPICT

MASCULINITIES............................................................................. 143

4.1 Introduction ................................................................................. 143
4.2 Dialogue ......................................................................................... 143
4.3 Use of Kiswahili, vernacular or foreign language ................................. 149
4.4 Vivid description ........................................................................ 150
4.5 Literary Onomastics ................................................................... 154
4.6 The third-person narrative voice ...................................................... 157
4.7 Songs .......................................................................................... 160
4.8 Conclusion ....................................................................................... 163
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction ................................................................. 164
5.2 Summary and Findings .................................................... 165
5.3 Recommendations ....................................................... 169

WORKS CITED ...................................................................... 170
ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of masculinities in selected Kenyan female-authored novels. The novels studied include *The Promised Land* by Grace Ogot, *Coming to Birth* by Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye, *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* by Moraa Gitaa, and *Dust* by Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor. The four novels were selected using purposive sampling as they bring out varied masculinities. As its objectives, the study investigates the masculine identities in varied contexts; the gender stereotypes depicted in the selected texts; and the stylistic choices used by the female authors to depict the masculinities. This qualitative study analyzes the novels through a close textual reading of the selected primary texts and related studies that have been done in this field. Examples from the selected texts are analyzed in light of the concepts of theorists, critics and reviewers. The study draws on Robert Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity, which argues that there are varied masculinities; Judith Butler’s theory of performativity; and John Beynon’s theory of new man-ism to determine how masculinities are represented. The conceptual framework underpins the argument that men exude varied and complex masculinities under different circumstances and contexts. At other times men have been portrayed stereotypically, thus conforming to traditional and oppressive male behavior. Men have also been presented as aberrant. In other words, masculinities are mutable and complex. This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one covers the background, brief synopses of the selected texts, the problem statement, justification, scope of the study, conceptual framework and methodology. Chapter two discusses circumstances and experiences that help forge varied and complex masculinities. Chapter three explores the stereotypic portrayal of men and the aberrant men who reject traditional forms of masculinity. Chapter four examines the literary devices that female authors have used to highlight the masculinities in their novels. Chapter five summarizes the findings and insights of this study. The study noted that men’s identities are mutable; they change depending on the fluctuating economic, political and social contexts. There are celebrated men who are portrayed positively as exercising desirable masculinities, while others are depicted in negative light, especially as they relate with women and fellow men. Moreover, while some men are depicted stereotypically, others are portrayed as feminized or emasculated. Yet other men are presented as embracing traits of the “new man.”
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Feminism has triggered increased interest in the study of gender and gender relations in Africa in the last three and a half decades. Most gender studies in Africa, however, majorly explored the representations of African women in literary texts. It is only later that feminist studies incorporated the study of men and masculinity. In their historical book *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, Lisa Lindsay and Stephan Miescher take the position that though “gender has become a major research focus in African studies over the last twenty years, men have rarely been the subject of research on gender in Africa […] The male subject was frequently positioned as given, serving as a backdrop in the examination of women’s experiences” (1). Lahoucine Ouzgane and Robert Morrell take the position that “men have been overlooked, taken for granted, or treated as a homogenous category” (7). Egara Kabaji too in “Masculinity and Ritual Violence: A Study of Bullfighting among the Luhyia of Western Kenya” affirms that “gender research in Africa has tended to focus only on women. This skewed attention has given rise to the popular but fallacious attitude that gender issues are synonymous with women’s issues” (34). Theresa Enin’s “The Making of Akan Men: Confronting Hegemonic Masculinities in Ayi Kwei Armah’s The Healers and Ama Ata Aidoo’s Anowa” emphasizes the need to study male characters so that we “strengthen the scope of criticism on gender and render it more complete” (42). Moreover, while there is a proliferation of masculinity studies from the West, little attention has been given to the
“rich variety of gendered practices in Africa” (Miescher and Lindsay 2). Indeed, masculine representations in fiction are worth exploring because the masculine traits recognized in the characters may impact on the understanding of gender relations and society in general.

Male writers such as Chinua Achebe, Tayeb Salih and Elechi Amadi have explored masculinity by constructing and deconstructing images of ideal men. They create male protagonists who mostly conform to the male ideal of successful and hardworking men. They portray men as physically strong, courageous, competitive and powerful. For example, Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* and Elechi Amadi in *The Great Ponds* depict masculine and dominant male characters (Okonkwo and Olumba respectively) with hegemonic attributes such as industry, material wealth, physical strength, violence and courage, all of which traits are associated with males. Interestingly, both of these warriors wish their sons (Nwoye and Ikechi respectively) can become real tough men. However, while Ikechi is a success story, Nwoye breaks the heart of his father. Male writers also draw on proverbs that mostly relate to males. Achebe, for example, notes that “A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches” (46). This proverb means that a real man can be identified in his childhood.

Writing about hegemonic masculinity in African novels, Amjad Alsyouf notes the creation of superordinate male characters who dominate over and suppress subordinate female characters through physical and sexual violence (170). The male characters embody the concept of hegemonic masculinity in the novels. It should,
however, be noted that the male perspective of masculinity is not the only one. Females too are interested in the role of masculinity as reflected in cultural, social and political milieus. Therefore, this study explores whether or not the selected women writers create, endorse, or condemn certain characteristics of what constitutes masculinity.

A number of studies have examined masculinities in African societies, including Robert Morrell’s *Changing Men in Southern Africa*; Lisa Lindsay and Stephan Miescher’s *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*; Lahoucine Ouzgane and Robert Morrell’s *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*; and Ezra Chitando and Sophie Chirongoma’s *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV, and Religion*. Raoul Granqvist’s “*Peter Pan in Nairobi: Masculinity’s Postcolonial City*” analyses hegemonic masculinity in Spear Books series. He examines male protagonists in predominantly male-authored novels. However, research on the representation of masculinity in novels, particularly those written by Kenyan women, is rather scanty. This study, therefore, examines the representation of masculinities in Kenyan women’s writing, using the concepts of hegemonic masculinity as used by Robert Connell, new man-ism as espoused by John Beynon, and gender performativity as used by Judith Butler. Through an analysis of male characters in the selected texts, the study underscores Kenyan women writer’s attitude towards men as emphasized in the selected fictional works.

This study focuses on selected novels written by Kenyan female authors in order to examine how they represent male gender identities. It explores the representation of masculinities in selected novels, viz. *The Promised Land* by Grace Ogot, *Coming to
Birth by Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye, Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold by Moraa Gitaa, and Dust by Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor. The four novels help to elucidate the perceptions and notions of masculinity that these women writers have of males.

Following are brief synopses of the selected texts. To begin with, Grace Ogot’s The Promised Land which was published in 1966 is set in a rural area. It is about emigration and its pitfalls. In order to amass wealth, the main male character, Ochola, is enticed to move from Nyanza in Kenya to neighboring Tanganyika as soon as he marries a submissive wife. The ambition to be wealthy and independent from his family drives him to a place he perceives as “the promised land.” Ochola decides to settle in Tanganyika against the wishes of his father, his step mother, his wife, Nyapol, and the neighbors. Assisted by a friend, Okech, he settles in Tanganyika and soon prospers economically. However, he is bewitched by a jealous Nyamwezi neighbor and suffers an inexplicable disease. His family has to abandon their wealth and go back to Nyanza.

Marjorie Macgoye’s Coming to Birth is a story that revolves around Martin Were and Paulina Akelo, a young immature woman who migrates to Nairobi city to join her husband. Martin sets off as a hardworking and promising young man, but faces challenges, including the struggle to get a child. He even engages in extra-marital affairs, but without success. Due to stress, he drinks and brutally beats up his wife at the slightest provocation. At some point his marriage suffers a brief separation, and he dates other women. Meanwhile, his wife is gradually attaining economic independence. Towards the end of the novel, Martin and Paulina reunite and there is hope and happiness as Paulina announces that she is expectant. Running alongside this story is
the history of Kenya’s political development from the state of Emergency in the 1950s to 1978 when people with differing political opinions suffer detentions and assassinations. Many people are killed (for example, Paulina’s son Okeyo), yet others suffer injuries.

_Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold_ by Moraa Gitaa is a story about a white Italian entrepreneur and investor called Giorgio Santini and a troubled Kenyan black woman known as Lavina Kante. Giorgio rescues Lavina from drowning in the sea and, from then, they forge an enduring interracial love relationship. Though Lavina is HIV positive and is struggling with betrayal, family rejection, stigma and a defeatist attitude, Giorgio vows to love and care for her and start a family with her. Giorgio is contrasted with insensitive and cruel men such as Rawal and Tony Kamunde. He stands by Lavina, dates her in spite of her HIV status, marries her, and together they bear twins.

Yvonne Owuor’s _Dust_ straddles the historical aspects of Kenya from the 1950’s when the Mau Mau fought with the British to around 2008 when Kenya experienced post-election violence. The novel depicts the colonial past and a post-independent country struggling with the adverse effects of imperial wars, violence, tribalism and corruption. The story revolves around the experiences of Aggrey Nyipir Oganda and his son Odidi Oganda. Young Nyipir is interested in going to Burma to join his father and brother in the war, but ends up working as a white man’s servant. He kills his colonial boss and marries the white man’s black mistress, with whom he sires two children. Odidi is a talented sportsman and excels in his studies too. Because he refuses to
embrace his father’s violent interests and to compromise his integrity after college, he suffers injuries and injustices from his father and the powerful government operatives. Frustrated, he joins, in protest, a gang of robbers in the city. One day he is gunned down while running for his life. In discussing the presentation of masculinities in the selected texts, this study focuses on male characters and their role in the family and the community.

1.2 Statement of the Problem
While many studies on women’s writings have been undertaken, these studies have tended to focus on the empowerment of the woman. With the foregoing, it is necessary to examine how women writers present men and masculinity. Thus, the problem of this study is to examine how selected Kenyan women novelists present masculinities in their works. Specifically, this study scrutinizes not only the types of masculinities employed by Grace Ogot in *The Promised Land*, by Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye in *Coming to Birth*, by Moraa Gitaa in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*, and by Yvonne Owuor in *Dust* but also investigates the stylistic choices made by the selected writers in their presentation of these masculinities. It also explores how female writers regard gender stereotypes as well as alternative models of masculinity. Additionally, the study investigates the functions that men serve in different contexts and whether these functions result in masculine identities.

1.3 Research Objectives
1. To examine men’s functions in economic, political and social contexts and deduce resultant masculine identities as reflected in the selected texts.
2. To explore how the selected female writers regard gender stereotypes and alternative models of masculinity in their depiction of male characters.

3. To examine the stylistic choices used by the selected authors to depict masculinities

1.4 Research Questions
1. What masculine identities are forged from men’s functions in economic, political and social contexts in the texts under investigation?

2. How do the selected female writers regard gender stereotypes and alternative masculine models in depicting male characters?

3. What do the selected authors do with the stylistic choices in their depiction of male characters?

1.5 Assumptions
1. Men forge varied masculine identities in economic, political and social contexts in the selected texts.

2. The female writers under study employ gender stereotypes and alternative masculine models in their depiction of male characters.

3. The selected female authors use a wide range of stylistic choices to depict varied masculinities.

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

Previous studies on masculinities have mostly focused on male-authored books and have comparatively understudied women’s creative works in academic institutions. This observation is affirmed by Ama Ata Aidoo who notes that women
writers have largely been overlooked in the criticism of African Literature, yet what they write equally deserves serious attention. She deplores the exclusion of African women from a male-dominated literary scene and contends that African women writers have a right to be treated as equals. She says, “the stuff [they] write deserves to be looked at and judged, seriously, like those by our male counterparts, because the very act of creating has cost us too much” (517). Marie Kruger in her book *Women’s Literature in Kenya and Uganda: The Trouble with Modernity*, agrees with Aidoo’s position. She notes that some women writers in Kenya and Uganda have been honored with prestigious literary awards, yet their works have not received sustained critical attention that they urgently deserve (1). Durosimi Jones in *Women in African Literature Today* confirms that African women writers have been elided in critical studies and anthologies authored by men. Historically, male literary writers appeared to eclipse the contribution of female writers to society. The examination of masculinities in the selected women’s texts, hopefully, enhances not only the critical understanding of Kenyan female writing, but also understanding of females’ representation of masculinity.

Additionally, through an analysis of masculinities in female-authored books, one appreciates that men’s issues are not a preserve of male writers only. Female writers too participate in influencing the perception of men and women in society; in any case, females often decry patriarchy. This study, hopefully, introduces a female perspective in studying presentation of masculinities in Kenyan novels written by women.
Moreover, the study, hopefully, adds to the increasing interest in studying masculinities in Kenya by introducing female-authored texts into the discussion. An analysis of the selected writers’ conceptions of masculinity will shed light on the masculinities in varied contexts. Thus, Grace Ogot’s *The Promised Land* presents masculinity in a largely patriarchal and agrarian rural society, while Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye’s *Coming to Birth* is set in a fairly urban setting. Moraa Gitaa’s *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* and Yvonne Owuor’s *Dust* are placed in a contemporary context.

In addition, the study may contribute to the discourse on achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 5, which seeks to achieve gender equality not only in Kenya, but globally too. The Kenyan government aims at preventing and ending gender inequality, violence, and exploitation of women. Christine Ricardo and Gary Barker in a paper titled *Men, Masculinities, Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Violence* rightly note that for us to achieve gender equality, we must engage men more and, importantly, increase research and discussion on masculinities (3). Tal Peretz in “Why Study Men and Masculinities? A Theorized Research Review” notes that when we study men and masculinity, efforts to promote gender equality are bound to succeed. If men’s practices, attitudes and relations change, then stagnation in women’s gains in employment, educational attainment, and representation in political office will be eliminated (34).
1.7 Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study delimits itself to four novels by four Kenyan women authors who include Grace Ogot, Marjorie Macgoye, Moraa Gitaa, and Yvonne Owuor. Without a doubt, Grace Ogot, who is said to be the first female writer not only in Kenya but also in East Africa (Stratton 58; Booker 42), has authored other novels, namely *The Strange Bride* and *The Graduate*, but this study only analyses *The Promised Land*. On the other hand, Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye has written *The Present Moment, Street Life, Homing In*, and *A Farm called Kishinev*; however, this study examines only *Coming to Birth* -- her debut novel that won her the Sinclair Prize for its social and political significance. And while Moraa Gitaa has also written *Shifting Sands*, this study focuses only on *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*. Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor wrote an award-winning short story "Weight of Whispers", but the study analyzes her novel titled *Dust* – which, according to Godwin Siundu, a Literature scholar -- has “not marshalled critical literary responses from scholars, especially those of us in the region” (31). Godwin Murunga, a senior research fellow in the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, also asserts that Yvonne Owuor deserves more than a passing mention in the press and that indeed she is worth celebrating because “she has earned our admiration as a moral compass and conscience of society” (16). The four selected texts allow not only a close examination of the novels, but also an in-depth analysis of the male characters therein, and the stylistic choices used to depict masculinity. Moreover, in these selected works, the study focuses only on material pertaining to masculinities. Lastly, while many other theories could be used to analyze
masculinities in the selected texts, this study delimited itself to three concepts, viz.
hegemonic masculinity, performativity, and new man-ism.

1.8 Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Review of Related Literature

This section reviews available literature with a view to establishing what has been done by theorists, critics and researchers on men and masculinities, female-authored texts, and on the selected texts. The section begins by reviewing several critical works on men and masculinities as social, historical and cultural constructs in the Western world and in African societies. It then reviews literature on gender stereotypes in novels, and finally, it ends with a discussion of previous studies on the selected texts.

1.8.1 Masculinity studies

This study refers to masculinity as “a cluster of norms, values, and behavioral patterns expressing explicit and implicit expectations of how men should act and represent themselves to others” (Miescher and Lindsay 4). The norms, values and ways of expressing masculine identities are essential parts of social structures constructed by people through interaction with one another. Robert Connell, a theorist of masculinities, has developed views on multiple masculinities and is most closely associated with the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, his text titled *Masculinities* points to a major idea of this study: the multiplicity and instability of masculinities.
Hegemonic masculinity is the form that has established dominance within society and defines how real men should behave. It too changes over time and place. It is supported by the media and maintained by economic, political, and social power relations which structure patriarchal society. Robert Connell describes the hegemonic form of masculinity as the “most honored or desired in a particular context” (Masculinities 77). He contends, in Masculinities, that hegemonic masculinity is a configuration of gender practice which guarantees the dominant position of men and subordination of women in an unequal gender order (77). Michael Messner, in Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity, argues that hegemonic masculinity accounts for multiple forms of masculinity and the power relations that exist between them (98). There is therefore an unequal relation between different types of masculinities. In this regard, not all men are viewed as benefitting equally from the “patriarchal dividend” (Connell Masculinities 79); those men “who have some connection” to ideals of hegemonic masculinity are perceived to benefit most from the patriarchal dividend (79). They constitute the complicitous mode of masculinity. Meanwhile, men who are unable to connect to and draw upon ideals of hegemonic masculinity “pay part of the price, alongside women, for the maintenance of an unequal gender order” (63). These comprise the subordinate mode of masculinity that suffers exclusion and marginalization.

From the foregoing, it can be said that some masculinities wield more influence than others. Therefore, while men oppress women, some men are also dominated and subordinated by other men. It should, however, be noted that every man probably shares in what Connell calls “patriarchal dividend” through which men gain honor, prestige,
the right to command, and material advantage over women. However, while Connell’s text documents white men’s experiences, this literary study examines the portrayal of white and black masculinities. Moreover, Connell’s notion of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is helpful in this study as it emphasizes the power relations between masculinities, some of which are dominant, and others are complicit and marginalized.

Other scholars who have argued for recognition of the multiplicity and fluidity of masculinities include Arthur Brittan who contends that “we cannot talk of masculinity, only masculinities” (51). Michael Kimmel in *The Gendered Society* opines that “gender must be seen as an ever-changing fluid assemblage of meanings and behaviors” (10). In *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, Lahoucine Ouzgane and Robert Morrell reject the idea that “all men are the same”(4). Lisa Lindsay and Stephan Miescher also argue that in the colonial times “there were multiple and at times conflicting notions of masculinity, promoted by local and foreign institutions” (Lindsay and Miescher 13). Michael Flood also takes the same position that “there are multiple versions of how to be a man in any particular society, and the relations between them are a crucial part of the makeup of gender relations in general” (N. pag.). Different cultures and different periods of history construct gender differently, hence the plural masculinities rather than a single static masculinity at a given time or place. Being a social construct, and not a biological given, masculinity will vary according to factors such as age, wealth, ethnic origin, race, class, sexual orientation, health, marital status, level of education, and occupation. The idea of masculinity as fluid and plural and diverse is important to this study since varied factors and situations influence the construction of masculinities.
Victor Seidler’s *Rediscovering Masculinity* examines the role of language use in the construction of masculinities. He contends that men use language to develop a separate identity which is used to conceal feelings and emotions that are mostly associated with women and with the feminine. According to Seidler, men will not feel in control if they allow themselves to experience feelings and emotions openly (132-133). Moreover, males “master” language to help show them “as independent, strong, self-sufficient and masculine” (Seidler 142). Seidler further discusses the concept of reason or rationality which is a masculine trait (14). Men fear to show themselves as vulnerable and dependent, thus they exude an aura of rationality. In this study, the utterances of the male characters in the selected novels and the literary devices used by the writers help to highlight the expression of masculinities.

The study also makes use of John Beynon’s concept of “new man-ism” or contemporary hegemonic masculinity -- men who are more “caring, sensitive, domesticated and aggressive” (Beynon 17), but maintain authority in the gender order. These men’s physical and emotional softness is attributed to feminism’s challenge of patriarchy (Segal 156). Feminism is therefore blamed for what we see as aberrant men. This study examines men who not only take on domestic responsibilities, but are also emotional and caring.

Peter Powers’ “Gods of Physical Violence, Stopping at Nothing: Masculinity, Religion, and Art in the Work of Zora Neale Hurston” examines Hurston’s view of the relationship between Christianity and masculinity. Hurston, a significant female writer of the Harlem Renaissance, idealizes some traditional forms of masculine behavior,
such as physical prowess, violence, and risk-taking. For example she admires the strength of Biblical David and his God whom she perceives as a “real man” (Powers 232). This study examines men who are portrayed as “real men” and others who can be called “new men” because they critique traditional male practices; they are caring and are domestically responsible.

Mike Donaldson and Richard Howson in “Men, Migration and Hegemonic Masculinity” explore men’s experiences upon immigration into another national, ethnic, or cultural context. They examine whether immigrant men succeed or fail to “renegotiate the hegemonic masculine identifications, practices and sensibilities embedded in their ‘old’ gender relations” where they migrate (210). They observe that migrant men carry to their new homeland ideas and practices of what it means to be a man (209). Their article is helpful in this study as there are male characters that migrate from the rural areas to urban areas or from one country to another, all in an effort to be better providers for their immediate and extended family.

Several studies in African literature focus on representations of masculinity in mostly male-authored novels. For example, Obed Chiliboyi examines the construction of African masculinities in Ahmadou Kourouma’s novel The Suns of Independence. In his examination of both male and female masculinities, he discusses the use of language to express masculinities, an aspect is instructive in the study. Catherine Muhomah analyzes a male-authored text, The Girl was Mine, and she avers that “masculinity is linked with the notion of potency and virility” (28). She notes that masculinity can also be enhanced by such factors as money or wealth. This notion is important in examining
masculinities in the selected female-authored novels. Indeed, money plays a role in impacting relationships and thus the performance and construction of masculinities.

Abasi Kiyimba’s “Male Identity and Female Space in the Fiction of Ugandan Women Writers” pays attention to the presentation of male characters by Uganda women writers. He observes that female writers not only introduce to the literary scene female characters that play leading roles, but they also attack established stereotypes, injustices and male brutality against women. Kiyimba’s study, however, does not address the strategies that women writers use to represent men.

Research on masculinity in Kenya is growing. Of importance is Luise White’s essay titled, “Matrimony and Rebellion: Masculinity in Mau Mau,” which explores the fluid constructions and reconstructions of masculinity in Kenyan nationalism and its repression. The other research on masculinity in Kenya by Dorothy L. Hodgson, titled, “Being Maasai Men: Modernity and Production of Maasai Masculinities” tends to focus on the changing masculinities in changing times among the Maasai. She points to the multiple masculinities among the Maasai then focuses on the friction between the “traditional” hegemonic masculinity and the “modern” ormeek subordinate masculinity. The two essays above suggest that African masculinities are consciously constructed by individual men through subversive measures.

Frodwa Wahove Immaculate’s thesis titled “Margaret Ogola’s Imagination of Masculinities in Three Novels” is among a few exceptions that have analyzed the portrayal of male characters in female-authored novels. She, however, uses the reader-response approach and focuses mainly on the oppressive, negative and patriarchal
masculinity models based on sexism. Similarly, Catheine Muhomah’s article “What do Women Want?: Versions of Masculinity in Kenyan Romantic Fiction” analyzes masculinity in two romance novels by Asenath Odaga. She argues that these texts offer insights into the expectations and hopes that female protagonists have for men. She observes that masculinity is defined in terms of monogamy, responsible fatherhood, and negotiations on how money should be spent. Though each of the above studies focuses on a single Kenyan female writer, each provides a point of departure in our investigation. For example, this study not only examines four women writers, it also uses in its analysis a conceptual approach of hegemonic masculinity, new man-ism, and performativity. Moreover, masculinity in this study is defined in terms of several contextual experiences on men, and not just in terms of monogamy, fatherhood and money.

1.8.2 Gender stereotyping

Before analyzing gender stereotypes in the selected female-authored novels, it is essential to examine the meaning of the expression “gender stereotypes” as it is crucial for understanding the portrayals of male characters in novels. World Health Organization in “Gender, Women and Health” defines gender as “the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women” (1). So gender refers to what society considers masculine or feminine. Notably, gender may vary between cultures. For example, taking care of children and cooking may be seen as feminine in one culture, yet not gender-specific in another. Candace West and Don Zimmerman add that gender “is not simply an aspect of what one is, but, more fundamentally, it is something that one does,
and does recurrently, in interaction with others” (140). We all do gender in our everyday activities.

Stereotype is described by Cranny–Francis et al as “a radically reductive way of representing whole communities of people by identifying them with a few key characteristics. Individuals from the group who [do not] fit that stereotype are then said to be atypical” (141). The expression “gender stereotype” suggests a sense of shared beliefs about what men and women should do or what characteristics they all have in accordance with their gender. There is a sense of shared beliefs about what men and women should do or what characteristics they all have in accordance with their gender. Stereotypes are very common in the Kenyan society, and many people follow them without noticing.

In her book *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*, Lois Tyson discusses the notion of gender and notes that there are some age-old gender roles that are seen as traditional. Men are stereotypically seen as rational, strong, protective, and decisive while women are emotional, irrational, weak, nurturing and submissive. She asserts that these gender roles have been used successfully to justify the inequalities between men and women and view women as inferior (85).

Gender stereotypes are “widely shared beliefs about males’ and females’ abilities, personality traits and social behavior” (Weiten, Dunn and Hammer 339). They are social expectations that determine the behavior of individuals. Timothy Moore gives a few examples of gender stereotypes; for example, the expectations of femininity include being “domestic, warm, pretty, emotional, dependent, physically weak, and
passive” (579). Cranny-Francis et al adds that females “have come to be seen as naturally nurturing, sensitive […] and deferring” (143). Men, on the other hand, “are thought of as being more competitive and less emotional than women.” Masculinity stereotypes typify traits such as unemotional, physically strong, independent, active, and aggressive” (Moore 579). Moreover, “men are seen as removed, rational and authoritative” (Cranny-Francis et al. 145). From the discussion above, women are associated with negative or inferior characteristics or attributes while men are depicted as “the stronger ones.” Thus, a binary opposition is created where one element is dominant over the other. Gender theorists, such as Simone de Beauvoir, however, challenge the stereotyping of male and female in literature. Beauvoir contends that for a very long time women have been treated as Other. That the woman is deviant, abnormal, the second sex, and that she has regrettably consented to the idea of being taken as the Other. More importantly, in Theorizing Gender, Rachel Alsop, Annette Fitzsimons and Kathleen Lennon explain that masculinity is best expressed through “heterosexuality, economic autonomy, being able to provide for one’s family, being rational, being successful, keeping one’s emotions in check, and above all not doing anything considered feminine” (141). Society expects men to uphold the above-listed traits.

Linda L. Kwatsha’s article discusses gender stereotypes in selected African literary texts and how stereotypes socialize women and men to accept inequality. She lists psychological traits associated with femininity, namely nurturing, dependent, weak, and emotional, and particular kinds of feminine activities such as childcare, cooking and gardening (130). The article also hints at the societal expectation of men “to repress
their feelings and live according to their superego, so that they will not be outcasts in their society” (138). Men’s views should not be challenged by women. Men make decisions in the home and women are expected to respect and submit to their men. She concludes that women suffer inequalities because of the entrenched gender stereotypes perpetrated by men.

Talking about the adverse effects of gender stereotypes on women, Sicelo Ntshangase’s article depicts the suffering of a young girl in a novel titled *Uthando Lungumangoba* (Love Conquers All) by Maphili Shange. The study suggests that men have the “power to build or destroy the lives of women” (90). The gender stereotypes discussed include men supposedly being more intelligent than women; and women’s dependence on men in order to succeed in life. Both Kwatsha’s and Ntshangase’s articles seem to emphasize how stereotypes aggravate inequalities.

1.8.3 Critical works on the selected novels

For some time, women writers and critics have espoused women’s experiences to counter the dominant male depiction of females as ‘Other’. Women foreground themselves in an attempt to correct the stereotypic images of female characters as mothers, whores, witches, faithless and helpless victims of male hegemonies. Female writers are committed “to the task of bringing out the success in the female characters” (Abong’o 118). Ama Ata Aidoo, Kelekwa Nyaywa, Buchi Emecheta, Grace Ogot, among other women writers, have central female characters in their works. Margaret Ogola and Flora Nwapo, for example, in *The River and the Source* and *Efuru* respectively, depict protagonists (Elizabeth Awiti and Efuru) who choose their
husbands, marry them without the usual payment of bride price by the men, and they make decisions instead of being passive victims of a patriarchal society.

Additionally, Patience Awua-Boateng, in her unpublished thesis titled “The Presentation of the African Woman in Chinua Achebe’s Anthills of the Savanah, Amma Darko’s Faceless, and Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye’s Coming to Birth”, analyzes the images of African women in three novels, namely: Anthills of the Savannah, Faceless, and Coming to Birth. From the above listed texts and critical works, one may assert that most gender studies have tended to focus on how women writers reacted to and attempted to change attitudes towards perceptions of femininity (see also Nfah-Abbenyi 35). As such, feminist critiques of literature and society have mostly highlighted the plight of women. Meanwhile, male characters are overlooked, yet it is important to examine men’s behavior, especially in relation to women (Lindsay and Miescher 1-3).

Researchers have explored the under-representation and stereotypical role of female characters in literature, and the messages this sends to girls and women about their abilities and potential. Florence Stralton observes that women have been portrayed stereotypically as mothers whose task is to take care of their households and husbands (98). In her study on the portrayal of Kalenjin, Embu and Mbeere women of Kenya, Ciarungi Chesaina argues that women are not only overworked and frustrated, but are also regarded as appendages of the males in their lives. Tom Odhiambo’s essay entitled “Writing Alternative Womanhood in Kenya in Margaret Ogola’s The River and the Source” suggests that women’s struggles for emancipation can be best attained through formal education. Some researchers, such as Violet Barasa, articulate the place
of women characters in the Kenyan society. Barasa’s study examines “how Macgoye privileges the female figure by infusing her with energy and potential to break free from socio-cultural structures that confine women to unfulfilling and unsatisfying life of reliance on men” (1). Yet other scholars, such as Joseph Muleka and Deborah Wamalwa, advocate for non-sexist children’s books so as to have a positive effect on a child’s growth. As seen above, many critical studies by either male or female critics on Kenyan women’s writing examine how women novelists write on issues of femininity, hence focusing less on male protagonists. This observation resonates with Lahoucine Ouzgane and Robert Morrell’s argument in the text *African Masculinities* in which they affirm that studies in African feminism ignore men, manhood and fatherhood while giving a great deal of attention to womanhood and motherhood (1, 6-7). We might then argue that in scholarship there is no corresponding balance of masculinity, yet that balance would make the study on gender complete.

Although Ogot’s and Macgoye’s texts have received critical attention, the criticism has hardly addressed the texts from the perspective of this study. Many studies, though insightful, examine the novels with a focus on female identity, cultural oppression, and male-female relationships. In *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*, Florence Stratton, for example, notes that Grace Ogot is “Kenya’s best-known female writer” (58). She provides an analysis and comparison between male and female writers and their depiction of women. She decry the absence of women writers in critical works that include Eustace Palmer’s *The Growth of the African Novel*, and Gerald Moore’s *Twelve African Writers*. She argues that male critics have excluded African women writers from their male-dominated canon. She further notes that male
writers depict female characters as suicidal and murderers, and that they are goddesses who lure men to their death.

Stratton studies Ogot’s and Macgoye’s works and demonstrates how they achieve their feminist goals by discrediting the male subject through the inversion of male sexual allegories. The male becomes bad/object and female becomes good/subject. Chelagat Mutai, for example, as a subject of African nationalism, incites a crowd to violence and is detained for it (Statton 63). In addition, in Macgoye’s *Coming to Birth*, there is a woman MP as a demonstration that women can be of service to the state (75). Indeed, Stratton, who concludes that men in *The Promised Land* fall apart to create room for women, observes that Ogot is an advocate of women’s rights. Elsewhere, Margaret Reid notes that Ogot presents characters who typify stereotype traditional roles. Ogot portrays a traditional culture which merges with a patriarchal system that does not empower women. Reid observes that women are passive and powerless in a traditional setting. It should, however, be noted that little attention has been given to the presentation of masculinities in *The Promised Land* and *Coming to Birth*.

Joseph Slaughter’s article titled “Master Plans: Designing (National ) Allegories of Urban Space and Metropolitan Subjects for Postcolonial Kenya” examines the characters in Marjorie Macgoye’s *Coming to Birth* and how they participate in and define the urban and political spaces. He observes that Macgoye explores Nairobi as a political space which enlightens people to negotiate for it. Studying the same novel, Violet Barasa’s thesis “Reconstructing Kenyan Women’s Image in Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye’s *Coming to Birth*” explores the place of women characters in the Kenyan
society during the colonial and post-independence periods. She uses the feminist theory to bring out the contestation of patriarchal dominance and women agency in *Coming to Birth*. She demonstrates how the female protagonist struggles for empowerment and emancipation in the socio-political context (84). In yet another article, Gloria Makokha analyzes Macgoye’s portrayal of “the Kenyan woman.” She notes that there are times when she matures to independence, wisdom and decent living (1). This study, conversely, examines men and masculinities and draws links between politics and conflict in the construction of masculinity in Macgoye’s text.

Jean F. O’Barr in her essay “Feminist Issues in the Fiction of Kenya’s Women Writers” analyzes the works of seven Kenyan women writers to see how they depict women’s attitudes and behavior towards gender role questions. She identifies three main concerns in the fiction of female Kenyan writers: how female children become women, what marriage means for women, and where women’s work fits into their lives (58). O’Barr notes that the female characters in the novels are placed at the center as complex beings, who play multiple and contradictory roles. She is, however, silent about male characters, yet they pervade women’s writing. Her study too confirms the view that women characters have been given comparatively more attention than men.

In his analysis of *Dust*, Boiyo Amos Burkeywo examines the way Owuor fictionalizes Kenyan history during the colonial and post-independence eras by telling stories of marginalized communities. He argues that the text highlights aspects that are otherwise not told in historical accounts, especially in relation to violence, assassinations, corruption, nationalism and disillusionment in Kenya. By examining
masculinities in the text, this study broadens our appreciation of the text beyond representation of history. This study argues that male characters forge varied masculine identities that arise from the prevailing economic, political and social conditions.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

This study considers three vital concepts in investigating the presentation of masculinities in selected Kenyan female-authored novels: hegemonic masculinity, new man-ism, and gender performativity. In discussing the framework of hegemonic masculinity, Robert Connell, Lisa Lindsay and Stephan Miescher acknowledge the fluidity, hierarchy and multiplicity of masculinities, concepts that are explored in this study. Connell notes that men are more empowered than women and that some masculinities are more than others (Masculinities 108). While a sexist society presupposes male dominance over women, not all men are always in dominant positions. Connell discusses a gender-based hierarchical relationship between men of different classes, sexual orientations, and races, and the response of disadvantaged men in their marginalization. He notes that hegemonic masculinity, against which men aspire or resist, is “culturally exalted” and the ideal form in a given place at a given time (77). It is “the socially exalted form of being a ‘real man’” (Cooper and Foster 5), or what Christine Skelton calls “the public face of male power” (Skelton 172).

The non-ideal forms of masculinity that Connell distinguishes in his book Masculinities include complicit, subordinate, and marginalized. The complicit comprises men who share in the “patriarchal dividend, the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women” (79). For example, this may include
men in higher positions and higher salaries. They “have some connection with the hegemonic project but do not embody hegemonic masculinity” (Masculinities 79). This group does not take part in direct domination. Lynne Segal in her book observes that today’s males can share feelings and be more sensitive and more nurturing; however, they still benefit from patriarchy as a system and do little to challenge gender politics. Complicit men “gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honor, prestige and the right to command” (Connell Masculinities 82). One example of complicit masculinity is found in The Promised Land where Ochola enjoys all the benefits of patriarchy; his wife Nyapol cooks, brews and cleans while he goes out to the field. He is good-natured and would not hurt anyone intentionally and is far removed from the portrait of aggressive patriarchy depicted by Yvonne Owuor in Dust.

Subordinate masculinity, for example gays, is repressed and stigmatized; it constitutes men at the bottom of the hierarchy. Thus, they are subordinated to the hegemonic and the complicit masculinities, who are heterosexual (Connell Masculinities 78). The other pattern is the marginalized masculinities which are not within the hierarchy mentioned above. They are a separate sphere of masculinity, positioned in relation to social class and ethnicity. They include Blacks and low skilled workers. Such men have limited access to economic wealth and limited opportunities to improve their financial or social position in society. From the foregoing discussion, it may be said that there are multiple masculinities, some of which occupy favorable positions than others. The study takes cognizance of the multiplicity of masculinity evident in the selected texts.
Additionally, the four groups of men are not definite and static. They change and shift. Robert Connell asserts, “Hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type, always everywhere the same” (*Masculinities* 77). Masculinities change at different times and in different settings. Thus, different versions of masculinity are constructed in varied contexts, including in a largely patriarchal society, in a war situation, and in the face of a pandemic, among other locales. Undeniably, versions of masculinity may stem from tribal rites of passage, from virility, from wealth, from strength and fearlessness, and from concealment of emotions. Undoubtedly, then, hegemonic masculinity can motivate men towards many goals, including financial independence, virility, physical prowess, suppression of emotions, and the ability to inflict and withstand violence (Bird 122; Martin 474). A glaring limitation in Connell’s framework is that it is built around “the current western gender order” (*Masculinities* 77). It therefore seems to lock out the non-Western men, some of whom this study examines. Nevertheless, it is helpful as it reveals the pluralism in masculinities and the hierarchy of masculinities. Since the concept assumes that hegemonic masculinity changes through time and place, it can therefore explain the varied masculinities in different contexts.

Similarly, versions of masculinity may be shaped by formal education, the media, and Western cultures. For example, men are embracing “new man-ism” (an expression attributed to John Beynon who authored the book *Masculinities and Culture*) where they accept gender roles and endeavor to be “non-sexist, non-autocratic, more involved in domestic responsibilities, emotionally more responsive and more willing to criticize their own position and practices” (Morrell 164). “New men” not only support
their spouses in educational and professional pursuits, but they also willingly engage in household chores such as dishwashing and looking after children, without fear of criticism from peers or those around them. Rosalind Gill notes that the “‘new man’ is generally characterized as sensitive, emotionally aware, respectful of women, and egalitarian in outlook – and […] as narcissistic and highly invested in his physical appearance” (37). This new kind of masculinity encompasses many traits previously thought of as feminine --“emotionality, intimacy, nurturing and caring” (Gill 42). The ‘New man’ is “a highly involved and nurturant father, ‘in touch with’ and expressive of his feelings, and egalitarian in his dealings with women” (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner 202).

John Beynon studies Western cultural contexts and notes that there are two strands of the new man: nurturer and narcissist (165). The new man-as-nurturer displays attributes that emphasize a male’s emotional capacity. The “new man” not only experiences and expresses emotions, he also values personal relationships. Men are depicted as more caring and sensitive. The male does not subscribe to masculine domination of the female, but instead takes on an inclusive attitude towards the marginalized female other. The male empathizes with the female who is always dominated over because of her sex. For example, Ochola in The Promised Land is portrayed as a caring man. After slapping his wife, Nyapol, he feels remorseful and vows never to do it again. Giorgio Santini too, in Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold, is a caring man and a sensitive lover. The female writers seem to challenge what society flaunts as traits of hegemonic masculinity: unemotional, non-nurturant, independent, aggressive, and dispassionate.
The second strand, that is, the new man-as-narcissist suggests a hedonist who seeks out “the latest fashions and [takes] a great interest in grooming and appearance” (Beynon 164). He emphasizes attractiveness and the physical male body and masculine success and achievement. Beynon goes on to argue that the two strands have become “woven together in the public mind into a potpourri, nebulous new man-ism” (120). A hybrid new man is formed. Dong Jun summarizes it well: “The new man is to demonstrate a wider range of domestic involvement, a wider range of emotional responses and a greater willingness to criticize his own practices” (Jun 56). The idea of a “modern” hegemonic masculinity helps explain why the recent female writers challenge traditional representations of masculinity.

The study also relies upon the gender performativity concept as derived from Judith Butler. She argues in *Gender Trouble* that “[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender […] Identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (25). Thus, gender (in our case, masculinity) is perative in that these “expressions” (speech acts, appearance, and actions) form the sum total of gender identity. Following her assertions, it is plausible to argue that masculinities can be identified through certain patterns of behavior, practices and attitudes. Moreover, they are fluid, they keep changing in different contexts and different times (Butler 26). She observes that gender is not a stable identity but an act that requires repeated performances (140). *In Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, Charles Bressler makes the following observation:
[g]ender is not stable, but fluid and changes from person to person and from context to context. Like gender, self-identity is performative – that is, what one does at a particular time, place, and context determines one’s gender and identity, not a universal concept of who we are. Our identities are connected to what we do and are, not to our supposed essence (essentialism). Our identities are the effect, not the cause, of our performances. (228)

Thus, gender is created by performance itself. Men as agents actively make and shape their identities. They display manliness. They ‘do’ masculinity. Masculinity is something a person “does” rather than something a person “has” (West and Zimmerman 126; Whitehead and Barrett 18). To sum it up, the three concepts of hegemonic masculinity, performativity, and new man-ism point to the fluidity and complexity of masculine identities in the selected novels.

1.10 Methodology

This section presents research design, the sampling technique and size and the strategies used to explore the research objectives.

1.10.1 Research Design

The methodological approach used in the analysis of the novels is qualitative. In qualitative research, the researcher is the key data gathering instrument, for he or she spends time in the research setting, exploring the subject under study (Tuckman 395). In distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative research, Lawrence Neuman notes that in qualitative research concepts are often in the form of themes and motifs as
opposed to concepts being in the form of distinct variables. Moreover, data is in the form of words as opposed to numbers from precise measurement (329). The qualitative approach allows an inductive analysis of data so as to extract information from different sources before one analyzes and makes conclusions. Neuman further notes that in qualitative research analysis proceeds by extracting themes, theories or generalizations from evidence and organizing data to present a coherent consistent picture, as opposed to evaluation of statistics, frequency, tables, or charts in quantitative research. The qualitative approach is most suitable for this study since data presentation is more descriptive and narrative in style. Moreover, it allows the researcher to unravel the complexities of social realities in the context of socio-economic, cultural and political structures. According to Michael Myers, the qualitative research method is better suited for social and cultural phenomena; after all, it is concerned with understanding people and their social cultural contexts – why they behave the way they do, their knowledge, values, beliefs, attitudes and fears (241 - 242). Each novel has a distinct context that informs the varied masculinities that are represented by the female writers.

1.10.2 Sampling Technique and Size

The study uses a version of non-probability sampling, purposive sampling, in selecting the primary texts because it allows the selecting of items for analysis to be based on the following issues: personal judgment, the purpose of the study, and research aims (Babbie and Mouton 75). The novels for analysis -- all of which are written by Kenyan female authors -- include *The Promised Land* by Grace Ogot, *Coming to Birth* by Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye, *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* by Moraa Gitaa, and *Dust* by Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor. Each novel is analyzed using the
identified theoretical concepts for versions of masculinity as dictated by the different contexts.

1.10.3 Data Analysis

In order to investigate the representations of masculinities in the selected female-authored texts, the study, which is library-based, utilizes close textual analysis of the four novels. In their text *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln note that a textual analysis found in literary studies treats each selected text as “a self-contained system” in order to explore where meanings are brought into view (7). As the selected novels are the “self-contained systems” for investigation, this study quotes words and sentences from the novels to uncover relevant themes and to examine male characters and their representation. The conceptual frameworks within which the primary texts are read and analyzed in examining masculinities include hegemonic masculinity, new man-ism, and performative theory.

The study further makes use of relevant secondary sources such as journals, critical works on the selected writers, dissertations, and any other relevant materials that relate to masculinities and its performance by male characters. The theories on masculinity as discussed by various scholars help in the analysis of the primary texts. The study closely examines the male characters in varied settings by looking at their relationships and expression of power in the selected literary texts. This study also uses comparison to determine parallels between the selected texts and other literary texts in their representation of masculinities.
1.11 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is the introduction to the research. It focuses on the background, the research problem or area of investigation, and objectives of the research. It provides a discussion on the treatment of masculinity in the West, in Africa and in Kenya by theorists and critiques. It also presents the research methodology and the conceptual framework within which the textual analysis will be conducted. The justification and scope of the study are also covered.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four comprise the major analytical readings of the selected texts which form the basis of this study. Chapter Two describes the contexts and circumstances that give rise to varied images of masculinity found in the texts. The following subheadings constitute the classifications of the image: Men relating with women; men relating with men; men and work; men and sport; and men and violence.

Chapter Three analyzes the female writers’ portrayal of gender stereotypes and alternative models of masculinity. Men are depicted as violent, rational, unemotional, protective, heterosexual, competitive, and independent. We also show how men are portrayed as irrational, vulnerable and emotional. This chapter further explores colonial and anti-colonial masculinities, and the new man. Chapter Four analyzes the stylistic choices that the selected female writers use in depicting male characters.

Chapter Five provides summary and conclusions drawn from the analysis of the texts. It also points out areas for future research on representation of men in female writing. Following is Chapter Two, which discusses men’s functions in different contexts and the resultant masculinities.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 MEN’S FUNCTIONS AND RESULTANT MASCULINITIES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the contexts and circumstances that give rise to the multiple and varied images of masculinity gleaned from the selected women’s texts. The first section (2.2) explores men’s relationships with women, men exerting gender power over women. Section 2.3 discusses men relating with fellow men as fathers, sons, brothers, or friends. Here, some masculine forms exert power over other less socially privileged men. In addition, the chapter covers the aspect of work and how it affects a man’s sense of worth. The subsequent sections study sexual exploitation by men; men’s participation in sport; and men in relation to violence.

2.2 Men relating with women

Though the selected texts have females as the main characters, these women interact with men who contribute to their development. It is worth noting that the relationship between men and women is about power. Men feel entitled to control women and exercise authority over them. Masculinity endows men with hegemonic power which may be coercive. Sometimes, men get physically violent towards women in order to exercise control. After all, masculinity is “shaped in relation to an overall structure of power (the subordination of women to men)” (Connel Masculinities 223). Masculine forms define women as subordinate to men. Robert Connell further contends that “husbands who batter wives typically feel that they are exercising a right, maintaining good order in the family and punishing their wives’ delinquency --
especially wives’ failure to keep their proper place (e.g., not doing domestic work to the husband’s satisfaction, or answering back)” (Masculinities 213).

Patricia Kameri-Mbote observes that “masculine construction requires manhood to be equated with the ability to exert power over others, especially through the use of force. Masculinity […] gives man power to control the lives of those around him, especially women” (2). Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart, for example, “ruled his house with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper and so did his little children” (Achebe 9). Jeff Hearn adds that violence is a “resource for demonstrating and showing [that] a person is a man” (37). This suggests that masculine identities are constructed through acts of violence against women.

Additionally, it confirms Judith Butler’s theory of performativity that characterizes gender as performance; that gender is always a doing (25). The notion of men asserting their masculinity by force is evident in Grace Ogot’s The Promised Land when Ochola slaps Nyapol after she provocatively remarks that he is a lost man, for he had left his inheritance to go and live as a refugee amongst strangers (30). Ochola, however, regrets this action and makes a resolve not to slap her again since she was expecting their first baby (30). Ochola’s action, which is a show of masculinity, confirms that men are socialized to give commands and that women should comply. He answers his inquisitive wife that “[t]here is nothing to explain. All I’ve been telling you since last night is that we’re going to move to Tanganyika and settle there as soon as we agree on the date” (140. And when women fail to comply, they suffer violence. Ochola
tells his wife, “And remember, I hate being interrupted when I’m talking. There can only be one husband in the house. I’m making all these difficult decisions in order to make you happy […] Women! Useless the world over!” (15). Ochola’s remarks emphasize his power and authority over his wife.

Lloyd Brown, as cited in Florence Stratton’s text, argues that “Ochola is the conventionally masculine figure -- dominant and jealous of his male prerogatives as head of the family” (Stratton 68). Indeed, Ochola, as master, reminds Nyapol, “When I married you, you promised to obey me” (Ogot 16). Moreover, a woman is like a man’s property; Ochola insists on going to Tanganyika with Nyapol because he “cannot go to Tanganyika empty-handed” (18). He asks, “Can you go to cut wood without an axe?” (18). Indeed, society “invests men with authority” (Stratton 69) and women, just like Nyapol, are supposed to be “obedient, subservient to her husband, and performing without question all the duties that custom has assigned to women only” (68). Stratton argues that Ochola’s manhood is the basis of his identity and he can brook no challenge to it, especially from a woman” (70). Examining masculinities and gender-based violence, Karen Graff and Lindy Heinecken observe that gender inequality perpetuates cultures of violence, and particularly gender-based violence. Women are often seen as less important than men or as men’s possessions; hence men feel little hesitation in abusing women (6).

In Marjorie Macgoye’s Coming to Birth, Martin meets his wife at the railway station in Nairobi. Despite her emaciated, sickly look, Martin’s masculine identity does not allow him to help in carrying the luggage. Elsewhere, he is so incensed by Paulina’s
lack of patience (she gets lost in the city and roams in search of Martin’s house for two nights). He pushes her so hard that she falls to the floor, grazes her knees and knocks her forehead on the wooden frame. He then hurls insults at her, and rains blows on her (22-23). Paulina’s cheeks have dark bruises. And when Martin warns Paulina not to get out of his eye range again, she replies in a subdued, gentle voice, “As you say, Martin” (26). In another instance, Martin again beats Paulina when he finds her shedding tears because she bleeds again (32). Martin projects oppressive and impudent masculinities. His views are final; he does not accept other views from other members of the family -- especially females or wives. Martin uses his position as breadwinner to assault and punish his economically dependent wife not only for failure to follow instructions, but also for not conceiving fast enough.

Additionally, when Martin learns about Paulina’s sexual unfaithfulness, he responds in a masculine manner by beating her up. Paulina’s infidelity is tantamount to challenging Martin’s manhood in public. Her unfaithfulness suggests that Martin is not in control, so he beats her up to take back the control, to express his male authority. Discussing the South African experience, Floretta Boonzaier brings out men’s expectations of purity in their wives. That if a wife engages in adultery, she is justifiably beaten. Meanwhile, the man goes out with other women and does not think himself unfaithful (200). Ochola too, in *The Promised Land*, exhibits this trait of a controlling man when he insists on going to Tanganyika to settle there against the wishes of his wife. These representations suggest a stereotypical image of masculine identity which borrows from the patriarchal tradition. Men, as brought out in Ochola’s
behavior, silence, denigrate and sideline women in their pursuit for wealth. Ochola believes it is masculine to silence and control a wife.

Speaking about the South African experience, Robert Morrel in *Changing Men in Southern Africa* observes that “in families, both blacks and white, men made decisions, earned the money, and held power. The law (both customary and modern) supported the presumption of male power and authority and discriminated against women” (18). Anastasia Sai, too, in her study on masculinities in Papua New Guinea, notes that men believe “it is a husband’s responsibility to control his wife and family in order to avoid criticism through gossip as well as to generally advance the well-being of the family unit” (Sai 248). This attitude resonates with Ahoya’s remarks when she tells battered Paulina in *Coming to Birth* that traditionally her husband would have given her a token beating while the guests were still there so that in case she is widowed and inherited, people would not say that the new husband was the first one even to beat her (Macgoye 24). The legitimization of violence against women compares with Diane Prusank’s argument that hegemonic males “find the domination and exploitation of women and other men to be not only expected, but actually demanded” (161).

The Nyamwezi medicine-man in *The Promised Land* also enforces notions of passive femininity by beating his wife, Aziza. He masks his femininity by beating his wife. In any case, Evil Forest, who presides over Uzowulu’s case of domestic violence in *Things Fall Apart*, comments that “It is not brave when a man fights with a woman” (Achebe 66). Notably, though, unlike other women who conceal the turmoil and
anguish they endure in their abusive marriages, a sad, tearful Aziza shares with Nyapol thus:

I cannot tell a lie and say I’m happy. It’s been a nightmare ever since I married him, having to live in a home which is haunted by evil spirits and snakes […] Being a woman like myself, you can understand. I have often thought of running away and returning to my people, but I know that his hands will never leave me. That’s why I decided I must stay with him. (Ogot 76)

Aziza resignedly submits and conforms to her cruel husband. The narrator says that while Nyapol and Ochola are talking, they hear “yelling and shouting. It came from the direction of the old man’s compound. It was a woman’s voice. Nyapol knew that Aziza was often beaten but this was the first time that they had heard such a terrified cry. The yelling and shouting died down just as suddenly as it had come” (83). Through Aziza’s sharing with Nyapol, Ogot seems to suggest that the best way to deal with an abusive marriage is confide in neighbors and friends.

In contrast to the violent Ochola and Martin in *The Promised Land* and *Coming to Birth* respectively, Giorgio Santini in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*, presents a traditional image of a man in charge. He is strong, muscular and able to take care of his woman. The narrator says, “He was a multi-millionaire. But of what use was the money if he did not have children to spend it on?” (Gitaa 34). Lavina’s close friend, known as Lynne, describes Giorgio as caring (65). This description suggests his gentility. Moreover, Giorgio’s masculinity is evident in his material success. He owns a
helicopter and expensive cars -- images of masculinity. Lavina asks Giorgio whether the chopper they are about to board is his and he nods. She then murmurs under her breath, “status symbols for the financially savvy” (47). Moreover, Giorgio owns a jaguar (149). Indeed, like Andrea Cornwall opines, “money represents a form of power that reconfigures discourses of man the controller and man the provider” (Cornwall 240). Money explains the unequal power relations between men (who usually earn it anyway) and women whose access to it is limited.

Paul Dover writes about gender differentiation in Zambian culture where male children go through a symbiotic dissociation from their mothers so that they develop an identity towards a male world and identify with “fatherly” characteristics (177). According to Dover, men must create a sphere of values and masculine attributes such as being powerful, strong, and protective, among others (177). The activeness of masculinity is seen in terms of a household head and breadwinner. This dissociation is typical of Ochola’s and Giorgio’s behavior, both of whom have to break from the control of their mothers. Ochola, before departing for Tanganyika, visits his mother’s grave and asks the spirit of his mother to talk to God “to bless me and my wife, and guide our feet to the unknown land” (Ogot 24). And as he fixes his eyes on her grave, he seems to hear the stones saying to him, “Don’t go, don’t go. Stay with us, stay with us!” (25). But despite these silent pleas and the tearful pleas of his step-mother not to leave his aging father and his inheritance, Ochola packs and leaves for Tanganyika (23). He ignores the controlling force of his mother.
Additionally, the father-daughter relationship from the viewpoint of female writers is worth exploring. The father’s role is to discipline and provide for his family. Fathers try to enforce good behavior and morals in their children. For example, Lavina is ostracized from her family for contracting HIV. The narrator says, Lavina’s father, “had rejected her and made sure that his family had no interaction with her” (Gitaa 95-96). To Lavina’s father, such a severe punishment is in order. It demonstrates his authority over his ‘wayward’ child. Similarly, Paulina in *Coming to Birth* remembers her father who “had always been straight-shouldered, unbending, laying down the law” (Macgoye 62). Austin Bukenya in *Notes on Marjorie Oludle Macgoye’s Coming to Birth* observes that Paulina’s father “had been a strong and powerful man and a figure of authority in his family” (Bukenya 64). A stern but loving father demands obedience and loyalty from the children. Both Lavina’s and Paulina’s benevolent fathers can be said to be involved fathers who are interested in their children’s wellbeing. They actively engage in breadwinning and disciplining roles of fathers.

Lastly, polygamy is an important marker of masculinity in Africa. Margrethe Silberschmidt, whose study was based in Kenya, argues that the power of the male traditionally resided in polygamy since the more wives one had, the more land could be cultivated. Many wives also meant many heirs, which is crucial in consolidating a man’s position in the community. Polygamy affirmed the man’s virility as sons expanded the clan and daughters brought in cattle that provided relationships with other lineage groups (Cited in Cousins 47). Giorgio in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* pointedly says that “whereas a woman is basically monogamous, a man isn’t, and that’s since time immemorial” (116). Society’s acceptance of polygamous or unfaithful
men may explain why in *Coming to Birth* Rachel, one of Paulina’s comforters, desists from stirring up trouble when she suspects that her expectant housemaid is carrying her husband’s baby. It is because, traditionally, polygamy was accepted in this community and the housemaid would have to stay on as *nyar ot* or junior wife (39). Indeed, the more children a man fathered with different wives, the more socially powerful he was.

Polygamy represented, in pre-colonial and colonial times, virility and economic wealth. Only the wealthy men married more than one wife. Daouda Loum argues that “the more wives a man has, the more he evidences his courage, physical strength, and sexual potency” (as cited in Delphine Fongang 39). A man who married several women showed that he is sexually powerful and brave. Marrying more than one wife is indicative of masculinity. Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Elechi Amadi’s *The Great Ponds* aptly capture this idea that marrying several wives suggests masculinity. In *The Great Ponds*, for example, the polygamous men included chiefs (Chiefs Eze Diali and Eze Okehi), elders (elders Chituru and Wezume), and warriors (Olumba and Wago).

In *The Promised Land*, Owiti, Ochola’s father, has three wives. His first wife, that is Ochola’s mother, bears him two sons. After her death, he remarries so that the second wife can look after the two young boys. However, because the step-mother is unkind to the two boys, Owiti is prevailed upon by relatives to marry a third wife (Ogot 19-20). Notably, polygamy was to ensure not only the continuation of the family lineage and the survival of off-springs, but also provision of necessary labor to cultivate land and look after animals. Owiti’s relatives, however, demand that he marries a third
wife to take care of his “weak and miserable” boys (20). Noteworthy, Owiti seems unable to control his household because, as the narrator says, “sometimes Owiti heard these outbursts, but he felt that loss of his wife so much that, instead of quarrelling, he walked away to find peace by herding his cattle on the plains. When his children told him of their sufferings, he simply bowed his head and wept” (19). He fails to exercise his power and authority as the head of the household to ensure the well-being of the children.

2.3 Men relating with other men

Men-to-men relationships tend to be competitive. Sandra L. Bem’s article lists competitiveness as a desirable and typical masculine personality trait for a man (156). The father-son relation in the selected texts is worth discussing. A father performs a dominant form of masculinity and offers direction on how a son should perform his own masculinity. He tries to influence the son’s performance of masculinity to conform to his perception of dominant masculinity. An adolescent boy may accept the father’s image of masculinity and work towards it, or reject it and develop his own that is in opposition to the father’s. Moses Odidi Ebewesit Oganda in *Dust* is critical of Nyipir’s (his father’s) interests. For violent Nyipir, a gun is a key symbol of masculinity in their community. This conviction explains why he gives Odidi a gun at thirteen years of age. Nyipir wants to socialize his son Moses into ‘doing’ masculinity; he himself uses his gun in ‘masculine’ activities such as cattle rustling. However, when Odidi joins university, he interacts with Fela Kuti’s songs. He also appoints himself Thomas Sankara’s heir and wears “nonprescription lenses shaped like those Patrice Lumumba had once worn” (Owuor 9). Like Sankara and Patrice Lumumba, who believed in social
equality and opposed neo-colonialism, Odidi fights evils such as violence, which his father participates in. Odidi therefore negotiates his own masculine identity. After three semesters at university,

Odidi travelled home to Wuoth Ogik. In their third evening as a family, Odidi Oganda brought in the AK-47 that Nyipir, his father, had given him five years ago. He took it apart, then threw the pieces at Nyipir’s feet, chanting: Aye, aye, aye... I no go agree make my brother hungry, make I no talk.... (Owuor 10)

Odidi’s stance, which seems to support social and economic equality, upsets Nyipir so much that he whips Odidi saying, “The only… war you fight… is for what belongs to you. You can’t live the songs of people who don’t know your name” (10). The fight that follows between Odidi and his incensed father results in the breaking of Odidi’s left arm (10). Nyipir wants to assert his position as the male authority figure, who is charged with socializing his children into acts of aggression. This scuffle confirms Gregory Lehne’s observation about men’s relationship: “men are openly allowed to express anger and hostility, but not sensitivity and sympathy” (Lehne 336).

Fundamentally, guns and cattle rustling are a common image of masculinity, especially in pastoral communities in East Africa. Nyipir remembers “coming home from secret journeys, bearing gifts of livestock and assorted weapons like fourth magus” (Owuor 68). Nyipir “expanded his gun-trading and cattle-rustling enterprises across the northern territories and into the Horn of Africa” (84). One time, Ali Dida Hada, a police officer charged with searching for a mzungu called Hugh Bolton in
northern Kenya, stops Nyipir who is driving rustled livestock. Ali discovers that the livestock are standing on boxes that contain “self-loading pistols, assault rifles, submachine guns, AK-47s, an assortment of G3s, bullets, and two rocket launchers in long cases” (260). Interestingly, Ali does not arrest Nyipir. Instead, he partners with Nyipir to engage in the outlawed business for purposes of amassing wealth. The number of animals one owns determines one’s social status. Ali’s colleague, Petrus, wonders how Ali,

a *simple* cryptanalyst, on a policeman’s salary, has thirty-six million three hundred and fifty-two thousand shillings in six bank accounts […] twelve *simple* butcheries across the country, and three *simple* lorries that have been hired to transport cattle from the north to the south. (258)

Significantly, cattle-rustling qualifies males as men (Izugbara 8). Owning a gun and rustling cattle “involves acts of bravery and the initiation to manhood; it also serves to increase both individual and village wealth” (Small Arms Survey Sudan 4). These symbols suggest manhood and virility which confer social status.

Still staying with the father-son relationship, it can be said that fathers have the responsibility to teach their sons to grow into responsible men. Bob Pease, as cited in Inma Cirico Lyons’s article observes that fathers whose role is to shape their son’s subjectivity as male, “are disturbed by any of their son’s behavior that is not typically masculine [fathers are] expected to be the main transmitters of culturally approved forms of masculinity to their sons” (468). Sons are therefore expected to identify with their fathers as this is the acceptable social practice. Although in *Dust* we are not
offered detailed insight into Nyipir’s childhood relationship with his father, the author
gives us important information regarding his father as a man who, together with his
older son, got recruited into Burma war. He was killed in King George’s war in Burma
(69). Following in his father’s lead, Nyipir makes attempts to go to Burma to join his
father and brother, but to no avail. Ochola’s father, Owiti, seeks to masculinize Ochola
through informal education. The narrator says

Ochola was maturing into a man and Chila [Owiti’s third wife from
Ugenya, near the river Nzoia] allowed him to spend more time with his
father in the evenings. Out of the hands of his jealous step-mother, he
developed faster and became a good companion to his father. Owiti often
spoke to him about the tribal traditions and the clan wars. Owiti knew the
names of all the clan heroes, and taught Ochola to recite them. (Ogot 20)

Clearly, Owiti wants the son to grow up to be like himself; he wants his image to be
recreated in Ochola. The narrator says “he had fought in several clan wars” (19). Owiti
and Ochola’s relationship is reminiscent of Okonkwo’s and Nwoye’s in Things Fall
Apart. Okonkwo frequently reprimands Nwoye for spending time in the kitchen with
his mother instead of sitting with him to listen to masculine stories of violence and
bloodshed. Through the stories, Owiti prepares his son, Ochola, not to fear war or
bloodshed.

Notably, the position of the father as head of the home is under threat especially
when women rise to positions of leadership and take charge of their families. Women
become breadwinners and provide for their children due to absent fathers. In Coming to
Birth, for example, there are hungry shabby-dressed street urchins who catch Paulina’s attention. Some of them are sent out to beg (Macgoye 132). The little street boy called Che who is saved by Paulina has got a mother, as announced by his tormentor; Muhammad Ali lives in a rat infested shanty with his brother and a few friends (133); and Johnny lives with his mother who serves him tea in the morning and chips or cassava at night. Che’s dad, a watchman in Nakuru, stopped paying fees for his children because he “needed all his money to get another woman” (135). He visited his children one day or two in a month. Che says “his father is finished […]. He drinks too” (136). Johnny humorously tells one well-dressed passer-by, as he scampers behind him that, “after all […] for all you know you might be my father” (138). Men are presented as having abdicated their masculine roles. They are not fully involved in their children’s lives. Che’s father, for example, who migrates to Nakuru is distant in his relationship with his children. Another example of a non-committal father is seen in Simon who, after Paulina tells him she is expectant with his baby, gives many excuses why he cannot take responsibility. Paulina dismisses him from her house and says, “A child of mine does not have to look to a father who will not stand up for him” (69).

While fatherhood accords one the status of dominant masculinity, some young men disregard their fathers’ advice. For example, Abiero, Ochola’s younger brother, in The Promised Land, decides to get a Western education and turns away from his community. The narrator says

He became so possessed with his faith that the villagers thought he was mad. He stole his father’s precious pipe and broke it on a rock outside
the village. He was hostile towards any of his younger step-brothers or sisters who sang traditional songs […] Abiero took all the school teaching very seriously; even dancing to the throbbing African drums annoyed him. (20-1)

The narrator adds that “Abiero disobeyed his father in many ways” (21). Indeed, Abiero “was amongst the first batch of boys who had rebelled against their parents and attended the white man’s schools” (57). A disgusted Abiero seeks to make a complete break with his father’s world. It is Ochola who comforts the father because he fears offending him. Moreover, the narrator says that “boys who went to school found difficulty in persuading women to marry them […] They were slack in daily community work and liked things to be done for them. This made them lazy husbands who could not be relied upon to protect their family and tribe from enemies” (Ogot 57). This negative perception about Christian converts suggests that in this community men attain hegemonic masculinity by acquiring power and wealth through hard work. The community values hard work. Because Christians are perceived as lazy and indolent, they are not “real” men in this society. They do not adhere to gender role expectations.

However, Ochola, the erstwhile faithful son, disregards the counsel and pleas of his aging father and relocates to Tanganyika. When his wife tells him, “You might at least listen to your father,” Ochola retorts angrily, “I’m a married man now […] It is high time I was given a chance to provide for my family. Father should agree to give me this chance” (Ogot 19). Ochola wants to develop his own masculinity that is in opposition to his father’s. Commenting on the Ovambo societies of northern Namibia,
Stephan Miescher and Lisa Lindsay note that “male power was equated with men who had their own livestock, houses, wives, and juvenile dependents – men who […] performed the social role of ‘fathers’” (10). Thus, a man becomes a real man after marriage and starting his own household.

Furthermore, homosocial bonds are apparent in some selected texts. Notably, homosocial does not mean the same as homosexual. Eve K. Sedgwick’s definition is instructive; she observes that homosocial bonds are “social bonds between persons of the same sex” (1). While homosocial refers to “men-promoting-the –interest-of-men”, homosexual refers to “men-loving-men” (3). Sharon Bird’s definition compares well with Sedgwick’s. Homosociality “refers specifically to the nonsexual attractions held by men (or women) for members of their own sex” (121). In other words, men exhibit strong social bonds towards one another in a non-sexual manner in order to perpetuate hegemonic masculinity. Nici Nelson’s article “Representations of Men and Women, City and Town in Kenyan Novels of the 1970s and 1980s” discusses male bonding and care, as a “pervasive stereotype of men” (153). He illustrates male bonding by using Meja Mwangi’s Going Down River Road; Ben “learns to care for and ultimately to love the male Baby abandoned by Win” (154). Ben also falls in with Ochola and the three males live happily together in a shanty hut. Men are thus represented as taking care of each other against any hostility and hardships.

In The Promised Land the relationship of migrant Ochola and his host in Tanganyika, Okech, is homosocial. Okech supports Ochola and his wife in the first few days of arrival in Tanganyika. He helps Ochola to clear the fields and even put up a
house. After Ochola settles and is clearly prospering in Tanganyika, he shares his
wealth or success with his family back in Seme and his friends in Tanganyika. Through
his generosity, Ochola seeks to build and maintain a community of friends and family.
Years later, Okech feels bitter, frustrated and sad that Ochola is bewitched by the
jealous Tanganyikan neighbor. He supports Ochola’s family by sending his son, Oloo,
on a long trip to find Abiero, Ochola’s brother, to visit Tanganyika at once to help find
the lost brother. In short, men come together in an effort not only to survive and
empower themselves, but also to show deep concern and care for one another. Bird
notes that homosociality contributes to the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity by
encouraging competition among males (121), thereby facilitating “hierarchy in
relationships” (122). Men look out for fellow men to display manliness.

Lastly, circumcised males undermine the status of uncircumcised males. Patricia
Nyaundi, in her article “Circumcision and the Rights of the Kenyan Boy-child”
contends that different tribes in Kenya have words that are used to distinguish between
circumcised and uncircumcised males. She notes that the uncircumcised are
disrespected and are described in derogatory terms. She gives examples of the Kisii and
the Maasai who call the circumcised male omomura (young man) and ol-murani
(warrior), and the uncircumcised omoisia (small boy) and olayoni (small boy)
respectively (175). In Dust, Corporal Gakui perceives himself as superior to Nyipir. The
notion of a superior masculinity is derived from the belief that the circumcised are
superior over the uncircumcised. The narrator says, “The corporal spat, ‘Kihee!’
(Owuor 274) as the two played the Ajua game. “Kihee. Uncircumcised. Nyipir dropped
a seed into the grooved slot before turning to the man. He asked, ‘How does a mutilated
penis make a man more of a man? Msenje,’ he said, I’ve buried your testicles before, I can bury them again’” (274). Gakui falls back to this cultural issue which has no bearing on the quality of one’s work or skill. He exhibits a condescending attitude. The reference to Nyipir as a ‘boy’ suggests how Gakui’s relationship with Nyipir involves emasculation. It means Nyipir cannot grow to manhood. So, while Nyipir struggles to obtain a sense of agency, he discovers that Gakui’s beliefs deny him a masculine subjectivity. Gakui projects onto him an inferior identity.

2.4 Men and Work

Work is an important area in the performance of masculinity. It is “a mark of masculinity” (Morrell, Of Boys 626). While work grants men power, influence, and money, unemployment or lack of work negatively affects their self-worth. Lillian Rubin’s article confirms that work is a factor by which men define themselves and by all accounts, it is a test of their masculinity (290). Theodore Gradman also observes that men consider work as a means by which to accrue “extrinsic” (social status) and “intrinsic” rewards (self-expression and fulfillment). Ultimately work is critical in men’s construction of self as powerful, self-reliant, and competent (Gradman 105).

Male characters in the selected texts provide an image of masculinity and work. Men seek out jobs so that they can provide for the family and earn respect. In his study of men in Ovamboland, Namibia, Meredith McKittrick contends that young men ventured out in search of wage labor that gave them money to buy livestock, presents for their fathers, and manufactured goods for themselves, which were markers of elite male status. When the young men returned from stints of wage labor, other young men
sought to emulate them by becoming migrants themselves (39-40). Ochola, for example, in *The Promised Land* confesses to his wife Nyapol that he had been thinking they would migrate to Tanganyika where he “would work very hard, become rich and make you [Nyapol] happy.” (12). He envisions that migrating to Tanganyika will significantly change his masculine identity. He also believes he will be more helpful to his immediate and extended families. His anticipation to be wealthy and therefore helpful to his family is reminiscent of Andrea Cornwall’s study of Nigerian men who worked hard in order to be able “to spend money on a woman, to sustain her and the family” (Cornwall 240).

Ochola had earlier met two expensively dressed neighbors, who had migrated to Musoma in Tanganyika two years before. Lanya’s “hair was brushed back and he wore a gold ring on his right finger. His jacket, patched with brown leather at each elbow, made him look very important” (7). Ochola feels awkward before them both, and the feeling irritates him. “He was poorly dressed because he did not have enough money” (7). Ochola feels awkward and acknowledges that being male alone is inadequate. He must perform his gendered role to amass wealth. The two neighbors further tell him how they bring to their parents “bags of maize and gallons of ghee regularly” (7) Ochola then takes interest in migrating to Musoma in Tanganyika so that he can also tap the “wealth of that land and the enormous yield they get from the crops each year” (11). He cannot resist the allure and wealth of Tanganyika as exemplified by the two well-dressed neighbors. The apparent success of the well-dressed neighbours influences Ochola’s decision to migrate. These well-dressed immigrant peers who return with goodies reassert themselves as the dominant men. Deborah Boehm studied migrating
masculinities and notes that migration is “a primary stage on which expressions of male subjectivities are performed” (21). In brief, migration to urban centres or another country defines a man as it guarantees prosperity and cements a man’s authority in his home. The transnational migration by Ochola and his wife is an aspiration towards hegemonic masculinity. And indeed when he settles in Tanganyika, he acquires the social signifiers of masculinity, namely wealth and status. The narrator says “Abiero was impressed by the hard work and the wealth that his brother had accumulated within a short time” (Ogot 80).

Obviously, Ochola is motivated to migrate to Tanganyika because of economic reasons. Stephan Miescher and Lisa Lindsay take the position that the commercialization of labor empowered young men financially and, consequently, they asserted their independence from their seniors. “Junior males chose […] labor migration as alternative routes to the acquisition of masculine power” (11). Whereas Ochola’s wife is content with their current economic status, and is therefore not in favor of migrating, Ochola asks her, “What have we got to be called rich?” (Ogot 15). Indeed, even after Ochola’s extended family and neighbors try to talk him out of the idea of migrating, claiming that living among strangers will not only deprive him of a voice in the running of the strangers’ land, but will also spell loneliness for him (18), he insists, “I’m a married man now […] It is high time I was given a chance to plan my own future and to provide for my family” (19). According to Mbugua wa Mungai, “in conservative patriarchy […] male prestige and power is predicated on material wealth, which, in turn, is the basis upon which control over women might be achieved” (96). Looking at Ochola’s prospects, Oladele Taiwo observes that there was
abundant evidence that he [Ochola] will make good at home. He is successfully married to a hardworking woman who is liked by practically every member of his family. He is the first son of his father in a patrilineal society, which means he will eventually inherit his father’s farms and other possessions […] he will almost certainly succeed now as a farmer with the help of his father and a sympathetic stepmother. (131-2)

However, Ochola insists on migrating to Tanganyika.

Ochola’s ambition for wealth and desire to migrate are so important to him that he discards all fears and risks involved. He later confides in his father that if he goes, he will “be more useful […] I’ll be rich and all the money troubles we’ve had for so many years will vanish” (Ogot 21-22). This sentiment echoes Ray Hibbins’s observation in his study on Chinese male immigrants in Australia. Hibbins says that male gender identity is suggested by “responsibility for family as sole provider, guardian and protector; and emphasis on hard work” (Hibbins 173). Carton also argues in a similar vein that “it is only by taking a wife, having children, and building a homestead that men can begin to assume the privileges and responsibilities of a homestead head” (Carton 134). Indeed, Nyapol appreciates the husband’s decision to migrate and their moving into a new permanent house whose rooms were spacious and light. Nyapol realized how lucky she was. Very few women in her age group lived in a beautiful house like this. In fact she felt it was not wrong to think that she was the luckiest woman in the
world, although she knew it would be wrong to boast or to express her
secret feelings to others. (Ogot 56-7)

Ochola succeeds in providing for the family, at least, going by Nyapol’s contentment. His hard work earns him wealth and hence hegemonic masculinity. He builds three granaries for maize and two for the millet and beans (66) and arranges a big party to celebrate his success (68).

Elsewhere, while in Kisumu waiting to board the steamer to Tanganyika, Ochola and his wife look on pitifully as men totter with very heavy bags on their backs to load the steamer. Ochola explains to his wife that the surprisingly happy laborers are “neither slaves nor prisoners: they are just normal men who have come to town to earn money to buy things for their wives” (Ogot 35). Ochola suggests that “real” men engage in economic activities to provide for their wives. Urbanization affects men in that while the menial wage-earning activities empowered them, they also demeaned them (Morrell Of Boys 623). Indeed, the male loaders may be happy to provide for their wives back in the rural areas, but their economic activities in Kisumu are degrading. But, as observed by Donaldson and Howson, men who migrate sacrifice by weathering difficulties for the betterment of their families and they feel honored to do so (212).

Men’s allure of the city is telling. Commenting on Nyapol, Roger Kurtz says that she “recognizes a relationship between marriage, the city, and the cash economy. Just as men are ‘bewitched’ into accepting the terms of selling their labor in an urban, capitalist market, so are women bewitched into accepting the unfavorable terms of marriage” (135). In her unpublished thesis “Philosophical and Literary Eclecticism in
Grace Ogot’s Works,” Judith Jefwa comments that “migration to urban areas to acquire wealth becomes a symbol of success. The urban areas now become the new ‘Tanganyikas’ […] Usually, it is the man who goes away to the urban areas while his wife stays behind in the rural area in order to rear animals” (69). Kurtz notes that the city is “historically male” (137), meaning that while the rural areas are associated with women, the city is depicted as a male zone. He further observes that “the male to female ratio among the African population was nine to one” (135). Certainly, young men, who outnumber women, are attracted to towns in search of successful manhood and better economic prospects which serve to demonstrate their masculinity as the breadwinners of the family.

In Coming to Birth, when the train sweeps in, among the passengers alighting are "men like Martin himself but a little older, shabbier, more worried, back from leave maybe a day late and only a bag of beans between them and payday” (2). These are men who have found jobs by migrating to the city of Nairobi. And while employment has afforded them some money and power, they are poor in relation to their bosses or employers. We also meet Paulina’s father, the elder Okeyo. He “had worked, till his retirement the year before, on a sisal plantation beyond Nairobi, in the great bare plains that spread eastward towards the coast” (61). He worked very far from home; after all, as the narrator says, “the homestead was ordinarily a place of women and children” (61). He was “constantly away” (64) yet he did not “make much money out of his tedious work, month after month” (61). Austin Bukenya reports that “the description of the father and his laboring life points out the hazards and hardships of the ‘wage-earning’ economy which so drastically altered Luo family life -- and to which Paulina
and Martin very nearly fall victim” (64). Thus, a father’s absence disrupted family life as there were cases of adultery, family neglect, and disempowerment of men who have to depend on women whom patriarchy has labeled as inferior.

The work that men failed to take up was assumed by women in the homes. For example, since Okeyo worked far away from home, Paulina’s mother “reigned supreme” (Macgoye 64). She made decisions “to plant, to harvest, to store, to sell, […] she had momentarily become the household head, a person to be consulted and deferred to” (64). The empowered woman conversely points to the diminishing role of the husband or father and the subsequent assertiveness of the women at home. Robert Levine studies the agricultural tribes in Kenya and South Africa and notes that the pattern of labor migration placed a heavy burden of work on wives. He writes thus:

Rural African men [leave] home to work far away for a period of years, returning occasionally on vacation, and eventually retiring in their rural homes. Most frequently, though not always, they leave their wives and children behind to continue the agricultural work and maintain the husband’s claim to his share in the patrimonial land. (Levine 187)

Levine cites the Gusii community as an example where the rural woman does the cultivation for most crops -- tasks which they once shared with men. Moreover, the women milk cows, formerly a masculine task, and keep an eye on the family’s livestock (188). This adversely affects the position of the man as he loses his status and power.

In Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold and in Dust we meet some wealthy male characters. They possess enough assets and money to provide for their families
and friends. They thus dominate over women and over other men. While some males earn their money legitimately, honestly, through hard work, others earn through dubious, corrupt or criminal means; they engage in immoral behavior that goes against appropriate conceptions of hegemonic masculinity. Giorgio, for example, is a moneyed man. He has earned his money through investments and entrepreneurship.

The working class man, on the other hand, such as Martin Were, depends on moneyed investors for his income. He earns a salary from his employment and tries to provide for his family, even to clear his dowry payment (Macgoye 2). Also, he gives Paulina “money every two or three days and told her what to buy” (28). Interestingly, however, as the novel progresses, Martin loses his moneyed man status and depends on his wife Paulina. Gradually, he turns to alcohol abuse. Both the wealthy Giorgio and working-class Martin attain a masculine status. However, for the working class to successfully perform their masculine role, they depend on the bourgeoisie. Working-class men are so dependent on the employer that they live in fear of being sacked or being given half-pay. That is unlike the bourgeoisie, such as Giorgio in Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold, who are so independent that they not only financially provide for their families, but they also enjoy leisure time at their discretion. Ochola too in The Promised Land accumulates wealth when he goes to Tanganyika. He has enough to provide for his family and share with neighbors, friends and relatives back in Seme. He believes in a strong work-ethic similar to the working class masculinity that is endorsed by society.
Similarly, Giorgio, a strong but sensitive moneyed investor, has a strong work-
ethic, a desire to support his family and support the needy as well by establishing a 
foundation to cater for the orphans left behind by the HIV/AIDS catastrophe. This 
fatherly male role is evident when he not only provides for Lavina and his newly born 
twins, but he also starts a children’s home. He is philanthropic but retains his 
dominance and control.

It is worth noting that in *The Promised Land* and in *Coming to Birth* the female 
protagonists intervene when the men momentarily fail to live up to their masculine 
responsibilities. These women act and speak up to restore the masculine gender identity 
and help the male to take up their dominant position anew. Paulina’s efforts to support 
her broke husband, and Nyapol’s struggles to restore Ochola’s health attest to the desire 
to reinstate male dominance. It seems that female writers cannot imagine a world 
without male authority.

Of significance too, in Owuor’s *Dust*, we meet emasculated men who work for 
the whites. Karanja, for example, is the gardener; Noor Mohamed is the head cook; 
and Linus is the kitchen toto. Lazaro Agwaro is a “houseboy, who had been a signal 
man in Burma.” On several occasions, Mrs. Selene Bolton, a wife of a white settler, 
refers to him as “boy” (94, 100). The whites’ condescending view of adult male blacks 
is typical of colonialists who perceived themselves as adults and referred to African 
men as “boys.” Robert Morrell emphasizes the hierarchical relationship between 
African and white men. He says, “the use of the word ‘boy’ by whites (men and 
women, boys and girls) to refer to black men reflected a workplace reality in which
African men did the menial work, requiring strong, energetic and powerful bodies” (Of Boys 616). The offensive use of the expression ‘boy’ captures the emasculation and condensation of the adult African man. The whites feminized African men by giving them feminine tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and gardening. Colonial officials “feminized and infantilized African Men within the racialized political structure of colonialism” (Miescher and Lindsay 15-6). Black men worked as domestic workers to colonial officers, engaging in feminine tasks that they would not perform in rural areas (Uchendu 10).

Closely related to the aspect of work is activity as an attribute of men. Male activity is used to construct masculine identity. The passivity of the female characters contrasts the actions taken by the male characters. For example, women are not involved in decision-making. Their actions (for example Nyapol in The Promised Land) are limited to cooking, brewing alcohol – none of which is very active. Additionally, even though Nyapol exhibits physical activity towards the end of the novel, especially when the husband was very ill, she is still constructed as passive by the other male characters; it is Abiero and Magungu who succeed in moving the reluctant Ochola back to Seme.

Male activity is further evident in Dust in the character of the Trader also known as Zaman. He leaves “his wife, mistress, children, and suffering livestock at Hurran Hura to go for water, identify pastures, and obtain help from other supportive clans” (128). He hopes that his wives and children and grandchildren will someday play amid fat cows, green grass, and weekly rain (125). Due to harsh conditions, drought and
waterlessness, his wife and children, in the company of other escapees, follow him to Kargi, where the children die and the frail wife pleads for water to drink (128). The Trader runs for thirty kilometers, then another twelve kilometers to find water at an oasis. Unfortunately, by the time he gets back to Kargi, his wife too has succumbed (130). Zaman is bitter because a missionary family, the Jacobses, refuses to give him a lift to Kargi, which may have saved his wife. Zaman’s male activity is shown in his unrelenting efforts to save his children and wife in a harsh environment.

2.5 Masculinity and sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation is evident in some selected novels. Some lascivious and lecherous men seek to assert their manhood by sexually exploiting women. In The Promised Land a white Catholic priest, Father Ellis, sexually harasses Apiyo by squeezing and even bruising her breasts, “the way other men do when they desire a woman” (33). Apiyo “had gone to tell him her sins, so that he could plead with God to forgive her” (32). The narrator says Apiyo “wanted so much to be baptized like the others” (32). In protest, she bites the priest’s hand. And because she challenges his manliness by resisting his sexual advances, she is punished by being sent away from the church (32). Such sexual harassment, which is perpetrated by mostly males in positions of authority on female subordinates, is not just about sexual attraction but “primarily about men exercising power over women” (Wilson and Thompson 61). Men desire to oppress and dominate women in their search for sexual pleasure. Father Ellis blatantly abuses his masculine power and penalizes Apiyo when she resists. Kerry Robinson observes that sexual harassment is a way “to express and reconfirm the public and private positions of hegemonic masculinity within a heterosexualized gender order”
(20). Father Ellis’s unwelcome and offensive sexual advances support the fact that there is a link between masculinity and sexual harassment. Father Ellis exercises power inappropriately to degrade women. Robert Mellon in his “On the Motivation of quid pro quo Sexual Harassment in Men” says that there is a “relationship between chronic levels of masculine gender role stress and sexual harassment proclivity” (2290). In addition, “the pursuit of sexual relations with women would surely be included in any short list of traditional ‘manly’ acts” (Mellon 2294).

Additionally, in Moraa Gitaa’s novel *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* the female protagonist Lavina Kante, recounts her story. Her future is shattered when, as a worker in the medical fraternity, Rawal, a millionaire of Asian origin, who is about forty by then (193-4), not only takes advantage of her being too trusting, but also infects her with HIV, and then disappears for many days. She feels devastated and frustrated that she cannot reverse her sero status. Her life comes to a standstill (197). Rawal’s infecting women with HIV paints an image of the brutal and exploitative male. Rawal’s use of wealth to subjugate women and thus exercise his masculinity over vulnerable women is critiqued in the novel. While Lavina and Rawal’s other girlfriends may not be wholly excused, Rawal is clearly more mature than they are. He represents a man who lacks a sense of morality. Mark Hunter’s study on masculinities in multiple- sexual partners among the Zulu of South Africa observes that a man who engages in sex with several partners, earns respect only if he has a wife and a home. He adds that males with too many girlfriends would be rebuked because it “signified an unseemly masculinity, a masculinity gone too far” (Hunter 213). Having many girlfriends and therefore engaging in reckless sexual behavior is considered irresponsible, especially in light of
the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the fact that it denies the girls’ fathers dowry. While sexual virility suggests dominant ideal masculinity, it is risky behavior as it may adversely affect the man’s health.

Rawal’s sexual conquests confirm Andrew Herman’s observation in American men. He says that “wealth is intertwined with power because it is a possession or resource that enhances the ability and capacity of individuals to act effectively in the world by exercising control and authority over self and others” (Herman 37). He uses his masculine status provided by wealth to lure women. He provides Lavina “with various credit cards and two cars” and Lavina has “VIP entries into all the exclusive clubs in the country and parties aboard yachts on the entire East African coastline […] bank accounts were overflowing with millions” (Gitaa194). Indeed, Lavina’s family benefited financially from the wheat farms she had bought in Kitale (195), even though her father rejects and ostracizes her because of her HIV status.

Martin in Coming to Birth, similarly, exhibits exploitative masculinity. He takes advantage of women’s financial challenges. For example, he is ready to have Fauzia, a very young girl, move in with him and engage in all wifely duties. When he is asked about the nature of their relationship, he is non-committal (Macgoye 49). The impression that Martin is least bothered about the extramarital affair affirms the patriarchal dividend that all men benefit from – “the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women” (Connell Masculinities 79). Being a man, he exploits the power of men over women, knowing that society does not frown at men’s unfaithfulness in marriage. Meanwhile, while Martin is unfaithful, he does not expect
his wife to engage in extra-marital affairs. When his wife’s bleeding persists, he says, “Can’t even keep a baby for me. Can’t even be sure it was mine, can I?” (Macgoye 22). He is suspicious that she might have gone out with another man. Elsewhere, he threatens to beat her “if she was unfaithful to him” (46).

While Lavina is reeling in shock and helplessness at such injustice, she prays that “parliamentarians would pass a law making it illegal to knowingly infect another person with HIV” (Gitaa 198). As things stand, Rawal and his ilk cannot be held accountable or charged in a court of law. They therefore perpetuate impunity. When Lavina confronts Rawal, accusing him of infecting her with the virus, Rawal’s “coolly impolite and impersonal countenance proved that my [Lavina’s] accusation was justified. He neither accepted nor denied my allegations. He ordered me out of his office and told the security officers that I should never be allowed to step into the premises again!” (Gitaa 198). In addition, when Lavina suggests to Rawal that they marry, Rawal says that “his Asian family would never consent to his marriage to an African!” (Gitaa 196). Rawal is portrayed as indecisive and cowardly. He is not man enough to take firm stands. He does not stand by the woman he supposedly loves. According to Paul Dover, manliness entails lack of fear, being calm and decisive, and avoiding complaining (Dover 178). However, Rawal does not exhibit these attributes.

Furthermore, key to the representation of masculinity in Moraa Gitaa’s novel is the character of Giorgio Santini, a multimillionaire European of Italian origin who has been in Kenya for a couple of years. He is presented as a foil to Rawal in that despite the numerous romance episodes he has with Lavina, he does not exploit her
vulnerability and desperation. “Giorgio Santini was not like most men […] ‘I want neither of us to feel used.’ The echo of his words a couple of minutes earlier, […] brought an involuntary smile to her lips” (Gitaa 94). Giorgio promises Lavina: “I’d never deliberately hurt you” (99). He exercises self-control even when his desire for Lavina intensifies. He turns “his emotions on and off like […] a tap. Like a light switch” (Gitaa 190). This, I believe, is an attribute of manliness. Bird affirms that it is masculine to withhold expression of one’s feelings (122). Giorgio’s restraint is reminiscent of what Egodi Uchendu calls preferred masculinity among the Zulu which was “shown in the absence of premarital penetrative sexual interaction with a female subject even though intimate encounters were allowed” (Uchendu 8). Sexual intercourse before marriage was unmasculine.

2.6 Men and Sport

Robert Connell discusses the significance of sport in the construction of masculinity. He notes that “when boys start playing competitive sport they are not just learning a game, they are entering an organized institution” (Masculinities 35). The competitive and hierarchical organizational structures in sports are similar to structures found in most workplaces (36). Michael Messner’s Power at Play contends that boys’ masculinity is judged according to performance in competitive sport (Messner 24). Indeed, participating in sport is a source of masculine identity. Physical competition aids in achieving manly status. Connell asserts that

sport has come to be the leading definer of masculinity in mass culture.

Sport provides a continuous display of men’s bodies in motion.
Elaborate and carefully monitored rules bring these bodies into stylized contests with each other. In these contests a combination of superior force (provided by size, fitness, teamwork) and superior skill (provided by planning, practice and intuition) will enable one side to win. […] It is the integrated performance of the whole body, the capacity to do a range of things wonderfully well, that is admired in the greatest exemplars of competitive sport. (Masculinities 54)

One builds hegemonic masculinity through physical prowess, being physically active. Physical activity contrasts femininity which is culturally constructed as passive. As cited in Robert Morrell’s article, Connell writes on sports as an ‘astonishingly important’ place in influencing hegemonic masculinity:

> It is the central experience of the school years for many boys, and something which even the most determined swots have to work out their attitude to. What is learned by constant informal practice, and taught by formal coaching, is for each sport a specific combination of force and skill. Force, meaning the irresistible occupation of space; skill, meaning the ability to operate on space or the objects in it. (Of Boys 609)

Connell’s notion reflects Douglas Hartmann’s observation that men are obsessed with sports because they are “naturally physical and competitive, and that sports simply provide an outlet for these inherently masculine traits” (14). Hartmann further affirms that boys’ sports are not only aggressive, but they also emphasize winning, being tough,
and dealing with injuries and pain (16). Indeed, the behaviors and attitudes valued in men’s and boys’ athletics are not just about sports, but about masculinity (16).

In Yvonne Owuor’s *Dust*, rugby is the sport while in Moraa Gitaa’s *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*, swimming is the sport. Moses Odidi exudes an image of fitness. The narrator says that “Odidi acquired bulk […] and transformed the school’s game” (Owuor 14). His muscular body emphasizes his physical potency that places him in the category of hegemonic masculinity. His skill and speed in rugby at his new school helped him find belonging. The narrator says that after Odidi joins the rugby team, he transformed the school’s game. In the second season, when the opponents’ defense tried to take the ball from him, he broke three sets of teeth and converted twelve tries. Their school, former perennial failures, became School Rugby Cup contenders. In the created songs of worship for their new hero -- *Shifta! The Winger!* -- Odidi found belonging.

(Owuor 14)

Cut-throat competition is a major issue in sport and when men focus on winning, injury and violence may not be avoided. Odidi’s team depended on him to end the game. “He is the quickest, the trickiest, the best Shifta the Winger, dancing through adversaries. Before Jonah Lomu made it right to have large wingers, there was Shifta the Kenyan Winger, who carried the game into the face of opponents, and who scored try after try after try while crowds chanted *Shifta! Thump, thump! Winger! Thump! Thump! Thump!*” (Owuor 8). Odidi is an astute rugby player with a winning streak. He can only be
compared to Jonah Lomu, a New Zealand rugby superstar. Odidi’s sporting achievement represents some aspects of manly ideals such as team spirit, success, and individual achievement. Indeed, to be athletic and to engage in sports is an important characteristic of hegemonic masculinity in the world today as it is in the world of fiction.

2.7 Men and Violence

Violence and its relationship with masculinity is worth exploring in the selected texts. The term violence is well defined by World Health Organization as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (5). Clearly, violence entails physical and psychological dimensions. It is a pillar of the stereotypical construction of masculinity and it is widely believed that it is a male issue.

A United Nations report in 2004 suggested that over 50% of all convicted criminals in Kenya were males aged between 16 and 25. Men use violence to prove their power and maleness. Gavon Titley in his book *Youth Work With Boys and Young Men as a Means to Prevent Violence in Everyday Life* notes that “in the context of masculinity, violence is often seen as empowering” (Titley 25). Robert Connell also contends that men are biologically hardwired to be dominant and aggressive, and that their violent behavior is “natural” because they cannot be trained otherwise (Connell “Arms” 22). Elsewhere, Connell says that it is “the dominant gender who hold and use the means of violence” (*Masculinities* 83). He adds that “violence often underpins or
supports authority” (77) and it “is part of a system of domination” (84). Men are predisposed to violence as a way of asserting their masculinity.

In Yvonne Owuor’s Dust, for example, most of the gun-wielding characters (some of whom kill) are men. Traditionally, men made their names as warriors through violence. Ochola, for example, in The Promised Land bore his great grandfather’s name who was a warrior (Ogot 62). In fact, Ochola’s “grandfathers were warriors. They died fighting for this land” – Ochola’s inheritance (Ogot 18). The novels equate hegemonic masculinity with violence. Peter Iadicola and Anson Shupe’s text Violence, Inequality and Human Freedom categorizes violence into three contexts: interpersonal, institutional, and structural. Johan Galtung too in Peace by Peaceful Means addresses three types of violence: direct, structural, and cultural.

2.7.1 Interpersonal/Direct violence

What Peter Iadicola and Anson Shupe describe as interpersonal violence is what Galtung calls direct violence. It is between individuals, for example, an assault in a public place or a fight. According to Galtung, direct violence refers to hurting or killing somebody directly. He acknowledges that most directly violent acts are committed by men. This type of violence can be verbal or physical (31). Examples may include deadly armed conflict, domestic violence, exploitation, beating someone, and bar brawls. Notably, direct violence is associated with the most common interpretation of violence. In Coming to Birth exploitative employers do not guarantee decent places to stay or decent meals for their employees. In addition, in Macgoye’s and Owuor’s texts, the police silence, intimidate and even kill citizens who are perceived as government critics
or dissenters. An innocent boy, Okeyo, is shot dead at the roadside by masked police officers as Mzee’s motorcade leaves Kisumu. Around this time, Tom Mboya is assassinated (Macgoye 82-3). In Dust, Nyipir is tortured by police officers for speaking out (Owuor 299-301).

The common violent acts that we associate with interpersonal violence include assaults, rape, homicides. These acts that involve two or more people “are usually associated with overt instances of physical harm or injury: someone is pushed around, roughed up, hit, stabbed, invaded shot, or restrained […] or pain and injury that need not be physical. These ‘covert’ and emotional violations recognize that individuals can be victimized as both objects and subjects. In other words, any act that depersonalizes, dehumanizes, or transforms human beings into ‘things’ would qualify as interpersonal violence” (Barak 46).

Barak further examines five forms of interpersonal violence including homicide, juvenile victimization, physical and sexual child abuse, rape and stalking. In the corpus the study highlights homicide and physical abuse as the acts of violence. Homicide is simply defined as the killing of a person by another. Barak distinguishes between criminal homicide and noncriminal homicide. Criminal homicide involves first degree murder when the killing is premeditated, or voluntary manslaughter when there was only the intention to physically hurt someone and not to kill them. Noncriminal homicide comprises self-defense homicide and justifiable homicide. Self-defense is killing a person as a result of protecting a property, a person or oneself. And justifiable
homicide is the murder of a person “under the authority of the law, as when the police kill a felon or when a convicted offender is executed by the state” (Barak 49).

In *Dust*, for example, there are examples of homicide as a form of interpersonal violence. Young Nyipir commits what can be interpreted as voluntary manslaughter when he hits his uncle dead using a jembe. The uncle had always treated him cruelly. One day when one goat goes missing from the flock, Nyipir’s uncle brutally hits Nyipir, who retaliates and inadvertently kills the uncle. In addition, adult Nyipir shoots and kills Hugh Bolton who dangerously uses a knife against Akai-ma, a woman that Nyipir loves. One can safely argue that Nyipir kills Bolton in self-defense; he is only protecting and saving Akai-ma who has suffered several cuts before Nyipir shoots him (Bolton) in the head and the neck (Owuor 350). Nyipir wears a masculine aura that embraces violence. He wants to fight injustice with violence. When he kills Bolton, who is presented as powerful and unjust, he establishes his superior masculinity. Notably, the knife and the gun used by the characters stand as phallic symbols.

2.7.2 Structural violence

Structural violence is “the violence that is built into the structure of the society and manifests itself in differences in life chances” (Iadicola and Shupe 381). It is indirect violence because the suffering emanates from a capitalist and unfair world. Structural violence is evident when opportunities are inconsistently granted or denied based on sex, ethnicity, nationality, age, social class, and so on. Iadicola and Shupe give a few examples thus:
Violence can be an outcome of how we have organized a society in terms of access to basic necessities of survival. Or it can be an outcome of how we have organized a society in terms of access to pollution-free environment. Or it can be an outcome of how we have organized a society in terms of access to medical care and medicines to cure diseases. In short, it can be an outcome of how we have organized a society in terms of the distribution of life chances. Life chances refer to the opportunities in life to realize one’s potential – intellectually, physically, and spiritually. Differences in infant mortality rates among groups that occupy different positions in systems of stratification are a violent outcome of this arrangement of people. (380)

The lack of amenities and opportunities is typical of structural violence. Direct violence can be a result of structural violence especially when the oppressed resort to violence to fight for their needs.

Structural violence can be caused by classism -- whereby some groups are oppressed because of their social class in order to favor the dominant ruling group. Some male characters belong to a high socioeconomic class; they are wealthy and influential and exercise authority over those people in the lower class. David Morgan’s article titled “Class and Masculinity” asserts that “men will be found disproportionately located in the highest levels of political, economic, educational, and cultural organizations. In this respect, we may see men as centrally involved in class practices,
as individual or collective class actors” (Morgan 168). Indeed, there is a link between powerful social classes and masculinity.

Structural violence “is defined as built into the person, social and world spaces and is unintended […] Structural violence is divided into political, repressive and economic, exploitative; supported by structural penetration, segmentation, fragmentation, and marginalization. Furthermore, there is also the horizontal structural violence of being too tightly related, and of being too loosely or even unrelated” (Galtung Peace by 31). In other words, structural violence is built in the nature of social, cultural and economic institutions and it has an effect of denying peoples important rights, such as economic wellbeing, social, political and sexual equality, a sense of personal fulfillment and self-worth and is expressed with the existence of hunger, political repression, and psychological alienation (Galtung Peace by 2).

Structural violence harms people by insulting their basic needs such as freedom of expression, well-being, and need for work.

Galtung also identifies patriarchy as a form of structural violence (Galtung Peace by 30, 33). Patriarchy expresses itself in many other forms of violence against women, legitimized by cultural justifications. Some female writers speak against the traditional model of patriarchal family and give a negative women’s point of view towards men. Men are seen as an embodiment of violence. In Coming to Birth the young and naive Paulina does not look at her husband in the eye. The man, Martin Were, causes fear because she has been beaten by him before. She feels distant from her man and thus turns to other women for comfort (26).
Indeed, unequal distribution of power and resources gives rise to structural violence. Iadicola and Shupe give an example of when Christopher Columbus and his soldiers subjugated and enslaved native populations on contact (Iadicola and Shupe 35). More examples of structural violence include low living standards because of where one is born, inequality in education and political power. There are tribes and communities that feel oppressed and exploited. The government practices structural violence by creating underdevelopment, marginalization and exclusion of certain groups of citizens or communities. In Dust, the vicious military assault against the Shiftas (bandits) targeted both the militia and the civilians, plus their animals and property. The narrator says

Man hunting man in comradeship. Predatory subtlety; soft, no-fuss walking. Silent gestures – a look could say everything. Muscular wakefulness, essential manliness, as if this were how it had always been. Hypnotic life, a clarity of worlds so that he could see even past the clouds. Close-target reconnaissance work. He [Nyipir] was in a platoon fanning out in the northern terrain, tracking scents. Women, children, and elderly equaled prey, equaled game. Blasting hapless homesteaders, AK-47-ing camel herds to encourage cooperation. They mowed down elephant families. (Owuor 123-4)

The state clearly uses violent means to victimize marginal communities and enforce cooperation from them.
The Trader, Nyipir’s friend, tearfully remembers the Wagalla massacre in which about five thousand Kenyan nationals of Somali origin were killed in “a 1984 northern-frontier security operation” (Owuor 322). Petrus is summoned after the massacre “to help clean things up. He had overseen the washing of the blood-spattered Wagalla runway, had arranged burials in secret sites, had terrorized would-be witnesses into what should have been eternal silences” (322). Elsewhere, the narrator also tells of a night when “a government man drove into town from Nairobi. He carried petri dishes of vibrio cholera. He washed these in a water-supplying dam. Days later cholera danced violently across the landscape” (Owuor 272-3). The narrator goes on to say that after Tom Mboya’s assassination, the state meted out violence on those perceived as non-loyalists.

A hundred, and then a hundred more, herded into holding houses. Picked up – taken from homes, offloaded from saloon cars, hustled from offices, stopped on their way to somewhere else – prosecuted, and judged at night. Guilty, they were loaded onto the backs of lorries. And afterward, lime-sprinkled corpses were heaped in large holes dug into the grounds of appropriated farms. Washed in acid, covered with soil that became even more crimson, upon which new forests were planted. (273)

The state is depicted as victimizing some groups of its citizenry, just like the colonial regime dealt with the Mau Mau insurgents. Commenting on colonial oppression, Tabitha Kanogo’s Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau observes that during the insurgency, the colonial government “undertook massive exercises to comb the area
[Central Province] in search of culprits. The exercise entailed forced confessions, collective punishments, being confined to certain villages and forced labour, all of which produced fear, [and] anxiety” (139). Colonial oppression was as frustrating as it was in independent Kenya.

Such structural violence contributes to grievances that may push citizens to pick up guns and machetes and brutalize their fellow citizens. For example, a disgruntled Odidi, in Dust, is said to have joined such a gang when he meets his death. Odidi suffers a major blow when his bank “all of a sudden recalled his mortgage and had them thrown out with his things. They were auctioning the house. No lawyer would take up the case against the state” (163). The frustration drives Odidi into criminality. Sandy Ruxton in her study titled Men, Masculinities and Poverty in the UK observes that youth gang violence in cities is an example of marginalized masculinities asserting themselves against other men (Ruxton 64). She adds that this ‘protest masculinity’ is a result of “class deprivation and lack of access to cultural or economic resources” (64). Still in Dust we witness the slow death of Akai-ma’s twins, who are sired by Hugh Bolton. There is also suffering that is caused by unjust structures of society and deprivation of freedom, such as is evident in the posting of police officers to harsh territories as a punishment.

Cultural violence is characterized as any kind of symbols such as religious dogma, political ideology, language, art, science, law, media, education and so on that provides self-serving justification for direct and structural violence (Galtung Peace by 31). Cultural violence motivates actors to commit direct violence or to omit
counteracting structural violence. An aspect of culture can define violence as good or right; for example, abuse against women by men in some cultures is legitimized; wearing a gun is encouraged; killing people in the name of a holy war is allowed. Iadicola and Shupe call it institutional violence: An aggressive action promoted by a member or members of an institution or organization. Contexts such as tribalism, racism, war, terrorism are good examples. In *The Promised Land*, cultural violence can be traced in the persecution and marginalization that migrant Ochola suffers from his native neighbor who bewitches him and treats him unkindly. Ochola is told of his otherness and non-belonging. The hostile old man complains:

> You’re another Luo, aren’t you? And you’ve come to settle like the rest of them? But who put it into your head that this is no man’s land, for all Luo people to come and settle as they please. You come like masters to rob us of our land. You want us to work for you, but you don’t want your children to work for us. (Ogot 63)

Clearly, the old man exhibits tribal animosity.

### 2.7.3 Institutional violence

Barak notes that there are five representative forms of institutional violence, namely, family violence, childhood maltreatment, school violence, gang violence, and police and penal violence (Barak 79). Childhood maltreatment involves violence between adults and children. Adults, who occupy positions of control and dominance, maltreat children. The above-listed forms of institutional violence can help us to understand the male identities of the characters in the corpus.
Family violence occurs when a person controls or hurts a member of his/her family or instills fear by using violent or threatening behavior. Males especially oppress females to impose their patriarchal power/control. Male characters are violent against their wives and mistresses. Males force females to listen/submit to them. In our corpus there are examples of family violence. In *Coming to Birth* Martin Were beats up his mistress Fauzia and kicks her out when she does not come back to the house for three days. Moreover, he beats Paulina heavily, denounces her and disowns her when he learns of her illicit relationship with Simon in Kisumu (56-7). Martin feels a loss of dignity and vows to avenge. Males resort to violence to regain or assert their threatened masculinity.

Childhood maltreatment is evident in some novels. *Dust* offers a good example. Young Nyipir is mistreated by his uncle after his mother passes away. Nyipir is vulnerable as a boy whose father and elder brother are away in Burma and whose mother has died. In an extremely violent feat of rage, Nyipir hits his uncle dead. He reciprocates for the abuse and maltreatment from his uncle. (Owuor 156). He embraces and adopts violent behavior which his uncle exhibits. Indeed when Nyipir’s son Odidi rebels and resolves not to use a gun any longer, Nyipir seeks to impose his control over Odidi by use of violence (10). Nyipir’s masculinity and his role as a father are threatened by Odidi’s rebellion. Breaking Odidi’s arm during the scuffle is a reaffirmation of Nyipir’s masculinity. Yvonne Owuor seems to suggest that violence adversely affects people.
Yvonne Owuor seems to make violence a central element in her novel. This study identifies instances and effects of violence and their relationship with masculinity. Nyipir in *Dust* is a police officer, but he is also involved in criminal activities such as cattle rustling and trading in guns that go against the police code of conduct. Men use violence to assert their manliness. As noted earlier, most gun-wielding characters, in *Dust*, are men. However, two women (Ajany and Akai-ma) own guns too and are capable and ready to use them. One day when Galgalu comes home without animals, Nyipir shouts at Ajany to bring her gun. She then runs to the house, crawls under her bed and retrieves a rifle she had been given by her father when she turned thirteen (Owuor 58-9). This complicates the correlation between violence and masculinity. It appears, in *Dust*, violence is not supposed to be limited to the masculine only. Nevertheless, even though Ajany and Akai-ma are potentially violent, they do not commit any murders; the closest Akai-ma gets is being an accomplice in the murder of Hugh Bolton.

Masculinity and violence can be presented as closely connected in novels. Indeed, Owuor’s *Dust* can be interpreted as a study of violence in men. Violence is evident in Nyipir’s family, Bolton’s family and in government agencies. Nyipir’s son, Odidi, is an interesting character in the sense that he tries to avoid trouble. For example, one day when he returns from university he throws the pieces of his AK-47 at Nyipir’s feet (10). Odidi does not want to fight or injure others. He avoids violence. He is also a successful rugby player and his team depends on him to finish and score and bring victory (8).
Nyipir is presented as a retired and “a seasoned military man” (10). He wrestles Odidi and breaks Odidi’s left arm (10). He is portrayed as a hardened man who prospers in rustling of cattle and dealing in illegal arms (84-5). He has also killed men before (125, 156). However, we are also shown his soft side when he cries as he mourns the loss of Odidi. He comes through as a caring man when he sympathizes with Akai -- Hugh Bolton’s mistress then -- when Hugh’s “penknife slashed at [Akai’s] arms, shoulder, stomach, aiming for her womb”. Nyipir saves her by shooting Hugh in the throat (350). He is tender to women. Nyipir also comes through as a devoted father, who shows signs of violence from the time the reader meets him.

Men use violence to show their strength, power and maleness (Titley 25). Males engage in aggressive action to show power and manliness. They treat women like vulnerable beings in need of protection. Men are portrayed as the dominant sex that uses violence to impose its power. Robert Connell in *Masculinities* affirms that “it is, overwhelmingly, the dominant gender that holds and uses the means of violence. Men are armed far more often than women” (83). Connell goes on to list various ways how women are intimidated: “wolf-whistling in the street, to office harassment, to rape and domestic assault, to murder by a woman’s patriarchal ‘owner,’ such as a separated husband. Physical attacks are commonly accompanied by verbal abuse of women (whores and bitches in recent popular music that recommends beating women)” (Connell *Masculinities* 83).

Arabel Ajany in *Dust* is intimidated by Isaiah Bolton (Hugh Bolton’s son who seeks justice for his father’s death) by grabbing at her hair in a brief tug. Just before the
scuffle between them, Isaiah leans into her and says “Would be worth knowing how and when your mother got to be my father’s whore” (Owuor 231). In his frustration, Isaiah tries to impose his masculinity and power over Ajany. The search for his father’s killer(s) does not work out as he wishes.

While men are aggressive and violent, not all are presented as violent. Male characters such as Odidi in Dust and Giorgio in Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold are peaceful and don’t want to make use of violence. Gregg Barak, explains that

> even in those societies which can be (or are) characterized as aggressive or violent, relatively few boys or men, and even fewer girls or women, actually kill or seriously wound anybody during the course of their lives. (Barak 213)

Therefore, a character such as Odidi is a man who has opted not to be violent even though he grows up in a violent region in Northern Kenya. This explains why Odidi throws the pieces of his AK-47 at his father’s feet while, “chanting: Aye, aye, aye…I no go agree make my brother hungry, make I no talk…” (Owuor10). Odidi chooses to avoid the aggressive and violent practice of rustling.

2.7.4 ‘Policing’ masculinities

Police machismo is a stereotype. Nigel Fielding’s article affirms that “policing is a ‘macho’ occupation” (47). He adds that masculine values are central in the internal culture of the police. Policing is an expression of masculinity. Fielding lists the stereotyped cultural values of the police canteen which can be read as a form of ‘hegemonic masculinity’:
(i) Aggressive, physical action; (ii) a strong sense of competiveness and preoccupation with the imagery of conflict; (iii) exaggerated heterosexual orientations, often articulated in terms of misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes towards women; and (iv) the operation of rigid in-group/out-group distinctions whose consequences are strongly exclusionary in the case of out-groups and assertive of loyalty and affinity in the case of in-groups. (47)

The police believe in physically resolving conflict by aggressive action. The police officers represent a figure of violent ‘authority’ through their work as policemen in the selected novels. Dust portrays misogynistic and corrupt police officers. They are also brutal. The police seem to have a license to do what they want, especially engaging in physical violence, corruption, or concocting evidence. They also extort confessions out of suspects. Their language in reference to women is degrading; for example, Hugh calls Akai, “Prostitute, monkey, slut, slug, Ngikakumok!” (350).

Moreover, Coming to Birth and Dust make reference to the State of Emergency when the police strike, harass, brutalize and even kill people. Three policemen, for example, storm Paulina’s house and ask her to open up! “They overturned the bed, shook the cupboard until a couple of glasses broke, strewed the contents of the boxes over the floor, then, with another shove and injunctions to make more haste another time, they were gone […] Her back was grazed and sore” (Macgoye 31). The physical aggression and toughness is typical of the police. Owuor too portrays atrocities and mass murders in Dust during the Emergency. Warui buries many bodies of Africans
killed by colonial forces: “Bodies in gunia leaked liquids into the ground, over his hands, the stench of invisible human beings, smashed up and nameless, lowered into grounds that he then leveled” (Owuor 167). Nyipir is redeployed from the mission to a police camp where he was “ordered by the [white] commandant to join a group of men sent to retrieve bodies from a hut: a beheaded old man, a hanged youth about his age, a toddler, and two split-apart young women” (170). Traumatized Nyipir screams until he blacks out.

The military is the quintessential institution of masculinity. Kimberly Hutchings in “Making Sense of Masculinity and War” argues that there is a link between masculinity and militarism since both of them require aggression and physical courage (389). Police culture is associated with elements such as manliness, force, physique, violence, authority and brutality— all of which are the opposite of feminine values. Police are known to use violence to assert authority. Frantz Fanon contends that in the colonial states the police force is used as an instrument to maintain power, “by means of rifle butts and napalm” (38). There is use of force which is true not only during the colonial period but also after independence.

There’s structural violence that manifests itself in discriminatory practices in the police force. Discrimination along race or tribe is widespread in the police force, especially when it comes to transfers. The victims feel alienated. Aaron Chache, for example, in Dust is posted to the northern margins of Kenya where insecurity is rife. It is so insecure that on several occasions he opens the trapdoor in the floor and lowers himself into a banker when he sees a parade of raiders, rustlers, and other frightening
elements strolling near his outpost (210). He also has plenty of time to regret many things, including the absence of regular fruit and few opportunities to speak English (207). Aaron “had not planned for this in his career strategy. He had not anticipated needing to cling to sanity in an arid land” (206). Hugh Bolton is also said to have annoyed his bosses and is dispatched to the “Northern Frontier District, a closed district and an official destination for exiles” with the hope that he resigns (103). The northern part of Kenya is therefore perceived as a place where the wayward, uncooperative civil servants and security personnel are banished.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored several contexts and circumstances that help bring out hegemonic masculinities. Firstly, men relate with women as their subordinates. Connell said that hegemonic masculinity is the

configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant positon of men and the subordination of women. (Masculinities 77)

Men, therefore, construct a hegemonic image by subordinating women. Mothers are depicted as subordinate to their husbands as seen in the relationship between the Nyamwezi witchdoctor and Aziza his wife in The Promised Land, while the younger women are portrayed as striving for independence and freedom, even when they are faced with oppressive and impudent masculinities. This is brought out in Nyapol and
Ochola (in *The Promised Land*), and Paulina and Martin (in *Coming to Birth*).

Polygamy is also presented as a mark of masculinity.

There is an element of violence when men relate with each other, especially the father-son relationship as seen between Odidi and Nyipir in *Dust*, and Ochola and Abiero versus Owiti in *The Promised Land*. After the sons have been exposed to other worlds through friends, education, music and literature, they tend to negotiate their own unique masculine identities, thus rejecting their fathers’. Men further exhibit homosocial relationships as evidenced between Oketch and Ochola. Work and the pursuit of wealth is portrayed as a sign of masculinity as brought out in Ochola’s desire to work in Tanganyika and Okeyo’s, Paulina’s father, working far away from home.

Prompted by pressures to perform their masculine identities, the men migrate from their rural homes to urban centers or to another country to work and earn an income. The migration, however, adversely affects the man’s position as he loses power and status at home. In both *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* plus *Dust*, working men are emasculated by their employers. Some men solely depend on employers, and thus, live in fear of being sacked or given half-pay.

Masculinity and sexual exploitation is shown through the examples of father Ellis harassing Apiyo in *The Promised Land* and Rawal maliciously infecting Lavina with HIV in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*. Men exhibit exploitative, improper and inappropriate masculinity in their quest to conquer women sexually. Participation in sport is also seen as a source of masculine identity as presented in Owuor’s *Dust*. 
This chapter has also discussed various forms of violence and how they are propagated as evidence of masculinity. Jackson Katz argues that “although there are significant differences between the various masculinities, in patriarchal culture, violent behavior is typically gendered male” (Prusank 174). Violence is used by men to prove their power and manliness. For example, most gun-wielding characters in the texts are males. Direct violence is seen in *Coming to Birth* and *Dust* where the police silence, intimidate, brutalize and even kill citizens who are perceived as government critics or dissenters. In *Dust*, interpersonal violence is evident when young Nyipir shoots and kills Hugh Bolton. Structural violence is portrayed when opportunities and services are inconsistently granted or denied based on sex, ethnicity, nationality, age, social class, and so on. The Wagalla massacre in *Dust* is an example of structural violence. Again, disgruntled Moses Odidi resorts to illegal and dishonest means in order to survive as a man; he no longer challenges the exploitative and corrupt system, but instead accommodates himself to it by joining a gang.

Cultural violence is presented through the treatment of Ochola by his hostile Tanganyika neighbor. Institutional violence is seen in *Coming to Birth* when Martin Were beats up his mistress Fauzia and also beats Paulina when he learns of her relationship with Simon in Kisumu. In *Dust*, Nyipir, as a boy, suffers beatings in his uncle’s home after his mother dies. He too adopts the violent behavior and sustains it through his adulthood.

Policemen also exude negative masculinities in the texts. This is evinced by misogynistic and corrupt police officers. The Kenyan state of Emergency in *Coming to
Birth and Dust is an outlet of police brutality. Police use violence to assert authority.

Moreover, Northern margins of Kenya are a punishment or disciplinary destination.

The next chapter attempts to analyze the stereotypic presentations of men, or the lack of them in the selected texts.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF MASCULINITY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how male characters are perceived by the selected female writers. It analyzes how men perform their gender, how they change in the texts, or how aberrant they are. The chapter argues that the selected female writers create male characters who conform to gender stereotypes and others who challenge stereotypes, hence complex men. While some men are depicted as holding on to traditional masculine roles, others are portrayed as “new men” as they turn their backs on aggression, violence and exploitation of women. New men seem to question their conventional roles as men.

Judith Butler in Gender Trouble says that gender is performative and that we ‘do’ gender. She argues that one’s gender is constructed by one’s repetitive performance of it; what one does and how one acts defines one’s gender. Butler notes that “gender proves to be performative -- that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed” (34). Therefore, what we do creates our gender identity. In addition, “performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” (xv). From a young age we learn to perform our gender through repeated acts and thus our gender performance
becomes naturalized to an extent that gender is believed to be biologically constructed, rather than culturally and socially constructed. Considering how male characters in the selected novels relate, one discovers that there are those that meet the expectations of a masculine man and those that do not. There are those who act appropriately and those who do not. Undoubtedly, some male characters are stereotypically masculine while others are not.

3.2 Violence as stereotype

Violence is a pillar of the stereotypical construction of masculinity. It is widely believed to be a male issue. Michael Kimmel notes that “Men constitute 99 percent of all persons arrested for rape, 90 percent of those arrested for murder, 88 percent of those arrested for robbery, 79 percent for aggravated assault, 75 percent of other assaults, 75 percent of all family violence, 74 percent of disorderly conduct. Men are overwhelmingly more violent than women” (Kimmel 382). While there are some characters who are violent, others are portrayed as non-violent. Karen Graaff and Lindy Heinecken outline the factors that tend to encourage men to be more violent and more prone to use aggression as a first solution to problems and confrontations: firstly, the need to be the primary breadwinners and providers in a family; secondly, the assumption that men have a supposedly insatiable sex drive; and thirdly, the expectation that men should display physical strength or toughness, which may include violence to control others (2). Patricia Sexton noted that “male norms stress values such a courage, inner direction, certain forms of aggression, autonomy, mastery, technological skill, group solidarity, adventure and considerable amounts of toughness in mind and body” (cited in Lyons 466). It is men who fight for social and political power.
In *The Promised Land* Grace Ogot depicts men as violent. The narrator says that Ochola’s grandfathers fought against the Nandi and drove them from Nyanza to the mountains. This enabled them to occupy the fertile land that Ochola thinks of leaving (13). Ochola’s father reminds Ochola that, “our fathers died fighting for this land […] grandfathers bought it with their own blood” (22). This confirms that combat is an exclusive role played by men. David H. J. Morgan says “of all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced, and deployed, those associated with war and the military are some of the most direct […] the warrior still seems to be a key symbol of masculinity” (Lyons 467). Men in the Mau Mau rebellion and the Burma war exude an aura of “warrior” masculinity. The subjugated men are motivated to go to war in order to claim power and resist oppression.

Furthermore, it is “savage-looking policemen” who try to fend off the surging crowd that wants to board the steamer at Kisumu (Ogot 37). Indeed, it is “hundreds of Luo men, who went to Burma to help the white man fight his enemy” during the Second World War (40). According to the narrator, Ochola’s unfriendly neighbor, the medicine-man, often beats up his wife Aziza. Aziza produces terrified cries as a result of the beatings from her husband who thinks Luo immigrants are loading it over the Zangazi natives” (Ogot 83). According to bell hooks, men who experience inadequacies in a public world try to restore their sense of power in their homes. Such men equate domination of the woman with masculinity. They feel that by using violence or coercive force they are able to establish and maintain power and dominance (hooks 65).
Marjorie Macgoye also stereotypes men as violent in *Coming to Birth*. Martin Were, a salesman in a stationery shop in Nairobi, slaps, insults and pushes his young naïve wife, Paulina. He pummels her with fists because she does not wait for him to pick her from the hospital. For two nights she is lost in the city (Macgoye 22.). Paulina is “discoloured with bruises” (23). Speaking about men, Ahoya, a nun, says that husbands give their wives a token beating so that “if you are widowed and inherited you will not be able to say that your new husband was the first person ever to beat you” (24). Martin also beats his wife heavily when he learns about her affair with Simon in Kisumu (56). The woman as victim does not have the ability to defend herself, much less the intention to do so. Her only response to Martin’s beating is shedding tears. Martin maintains authority over his subordinate wife. Moreover, the policemen during the Emergency brutally raid slums, kick doors open and violently ransack people’s houses (31). Elsewhere, the uniformed men in Mzee’s motorcade shoot and kill Okeyo - - Paulina’s son (83) -- who is playing by the roadside.

In *Dust* violence is caused by income inequality and low economic development or poverty. Exploring the South African case, Karen Graaff and Lindy Heinecken argue that the inability “to achieve masculinities through economic means can contribute to men using violence against others as an alternative method of attaining these masculinities” (5). Moses Odidi for example, engages in violent criminal activities with a gang. He owns a gun which he acquired from an ex-warlord who has turned into a vendor of women’s wear (Owour 3). Policemen as well are depicted as violent. The plainclothes policeman standing beside Moses Odidi’s bullet-ridden body is said to endure, “and has endured the cocktail of stench: blood, shit, gun smoke, and rotten
water from a nearby open drain” (17). Before Odidi is killed, there is a gun battle between him and the police (185).

Interestingly, the females too exhibit violent tendencies. Akai ma, Moses Odidi’s mother, carries her rifle and she even threatens to shoot her daughter Ajany (36-37). Indeed, in her youth, Akai looked forward to organizing “proper cattle raids” (225). Ajany also is ready to use her rifle to fend off impending danger. When Galgalu returns without Nyipir’s animals, she runs to her hut, “crawls under the bed, looks around, retrieves a rifle stored in a broken wooden box” (59). This is the gun, AK-47, that she was given by her father when she turned thirteen. He charged Ajany, “Now you’re ready for your wars” (59).

Galgalu, the man who takes care of Nyipir’s livestock, carries a “rusty G3 rifle” (58). Nyipir himself “expanded his gun-trading and cattle-rustling enterprises across the northern territories and into the horn of Africa” (84). He “trained ragtag platoons, sold secret passageways through the northern frontier, used his windfall to buy the first set of guns” (205). He used Galgalu to raid (205).

Meanwhile, during the state of emergency in Kenya the Mau Mau warriors celebrate militarized masculinities. The warriors use crude weapons against the colonizer and the collaborators. For example, they hack senior chief Nderi using pangas (101). And “a week later, the solitary Eric Bower was taking a bath when he was slaughtered with his servants” (101).

Male violence is portrayed in the fatal scuffle between young Nyipir and his uncle in Kisumu. After Nyipir settles animals in for the night, his uncle goes to count
them and discovers that two goats that had eaten poisonous weeds died that evening.
The angry uncle whips Nyipir, who picks up a hoe and swings it at his uncle. The hoe
hits his mark with a crunch and there is a spurting fountain of blood. The uncle
whimpers and Nyipir runs away to a Catholic Mission school in Kisii (Owuor 156).

Towards the end of the novel, Nyipir confesses how he killed his white boss,
Hugh Bolton. He and Galgalu ventured into the red cave and when they re-emerged,
Nyipir was carrying Hugh’s bones (270). Before Nyipir shot Hugh in the head and
throat, Hugh had angrily insulted Akai and “slashed at her arms, shoulder, stomach,
aiming for her womb” (350). Michael Kimmel makes an interesting observation about
gender violence. He says that gender violence in a society is caused by gender
inequality. He adds, “the less gender differentiation between women and men, the less
likely will be gendered violence […] the more ‘like women’ men can be seen –
nurturing, caring, frightened – and the more ‘like men’ women can be seen – capable,
negative, competent in the public sphere – the more likely that aggression will take other
routes besides gendered violence” (Kimmel 385). Men in the selected texts are
stereotyped as violent. They are portrayed as warriors, brutal police officers, wife
batterers, rustlers, and even killers.

3.3 Unemotional men as stereotype

Francesca Cancian says that women are often portrayed as dependent,
submissive, insecure, illogical and passive, able to express tender feelings, aware of
other’s feelings, and gentle. Men, in contrast, are characterized as independent,
dominant, self-confident, logical and active, apt to hide emotions, not aware of others’
feelings, and aggressive (4). Traditionally, women are intrinsically emotional while masculinity is associated with emotional control. Therefore, men are expected to suppress emotions while women express emotions. Some males are depicted as unemotional. They are not anxious or scared. They are strong hegemonic men, whose masculine construction is understood to be “in opposition to women and subordinated men” (Gough 169).

Michael Kaufman also speaks about power and men’s suppression of emotions thus:

The acquisition of hegemonic (and most subordinate masculinities) is a process through which men come to suppress a range of emotions, needs, and possibilities, such as nurturing, receptivity, empathy, and compassion, which are experienced as inconsistent with the power of manhood. These emotions and needs don’t disappear; they are simply held in check or not allowed to play as full a role in our lives as would be healthy for ourselves and those around us. We damper these abilities and emotions because they might restrict our capacity and desire to control ourselves or dominate the human beings around us […] we suppress them because they come to be associated with the femininity we have rejected as part of our quest for masculinity. (65)

Men are therefore discouraged from expressing emotions so that they can wield power effectively over other men and women. They are expected to be strong and unemotional because expressing emotions is considered ‘unmanly’ and effeminate.
In *The Promised Land*, while Ochola’s wife Nyapol, weeps “in front of the old men, afraid that she and Ochola were going to waste their lives”, Ochola retains his ground (Ogot 18). He was going to a faraway Tanganyika in spite of the pleas from his wife and family not to venture into a land where the people “may be unfriendly” and where he may be lonely (18). Ochola is not anxious or scared. He is also depicted as unemotional when one day he strays into a wizard’s heavily fenced compound in Tanganyika. The unfriendly neighbor walks towards Ochola and a few large snakes wriggle out of the hut and twist round his legs. “Ochola mustered strength. It was embarrassing to tremble openly when a woman stood looking on. His great grandfather Ochola, whose name he bore, was a great warrior. This stranger was only a man like himself. He would not run; he would stand there and see it through, come what may” (62). Indeed Ochola is a strong hegemonic man. He is a descendant of a strong brave man. Secondly, he demonstrates courage, calmness and strength in the face of danger. Panic means unmanliness.

Stratton’s comparison between Ochola and Okonkwo is instructive. She claims that the two men share a number of characteristics:

Like Okonkwo, Ochola is obsessed with wealth and status: ‘Ochola’s ambition in life was to be rich, richer than those whom he had known in his youth’ […] Like Okonkwo, too, he spends his childhood years in poverty, then rises to considerable prominence, and finally loses everything he has struggled to obtain. More crucially, in his repression of
his feelings and his engagement in acts of aggression, he can be seen to suffer from the same emotional disorders as Okonkwo. (70)

Both Ochola and Okonkwo are self-made men who are adept at suppressing their emotions.

The unemotional trait is further seen in men who fall in love but do not lose control. They do not succumb to their desires of acting primitively. They exercise control over their bodies. In *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* Giorgio Santini is madly in love with Lavina; he can hardly sleep; he keeps dreaming of her (59), yet whenever they meet in emotional escapades, Giorgio does not give in to sex; he resists the temptation to make love to her. He turns “his emotions on and off like […] a tap. Like a light switch” (190). Giorgio embodies both feminine and masculine traits. He experiences emotions when he falls in love with Lavina and engages in romance; however, his ability to control his emotions so that he does not give in to sexual intercourse demonstrates self-control and hence masculinity.

Moreover, Giorgio is not anxious or scared as brought out in a robbery scene at a bank. When one gangster shoots at Lavina, Giorgio promptly hurls himself between the pistol and Lavina. He takes a bullet for her (223). Furthermore, while Giorgio’s friends such as Tony do not understand how a man can love and trust a woman who is HIV positive (140), Giorgio exudes a contrary attitude toward Lavina. He does not treat Lavina like a “pariah and with contempt” (143). He loves her in spite of her HIV status and says that what matters is for the two of them to be careful and understand the methods of transmission.
Rawal, in Gitaa’s text, can also be said to be emotionally detached and insensitive. He suppresses his feelings when dealing with women. He does not sympathize or even empathize with traumatized and devastated Lavina. The suppression of his feelings enables him to spread HIV with impunity and without caring about the women’s trauma. It is no wonder that his countenance is “coolly impolite and impersonal” (Gitaa 198). The selected texts depict stereotypic men who stifle their emotions, yet a few of them are portrayed as experiencing emotions when they fall in love or nearly shed tears.

### 3.4 Men as Rational

Male characters are depicted as acting rationally in contrast with women who act emotionally. Moreover, while masculinity is portrayed as active, non-hegemonic masculinities are portrayed as passive. Connell notes the rationality that typifies hegemonic masculinity thus:

A familiar theme in patriarchal ideology is that men are rational while women are emotional. This is a deep-seated assumption in European philosophy. It is one of the leading ideas in sex role theory, in the form of the instrumental/expressive dichotomy, and it is widespread in popular culture too. Science and technology, seen by the dominant ideology as the motors of progress, are culturally defined as a masculine realm. Hegemonic masculinity establishes its hegemony partly by its claim to embody the power of reason, and thus represent the interests of the whole society. *(Masculinities 164)*
The male is the rational decision-maker and his dominance is established on account of his possession of reason or rationality. In his rationality, the male believes he acts for the good of the family or society, and he sidelines those he perceives as lacking rationality; these include women, children and animals (Seidler 14). Ochola, in The Promised Land, as the head of the house, makes a firm decision to go to Tanganyika against his wife’s wishes. And when he gets there, his hard work is evident in his bountiful harvest. He uses his activity and initiative to construct male identity. In the same novel we note the passivity of the female characters to contrast them with the actions taken by male characters. The women, for example, do not participate in decision-making. The female characters are depicted as passive and lacking initiative. Nyapol’s actions are mostly limited to cooking, brewing alcohol and knitting. Elsewhere, after his terrifying encounter with the unfriendly and jealous medicine man, Ochola decides against sharing his experience with his wife because he believes women are often panicky and can make a big issue out of something. He chooses to tell her about the need for a charm to protect their house (65).

Another example of men’s rationality is seen in chapter four of Coming to Birth when Paulina’s son, Okeyo, is shot in the forehead. Paulina “began to wail loudly, rocking the baby in her arms” (Macgoye 83). Her emotional and irrational reaction is only natural. Meanwhile, an old man who maintains a façade of rationality, comforts her that she should not think she is alone. Unemotionally, he quickly proposes the practical thing to do: “we must go to our homes […] If they find us here after dark there will be trouble. I have been in the military in old days and I know” (84). A few days, after Okeyo’s death, when Martin Were meets Paulina, the narrator says, “but he
expressed formal regret for the death of the child” (87). One can conclude that the men’s composed reaction is clearly rational. Males construct their masculinity in contrast to the emotions of the female characters. Similarly, Hugh Bolton in *Dust* loses a baby girl, but while “Selene hoped Hugh would cry [,] he wrestled a torrent, which puffed and then deflated his face, and said, ‘Was looking forward to raising a real Kenyan lad. Must not wallow, through. We’ll try again’” (Owuor 96).

In *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*, men are presented as thinking rather than feeling characters. Giorgio’s composed and rational behavior after he learns that Lavina is HIV positive, contrasts Lavina’s and her friends’ emotional reaction. When Lavina blurts out what she thinks is an “earth-shattering revelation,” Giorgio’s massage on her neck and nape stills for a millisecond then he regains his composure and continues massaging her. He simply reassures that he would never deliberately hurt her (99). His reaction contrasts Lavina’s. She is so devastated on learning that she is HIV positive that she attempts suicide several times (198). And when she discloses her status to her friends, they shed tears freely (199). Indeed, Giorgio also rationalizes and postpones having sex with Lavina, because he believes it is the right thing to do. He keeps his emotions in check.

### 3.5 Men as Heterosexual

Robert Connell contends that hegemonic masculinity, just like complicit and marginalized masculinities, is heterosexually constructed in contrast to the subordinated homosexual masculinity (*Masculinities* 78-80). He therefore suggests that that ‘desirable’ kind of masculinity which is also a culturally accepted way of portraying
masculinity is heterosexual. Notably, males as heterosexual express their independence by sexually dominating women. The selected novels are replete with examples of heterosexual relationships. The female writers seem committed not only to traditional roles for men and women, but also to marriage and family. The males are expected to engage in heterosexual relationships that culminate in marriage. Men and women are united in marriage early in the novel, such as is the case in *Coming to Birth* and *The Promised Land*, or they are united towards the end of the novel as in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*.

Stephan F. Miescher posits that marriage guarantees adult masculinity. A man is expected to “look after the health of his wife, to clothe and feed her and to farm for her and house her” (90). Moreover, in all the selected works, the couples look forward to having a child or children. In *Coming to Birth*, as Martin Were waits for his wife Paulina to alight from the train, the narrator says “he would be a man indeed” (2). His marital status gives him a sense of manhood. Unfortunately, Martin is saddened by the fact that years after marriage, he has not sired any child. The narrator uses rhetorical questions and notes, “he did not go for elections or for Christmas, for what comfort could he bring to his parents when after all these years he no longer had even the pretense of a child to care for their old age?” (86). To sire children is a defining quality of masculinity, the absence of which poses a major challenge to a man’s masculinity.

Grace Ogot uses flashback in Chapter One to narrate how Ochola established his marriage relationship with Nyapol. The heterosexual relationships are used to signal the establishment and continuity of society. This explains why Nyapol is moody and sad
because Ochola ignores her and makes no sexual advances. She tells Ochola, “You treat me as if you only picked me up from the market place. What have I done to the ancestors to deserve such cruelty? You don’t eat the food I put before you. You don’t talk to me and at night you forget that I am a woman longing to hold a baby on my arms” (10). Samuel Muchoki sums it up well when he notes that marriage “symbolizes a man’s achievement in life; his ability to sire children symbolizes his virility. Consequently, a married man has higher social status and commands more respect than the unmarried man” (Muchoki 81).

Undoubtedly, and this is evident especially in Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold, it can be argued that admirable masculine behavior is rewarded with a heterosexual relationship that ends in a happy marriage. The importance of marriage in African cultures is underlined by John Mbiti in African Religions and Philosophy. He notes that

> [f]or African people, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet to be born […] Therefore, marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate. (133).

Marriage therefore is a necessity in which everyone in society is expected to take part. The patience and sacrifices that the male characters suffer is rewarded with a marriage partner. He proves himself worthy of the reward. Giorgio and Lavina’s relationship concludes with a happy marriage. Each partner supports the other; Lavina is not
subordinate to Giorgio. And Giorgio too is not a domineering husband. In Owuor’s *Dust*, after the murder of Hugh by Nyipir, who rescues Akai-ma from Hugh’s brutality, a heterosexual relationship is established between Nyipir and Akai-ma. They get two children, Moses and Ajany. The malicious, sadistic and morally bankrupt characters, such as Rawal who deliberately infects Lavina with HIV in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*, are not rewarded with a marriage relationship.

It is important to note, though, that when a man’s genitals are non-functional, the relationship between husband and wife is negatively affected. Daouda Loum, as cited in Delphine Fongang, speaks to the centrality of sexual virility in defining men:

> in traditional Africa, an impotent man is like a bull that cannot have an erection. What they both have in common is their inability to contribute to the growth and development of their species. The only difference being that the latter is doomed to be sold or slaughtered, whereas the former is stigmatized. (Fongang 27)

Sexual prowess, thus, becomes a marker of masculinity. It is important for men to have sex with women and even have many female sexual partners. Like Delphine Fongang, Leonore Tiefer contends that “sexual virility -- the ability to fulfill the conjugal duty, the ability to procreate, sexual power, and potency -- is everywhere a requirement of the male role, and thus, impotence is everywhere a matter of concern” (cited in Jun 141).

He adds that sexual competence is part of masculinity regardless of whether one is a traditional man, modern man, or new man. An impotent man suffers humiliation and low self-esteem because he is regarded as weak.
For instance, after Nyipir Oganda is discharged from service and is summoned to headquarters, he is brutalized by fellow police officers such that “by the end of that day, he was crawling, hatless, shoeless […] [They] beat his body and toyed with his testicles” (Owuor 300). Nyipir is tortured to impotence. The narrator says, “Every night, he touched the curves of his wife’s body, the places he longed to know and fill again. Every night, he understood a little more that all he could do was hold her to his body. He then watched as every night shifted her body to the edge of their bed. Their quiet tears” (302). Nyipir’s inability to have sex with his wife affects his male identity. The lack of sexual performance confronts him with the possibility that he is not a ‘real’ man. Due to sexual impotence, he cannot attain hegemonic masculinity.

In *Coming to Birth*, Martin’s manhood and potency are affirmed when Paulina announces to him that he is expecting their child after many years of disappointment. Martin says, “I have no reason not to be happy. All has not been well with us. You know it. I know it. There were women, and none of them gave me a child. You had another man and his child was lost to us” (147). A happy Martin brims with hope of siring a child. The prospect of fatherhood restores his sense of self-worth.

### 3.6 Men as protectors

Men are protective and they show strength and confidence. Traditionally, it is men who are supposed to help women out of difficult situations. They are involved in the manhood project of protecting women both physically and emotionally. Males feel the need to save or comfort a female -- even when the female is well able to handle the situation herself. In *The Promised Land*, after Ochola and Nyapol moved to their newly
built house far from Okech’s village -- a “place that looked very lonely and dangerous” (53) -- Nyapol expresses her fears to her husband. She fears “the hyenas that howled all around till dawn, and the weird human sounding cries of the birds of the forest. The cries penetrated her whole being and made the hair on her skin stand upright” (55).

Indeed, Ochola too is bothered by the problem of wild animals at the new home, but he “did not tell her about the endless laughter of the hyenas that had almost paralyzed him with fear” (55). He “did not admit to his wife that he was afraid. He could not betray the secret of manhood in the eyes of a woman” (56). To allay Nyapol’s fears, Ochola erects “a strong, thorny fence all around his house and set[s] up a heavy wooden gate that he locked at sunset. At night, he kept a big fire burning outside to keep the wild animals away” (56). There are two points to be noted here. Firstly, Ochola’s masculine performance is in conformity with the traditional masculine norms; he is determined to fend off any threats to his family. Secondly, his efforts to protect his visibly afraid wife show the flawed notion that women need men to protect them.

The same stereotype of men as protectors is entrenched in Giorgio Santini’s example in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*. He demonstrates this trait when he takes the bullet that was meant for Lavina, his girlfriend. “He had tried to protect her” (223). Earlier in the text he rescues Lavina who contemplates suicide by drowning in the ocean. She gets a painful muscle-pull and swallows mouthfuls of salty water. She chokes and fights for breath but just when her strength is ebbing out fast, “a muscular arm slid diagonally over her right shoulders and across her bare breasts, holding her firmly under her left armpit” (4). In her helplessness, Giorgio saves her. Japheth Muindu notes that
Giorgio [sic] is successful in protecting Lavina from insensitive people in the society such as Tony Kamunde, and steers her into productive treatment. His determination to take a bullet to save her life in the botched bank heist is compatible with De Rougemont’s assertion that, ‘the lover can reach self-awareness only by risking his life and being on the verge of death.’ (Muindu 43)

Giorgio’s actions help to restore hope in Lavina. Moreover, Giorgio provides not only physical protection, but emotional protection and guidance as well. He supports Lavina in her personal pursuits and shows her love. In fact, we can conclude that due to Giorgio’s emotional protection to Lavina, she contrasts Giorgio with insensitive Rawal who infects her with HIV and therefore makes her afraid and anxious, and with her father who ostracizes her after she is infected. His assurance not to hurt her coupled with the escort to doctors and herbalists emphasizes his emotional protection. Lavina finds protection in him. Also, he urges Lavina on to pursue her interest in art.

In Dust the stereotype is brought out in Odidi and Ajany’s relationship. Ajany, who is in secondary school, had climbed a tall tree and got stuck there. One student had accosted Odidi to tell him Ajany was lost inside a big tree. She sobbed in gulps that would have dislodged her. To help her out of this difficult situation, “Odidi hastened up the tree and sat next to her before hugging her” (Owour 44). Ajany then sits on Odidi’s back and they climb down. However Odidi miscalculates the distance and they fall to the ground. Meanwhile, he splits his forehead when he rolls to protect her (44). Elsewhere, Ajany has a nightmare and she runs out of her room to Odidi’s bed. She tells
Odidi that Obarogo wanted her face. Odidi reassures her that he will fight him and punch him until he has a face. Meanwhile, she “snuggled down next to him and grabbed his hand.” Ajany knows that Odidi is not afraid of anything (Owuor77). Nyipir is also portrayed as helping Akai, Hugh’s mistress then, out of a difficult situation. Hugh uses his penknife to slash at Akai’s arms, shoulder, and stomach, but Nyipir saves her by shooting and killing Hugh. Ochola, Giorgio, Odidi and Nyipir are thus portrayed as protectors and rescuers, as saviors of women. They are the only heroes who provide women with finances, welfare and contentment. Men are expected to protect women and to help solve women’s problems. These female writers seem to adopt an age-old stereotype in their novels.

3.7 Men as competitive

Men have a go-getting reflex. Beynon observes that men are “innately competitive” (3). Connell too lists competitiveness as one of the familiar items that men commit themselves to in the pursuit of hegemonic masculinity (Masculinities 123). Bird also writes that “[c]ompetition with other men provides a stage for establishing self both as an individual and as appropriately masculine [and] also contributes to the perpetuation of male dominance” (127). Masculinity demands competitiveness in men. Martin Were, for example, is not content with his academic qualifications. While working as a salesman in a stationery shop, he also attends evening classes in English and book-keeping (Macgoye 1). Moreover, he improves his position in the firm after getting a certificate (46). Indeed, he is more determined to be successful than other people; from his petty earnings of a hundred and forty shillings a month, he saves to buy a cow and food-safe for his mother-in-law and a watch for Paulina’s father as gifts.
and part of the bride price (2). He builds a square house for Paulina in Gem and buys her a pair of rubber shoes. He also builds one latrine in his homestead when most villagers think latrines are a dirty habit (6). Martin wants to be ahead of the pack. He is careful not to lose status, hence self-exertion.

Ochola in *The Promised Land* admires Ochwonyo’s visitors from Tanganyika. He wants to own large virgin tracts of land -- to run away from “unscrupulous tax collectors […] and land feuds” (6). He also wants to dress expensively, hence the decision to relocate to Tanganyika and make his fortune (7). When he gets to Tanganyika, in his first year, he gets “the biggest harvest he had ever known […] he built three granaries for maize and two for the millet and beans” (66). The villagers he invites for celebration praise him for his hard work and generosity. Indeed, Ochola invites guests to celebrate and prove his manhood. Kimmel in “Masculinity as Homophobia” notes that “men boast to one another of their accomplishments -- from their latest sexual conquest to the size of the fish they caught -- and how we constantly parade the markers of manhood -- wealth, power, status, sexy women -- in front of other men, desperate for their approval” (Kimmel 275). Ochola amasses wealth in Tanganyika and organizes a party to seek other men’s approval. His guests affirm his manhood when the narrator says they “were convinced that in a few years’ time Ochola would be one of the richest men in the land” (Ogot 74).

In *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* Giorgio invests in hi-tech gadgets (the most up-to-date communication system) because he runs a multi-million Euro business. He says that because “competition is fierce [,] instant access to information is
vital, especially as he has several projects in various stages of development at any one
given time (76). Giorgio owns a small light plane (Cessna) and his projects include
stately mansions that look like palaces (50). Clearly, he engages in competitive money-
making ventures.

Moses Odidi in Dust exhibits a go-getting reflex. He strives to win not only in
class but in sports as well. While his sister Ajany languishes at the bottom in class,
“changing places between number twenty-one and number twenty-three in a class of
twenty-four”, Odidi is “always one of the top five in his class” (Owuor 51). At
university, he studies engineering – a competitive course, and his former lecturer says
Odidi was “a most excellent student” (142). Indeed, Odidi managed a “first-class
honors. In the top ten best marks in the university’s history” (144). After graduating
from university he is reported to be “a successful Nairobi engineer servicing large
contracts” (34). Moreover, before he is brutally murdered, Odidi is said to own a green
Toyota Prado while his friend Musali owned a brown Jaguar (15). The ostentatious or
showy cars are a marker of masculinity.

Hugh Bolton too is competitive and hardworking. As soon as he and Selene, his
wife, settle at Naivasha, Hugh starts building a five-bedroom bungalow. He completes it
and decides to become a vinter. So he mobilizes his servants to plant vines from Italy
and South Africa. The narrator says, “Hugh had hired a tractor with borrowed money
and prepared the ground. They worked with fifteen shamba boys to plant vines […].
The vines thrived” (Owuor 93). Meanwhile, “the neighbors had already sized Hugh and
Selene up and found them acceptable. An exhilarating beginning, full of hard work,
experiments, dreams, plans, building, borrowing, and always starting again” (93). The men’s industrious nature is masculine. Studying Elizabeth Gaskell’s novels, Emily Jane Morris draws links between industry and masculinity. She notes that “masculinity is measured by industry and productivity and especially by the desire to work.” Morris sees hard work as an ideal of masculinity. Manliness is tied to the ability and desire to work (29).

3.8 Men as independent

Men are stereotypically portrayed as independent. They believe they can manage by themselves even when the task is very tough. They believe they can do things right on their own. Ochola risks and migrates to Tanganyika in a bid to become rich. He angrily tells his dissuaders, “I’m a married man now […] it is high time I was given a chance to plan my own future and to provide for my family” (Ogot 19). In Tanganyika, Ochola tells his host of twenty-two days that he had overstay and that it is time he put up a hut for himself and his wife (50). Ochola musters courage and builds a hut in a lonely and vast village far from Okech. Indeed, even though the first few nights in the lonely village were scary due to the howling wild animals, Ochola puts up a brave face. His wife who “woke up sick with fear, her nerves on edge” timidly asked him whether he intended to stay in that place or move back to Okech’s village. The narrator says

Ochola looked at her with hostility and did not answer immediately. This was a matter on which he had to stand firm, otherwise all his plans would collapse and they would never settle in Tanganyika.
He was a man! Nyapol knew that and decided she must know that every man, however small or however cowardly, must have a home of his own as soon as he had a family to support. (Ogot 56)

After a few years, Ochola falls very ill. His wife pleads with him to return to his home in Seme. She even threatens: “Let me return to my people, let me take my children away from this accursed place before some misfortune befalls them. I won’t stay here any longer, I’ve made up my mind to go” (124). Ochola, however, tells her, “You go home if you like […] But I’ll not move […] I’ll die here, Nyapol. I won’t go. I’ve told you this before and I haven’t changed my mind” (125). According to Stratton, Nyapol’s decision to return to Kenya is an affront to Ochola’s manhood (70). As head of the family, Ochola decides all matters. Evidently, he gets so disturbed when everyone is ready to leave, and with a broken heart thinks to himself, “How could they decide to leave without consulting him? Was he not the father of his family? Was he not the owner of the village?” (Ogot 135).

Some male characters, however, gradually move from independence to dependence. They succeed only after being helped and supported by those around them. For example, Martin Were in *Coming to Birth* sets off as an independent and responsible husband. In fact, in May 1962, he kicks his house mate Aduogi out; after all, “he was a now earning three hundred and fifty a month after passing his exams and decided he could afford to live alone” (Macgoye 48). However, as the story progresses, he degenerates into an irresponsible character that depends on his independent wife, Paulina. Paulina’s independence and power are evident at her father’s burial when she
refers to herself as being like “a man who has to go back to work. I have no one else to support me, and I have given the customary time” (Macgoye 66). It is a slight on Martin’s masculinity when he even borrows money from her to pay for charcoal. Moreover, he moves all his belongings to Paulina’s room and lives with her (Macgoye 96). Martin is depicted as economically impotent. Kurtz says that Martin’s moving in to live with Paulina is “the exact reverse of the scene at the opening of the book and a sharp departure from traditional Luo expectations” (153). This deviation from the traditional role of being independent, authoritative and oppressive is a challenge of gender stereotypes.

It should be noted that when women access employment, even informal or poorly remunerated, it challenges the male breadwinner status. A sense of inadequacy creeps into the male who subsequently resorts to alcoholism. The narrator says this of Martin Were, who is broke and childless: “He habitually came home late […] and occasionally he came after the radios had stopped playing, smelling of beer […] Each time he borrowed from her ten shillings which she had put aside from her work money to buy more yarn for crochet” (Macgoye 35). Martin’s abuse of alcohol confirms what Mbugua wa Mungai’s study noted about men’s lack of self-esteem; he says, “When these youth do not measure up to the mainstream, patriarchal society’s ideals of masculinity, they begin questioning their self-worth as men. The resulting self-doubt might then translate into their engagement in self-destructive behavior such as drug consumption and membership to criminal gangs so as to derive a sense of security” (Wa Mungai 212). Thus, alcohol abuse is an effort to restore hegemonic masculinity. This is typical of Martin Were’s actions.
Arguably, the selected literary texts provide evidence of changed gender roles where male protagonists take untraditional roles. Giorgio Santini’s reassurances to Lavina reflect his unconventional role as a man; after learning about Rawal’s cruel and oppressive act of infecting Lavina with HIV, he says, “I’d never deliberately hurt you” (Gitaa 99). The narrator adds, “He wasn’t a sadist or a masochist” (99). Giorgio takes an untraditional role of being obliging and liberal.

3.9 Men as unreliable lovers

The selected Kenyan women writers represent men as frustrated and unreliable. Women writers typically focus on themes of love and marriage. Men are portrayed as unsatisfactory and unfaithful lovers. One common feature in female writings is a stereotypic irresponsible male. Men are portrayed in unfavorable or negative stereotypical profiles. For example, Rawal in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* is over forty years yet not married. He seeks sexual pleasure in several women but is not keen to marry, Lavina’s pleas notwithstanding. The narrator says there were rumors that besides Lavina, Rawal “had another girlfriend [Moreover] he had built an apartment block for a Somali model in Mtwapa, in Mombasa’s north coast […] he had opened up this supermarket complex at Diani in South Coast for another lady, a Nubian refugee from Sudan. The man had insatiable appetite!” (195). The many sexual partners only confirm the observation that “male sexuality is often thought of by both men and women as unrestrained and unrestrainable” (Rivers and Aggleton 4). Rawal uses his financial muscle to manipulate and control the economically dependent women, whose ability to make decisions about sex is constrained. Rawal is hedonistic and treacherous. He passes off as a generous lover yet he infects women with HIV. Indeed, Lavina feels
dejected and even attempts suicide after her bitter experience with the insensitive Rawal. When Lavina confronts Rawal to protest against being infected, Rawal instructs his security guards never to allow her into his premises. Lavina adopts a positive attitude to life and love only after she meets Giorgio Santini.

Married men such as Martin Were, Mr. M., and Simon in *Coming to Birth* are negatively portrayed as reckless sex-seekers and flagrantly unfaithful spouses. These married men engage in extramarital affairs. Martin Were, whose wife is upcountry, turns to Fatima in an illicit relationship. The narrator says Martin visits Fatima occasionally in her room (Macgoye 33-35, 47). Moreover, he allows Fatima’s young sister, Fauzia, to move in with him whenever his wife is away (49). Additionally, Martin has an affair with Nancy – a young Kikuyu girl who is after financial support. Another example is Simon who is married to Martha but makes sexual advances at Paulina in Kisumu. This illicit relationship brings forth an illegitimate son (55). Mr. M., the Member of Parliament, stalks Joyce his secretary. He has an affair with her, yet he is married (119). Simon, the Philanderer, seduces Paulina for the sheer thrill of a ‘conquest’ (Macgoye 54). Macgoye suggests that married men are lustful and unfaithful.

In *Dust*, Hugh Bolton is a married man, yet he has an affair with Akai-ma, a black girl that later becomes Nyipir’s wife. The male characters’ infidelity is compatible with Christin Munsch’s findings about unfaithfulness in relation to earnings. She explains that “when men are economically dependent and women are breadwinners – identity concerns would become salient, threatening men’s masculinity. Consequently,
men with low relative incomes would be more likely to engage in infidelity, because it would allow them to engage in a compensatory, culturally normative male-typed behavior” (Munsch 487). She adds that “for breadwinning men, the greater their relative income, the more likely they were to engage in infidelity” (488).

As seen in the foregoing examples, men fall short as lovers and husbands. However, women writers also construct ideal masculinity. Gitaa, for example, constructs an ideal lover in Giorgio Santini. The muscular and sexually potent Giorgio can be said to be a ‘good man.’ He is not only loving and emotionally caring, but patient and supportive as well. Giorgio is contrasted with Rawal, a morally bankrupt lover. Giorgio is handsome, wealthy and romantic, yet exercises self-control. He makes Lavina feel loved and wanted. He rekindles Lavina’s interest in love. He embodies ideal masculinity marked by self-control and faithfulness and care. Lavina says of him, “he looked as virile and attractive as he had earlier in the cool evening of the beach” (Gitaa 19).

3.10 Feminized men

Patriarchal discourse describes men as dominating and women as dominated. However, female writers invert the gender hierarchy by positioning females at the center of gender discourse and pushing men to the periphery. The women writers construct women as attractive, independent, and educated. Some are represented as owning land -- a traditional masculine prerogative. Giorgio in Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold marvels at Lavina’s beauty thus: “Dio Santo! (My God) You’re beautiful! An African mermaid” (10). Moreover, Lavina’s “huge black eyes and black
hair against a backdrop of brown skin was what usually caught people’s eyes” (15). She is also employed at a hospital in the laboratory (196). Lavina also buys land in Kitale; she is therefore masculinized. Ajany Oganda, in Dust, studies in Brazil. At thirteen, she owned a rifle. She also single-handedly sets out to unearth the circumstances surrounding Odidi’s murder (59).

In Coming to Birth, Paulina Akelo tills a patch of land and grows vegetables in Pumwani and this helps the family during the lean days. She learns how to crochet and this not only beautifies the house, but it also earns her thirty to forty shillings a month in sales. She joins the Homecraft Training School in Kisumu where she earns the position of club leader at one of the centers. She buys a new bed and a mattress, a food cupboard and chairs. Her husband does not therefore dominate her. Towards the end of the novel, there is “relative irrelevance and unimportance of the man in social affairs” (Bukenya 75). The narrator says of Martin that “He did not see himself as maturing but as deprived of the chance of maturity, a childless man who would not keep a wife, whose house at home was shamed and whose house in town could never be home” (Macgoye 78). Indeed, “Martin shrinks and dwindles to an appendage of Paulina in the story, while she becomes a pillar of strength” (Bukenya 75). The masculinity represented here is not a gender hierarchy where men are superior to women. Men too face powerlessness when they encounter the threat of a self-reliant or economically independent woman. Whereas society expects men to be economically stable and provide for the family, Martin’s economic power no longer holds sway in the family. Speaking about inversion of roles, Stratton claims it is typical of African women’s writing (174). Paulina, for example, takes on the role of provider when she gives her
husband money and this not only threatens the masculinity and honor of Martin, it also makes him lose control over his wife. The male is dishonored, debased and belittled while the female is elevated.

Meanwhile, a few male characters are portrayed as engaging in domestic chores in their homes and embracing nurturing traits. These males undertake feminine roles so that they can be useful in a domestic setting. Giorgio, for example, has been feminized, subverting the machismo image associated with men; he helps out in the kitchen, (which may be viewed as a strength) and he also attaches a lot of importance to his appearance.

3.11 Colonial/Anti-Colonial Masculinities

Colonialism influenced the construction or forging of masculinities among the colonized. The white colonialists used their power over the black natives and women to assert their authority, thus affirming their masculinity. The study looks at the way the colonizers asserted their masculinity and how the natives reacted. There are two primary texts in the corpus that cover the colonial period in Kenya and the post-independence period. While the white colonialists were racist and condescending in their attitudes and practices towards the natives, the natives were either complicit with colonialism or opposed to it. Masculine traits include aggressiveness, independence, dominance, activeness, authoritativeness, competitiveness and logic. However, Robert Connell insists that not all men are the same; there are different forms of masculinity, including hegemonic, complicit and subordinate masculinities. Anias Mutekwa in her article “Gendered Beings, Gendered Discourses: The Gendering of Race, Colonialism
and Anti-colonial Nationalism in Three Zimbabwean Novels” argues that colonialism was not only a gendered institution, but that also, since it was “carried out mostly by men it became a markedly masculine enterprise” (Mutekwa 726). She adds that the colonized were subordinated and feminized while the colonizers were masculinized (726). Additionally, Robert Connell in “Arms and the Man” notes that “within the ‘Imperial poetics of war’ the conqueror was virile, while the colonized were dirty, sexualized and effeminate” (Connell 25). Colonialism, therefore, disrupted and forged new masculinities.

There is evidence of soldiers’ masculinity as young men in Nyanza heeded the call to join King George’s war in Burma. The able-bodied men enrolled into military “for the prestige, honor, power and glory of membership in the king’s African Rifles” (Owuor 155; see also Ogot 38-40). The young men believe that conscription into the military is an ideal representation of masculinity. For them, to engage in combat is performing manliness. However, the thrill of conscription soon gives way to disillusionment, especially when Nyipir’s brother and father do not come back from the war fronts to Kenya.

Caroline Elkins, in *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya*, argues that Britain justified its occupation of Africa in the name of “civilizing mission.” She notes that Britain’s conquest of African nations was motivated by “a duty, a moral obligation, to redeem the ‘backward heathens’ of the world. In Africa the British were going to bring light to the Dark Continent by transforming the so-called natives into progressive citizens” (Elkins 5). The British, after all, considered
themselves a superior race to that of the colonized. The colonizer believes it is his responsibility to enlighten the dark-minded native. Robert Morrell adds that “the history of white supremacy suggests that white, ruling class masculinity was hegemonic” (“Of Boys” 616). Meanwhile, blacks were relegated to the periphery as marginalized and therefore feminine. Wendy Webster argues that imperial white masculinity constituted “masculine adventure, power and authority in vast territory […] courage and strength” (Webster 529). Michael Kimmel adds that imperialists excluded men of color from the category of men. Men of other races were likened to “women and children, to make them Darwinian throwbacks, lower down in the evolutionary ladder from white Anglo-Saxon or Teutonic men” (Kimmel Masculinity 268). Africans, therefore, were relegated to the periphery as boys and savages that needed to be ruled and guided by the white colonialists. They are regarded as lazy and lacking in intelligence, hence not manly.

Notably, though, while the colonialists constructed natives as violent and backward and uncivilized, Yvonne Owuor’s Dust suggests the contrary. Owuor depicts whites as violent, unjust and uncivilized. In the novel, a white soldier, Hugh Bolton and his wife Selene are said to have berthed in Mombasa in 1950. The colonizers (including Hugh, James Thompson, Governor Mitchell, and Colfield) who “sought adventure in blank-slate kingdoms where [they] owned the rules and would remake a country in [their] image” (Owuor 91), were mostly male, thus affirming that colonialism was a masculine enterprise. Indeed, Selene’s repeated pleas to Hugh to go back to England fall on deaf ears; Hugh Bolton would instead reply “we are home, my love, we’re home” (91). Moreover, the narrator says the colonial authorities used the Lancashire Fusiliers to patrol Nairobi’s street; “the Kenya Police Reserves and Kenya Regiment
were summoned to active duty [...] The next day, Kenya, the Royal Navy cruiser, docked in Mombasa. There were men on board” (100-101). On the whole, white masculinity was expressed in military ventures, and colonialism was a quest for masculinity.

Colonial violence is evident in the mass-murders in Fort Hall in the Central Province where young Nyipir is sent by a priest at the mission in Kisii (166). While working at Fort Hall as a cook and cleaner, Nyipir meets Warui, a grave-digger, who “made bodies disappear for the Crown” (Owuor 167). In gunias, Warui buries many African bodies that have been murdered by colonialists. Nyipir, then, assists Warui by planting grass atop burial sites (168). The colonizer uses violence to establish and preserve order. However, the colonizer does not succeed in maintaining order because the colonized puts up armed resistance against the colonizer’s violent means. In fact, the colonized imitates colonial violence learned from the colonizer.

Hugh’s violence is evident in the “assortment of guns [that] entered the house, as did a parade of slaughtered creatures – heads, skins, tusks” (95-96) that he brought back from his many safaris. Jacklyn Cock who examines the South African experience links the use of firearms to constructions of masculinity. She says, “guns are a key feature of hegemonic masculinity. Their ownership and use varies across racial lines and between institutions, but nevertheless is central to the way many men act out their masculinity” (Cock 43). Violence is also seen in the conquest and displacement of the natives instead of using persuasion. No wonder, the native nationalists sing, “Kenya, Kenya, Kenya nchi yetu... wapi wale wabeberu waone haya” (Owuor 115). The
colonialists had masculinized themselves while feminizing the African natives. The Mau Mau fighters are a threat to the white masculinity. Selene whispers to herself, “my people created this country. I’ll be damned if I’ll be forced out. This is my country” (Owuor 103). The whites believe they have an inherent right to the land that natives want to reclaim.

Furthermore, the names given to adult Africans during the colonial era are gendered. They establish the master/servant relationship that existed during the colonial period. The colonial masters hired black males to engage in domestic labor in white homes. This is reminiscent of Connell’s marginalized masculinities which are complicated by racial, class, ethnic or socio-economic differences. The whites in their superiority complex marginalized blacks. Robert Staples studies black masculinity in the United States and notes that black men suffer not only unemployment and racism, but poverty as well. Staples adds that black men are denied mainstream forms of masculine fulfillment. They cannot achieve the valued masculine status due to racism. Similarly, black men in colonial Kenya were inferiorized, marginalized and thus emasculated when they were referred to as ‘boys’ by their dominant white masters.

A typical case is Hugh Bolton who calls Nyipir Aggrey Oganda “boy” (Owuor 108, 313, 316). A white commandant at the military camp also addresses Nyipir as ‘boy’. Selene addresses Lazaro Agwaro, their houseboy, as “boy” (94). Nyipir, on the other hand, addresses Hugh as “Bwana” (316). Notably, the Hugh family employs male houseboys, gardeners, and cooks. Moreover, for Hugh Bolton, Nyipir is “mtu kishenzi” (Owuor 316). The white colonialists used such expressions to inferiorize and control
natives. Julia Martinez and Claire Lowrie contend that the ‘houseboys’ were denied adulthood and the privilege to exercise masculinity because of “paternalistic emphasis on supervision, discipline and training and the corresponding denial of manhood or adulthood” (Martinez and Lowrie 319). The superior masculinity exercised by the European master over the male servant triggered a shift in black masculinities. This employment of African males in traditionally feminine professions/tasks represents feminization. Indeed, the African male’s masculinity is invisible, considering how Selene bosses over her houseboys. Whites infantilized black males by regarding them as children that needed guidance; they feminized blacks by giving them female duties that did not pay much.

Additionally, white colonialists exercised spiritual violence on African natives by imposing Christianity and demonizing other religions and some tribes as a way of subjugating the natives. In Dust, Nyipir, who is unable to proceed to secondary school for lack of school fees, visits at the mission in Kisii. At that mission, a priest named Father Paul sends him to Fort Hall in Central Province where missionaries “had asked for a reliable Christian good boy, non-Kikuyu, to help with the gardening and other chores” (166). In Maegoye’s Coming to Birth, the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru (K.E.M) are demonized in the sense that a curfew is instituted to weed out perceived dissidents. Armed guards patrol and look out for the K.E.M to shoot or take away (27, 30). The Kikuyu not only lose jobs, but their freedom of movement is also curtailed as they have to carry a special pass which should be produced to the guards on demand (8). Interestingly, in Dust, next door to the mission at Fort Hall is an army camp (167).
Priests, therefore, were not neutral onlookers to colonial activities. They supported and were involved in colonial projects.

Christianity, consequently, contributes to the tribal division among African natives. Africans then find difficulty uniting against colonialism. Elsewhere, the Trader walks for many hours before he reaches a mission where “the Jacobses live and preach a version of their Gospel, teaching, healing, and baptizing in the name of God” (Owuor 125). Pastor Jacobs announces to the exhausted Trader, “Hapa kwetu ni ufalme ya Mungu.” In the next three hours “the Trader has surrendered his radio, taken the prerequisite disinfected shower, been photographed for the mission’s fund-raising Web site, and chosen Sila for his baptismal name. These gain him admission and a safari bed with a thin mattress” (126). The reader, from the foregoing, witnesses the complicitous nature of Christianity in constructing colonial hegemonic masculinities. Note that the Trader is also given a Christian name, Sila. One can safely assert that what the Trader is taken through is meant to make him as the colonized inferior.

### 3.11.1 Masculinities of resistance and anti-colonial nationalism

Blacks are feminized by colonialism, but they attempt to recover their masculinity by rebelling and murdering whites. In the preface to Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, Sartre notes that some colonized men “make men of themselves by murdering Europeans” (Fanon 15). The native uses violence learned from the colonizer as a form of resistance against the colonizer’s violent means. The native thus reacts against the oppressor as a way to liberate himself and the oppressed society. This act is seen in Owuor’s *Dust* where Nyipir musters courage and kills his boss Hugh
Bolton, buries him in a cave and marries Hugh’s black mistress, Akai-ma. Nyipir cannot resist the temptation to fight back.

Additionally, before independence, there is a lot of unease among colonialists. There is news that a settler family in the Aberdare Range is murdered, children included, by the Mau Mau (99). As soon as a state of emergency is declared in Kenya by Governor Baring, a Senior Chief Nderi is “hacked into meat-sized chunks by pangas in the hands of his people” (101). Nderi is a sellout who sides with the colonialists and therefore frustrates the efforts of forging a united front against the colonialists. His masculinity perpetuates colonialism. The narrator adds that “A week later, the solitary Eric Bower was taking a bath when he was slaughtered with his servants” (101). The resistance movement that fights against colonialists is masculine. Indeed, the main actors are men who also use phallic objects to attack and kill the colonizer and the collaborators. The above reaction of the natives towards colonial violence confirms Frantz Fanon’s observation:

The violence which had ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters. (Fanon 40)

Violence is central in constructing relations between the colonizer and the colonized.
It should, however, be noted that after Kenya gained independence, the citizens did not necessarily enjoy the anticipated freedoms and the fruits of independence. This is because the masculinity of the new leaders was not different from the colonialists’ repressive and torturous approach. The narrator in *Dust* says thus:

> No one cried when the voracious, frenzied seizing of lives began. A new word slithered into the landscape – *Nyakua*: plunder, possess. Entitled brigandage. But it was cleansed to mean ‘hard work’. In the nation, slow horror, as if all had woken up to a vision of violating, crowing ghouls crowding their beds. Nyipir remembers how bodies started to stoop to contain the shame, the loss, the eclipse. Such eyes-turned-inward silences so that when bodies started showing up mutilated and truly dead, the loudest protests were created out of whispers. (Owuor 25-6)

Similarly, Macgoye’s narrator observes that in 1965, a year after independence, people were “disappointed that big houses and farms did not, as by magic, fall to them” (Macgoye 58).

Elsewhere, still in post-independent Kenya, whispers are common. When J. M. Kariuki goes missing, rumors and whispers are rife. Kariuki’s body is found “discreetly mutilated.” People spoke in low tones; “a Kikuyu gramophone record was banned” (Macgoye 106, 107, 108). Argwings Kodhek, the Foreign Minister – is involved in a suspicious car accident. In Tanzania, Eduardo Mondlane is assassinated (Macgoye 72). Similarly, Owuor’s text notes that citizens were “blind and deaf even when they saw neighbors being hauled away, howling. Some buried bodies of mysteriously smashed-
up relatives, and addressed their anguish in riddles that only archangels might decipher. Provincial officers and chiefs passed decrees in village after village: from now on, we shall not speak of so-and so again. Anybody who mentions this name is an enemy of our nation” (Owuor 302). Tom Mboya is an eminent figure in post-independent Kenya. Though assassinated about fifty years ago (1969), he is still celebrated as a respected national hero. He is a nationalist that imagined the best for Kenya and its people.

The colonial and post-colonial periods in Dust and in Coming to Birth by Owuor and Macgoye respectively, present us with varied forms of masculinities. How do the male characters contribute positively to society as anticolonial nationalists and post-independence leaders? During the colonial period, the white man fitted the role of hegemonic masculinity. It should, however, be noted that in the smaller native, indigenous communities, where the colonizer was absent, hegemonic masculinities emerged.

There is an aggressive masculinity in post-independent Kenya that was typical of the colonial era. Citizens are disillusioned after independence. They fought for democracy and freedom but are oppressed and neglected by the corrupt, brutal, selfish and divisive nationalist leaders. In Dust, Odidi is young, ambitious and hopeful, but is soon disillusioned with the corrupt government officials in power. As an engineer of Tich Lich Engineers, he and his colleague, Musali, wins a two-hundred and seventy-five – million-shilling contract to repair the country’s dams after the El Nino rains. After they had started dredging the dams, they were summoned for an urgent meeting with a senior Magistrate who gave them
a paragraph to recite. An oath of secrecy, subject to the Official Secrecy Act. A man in the proverbial black suit witnessed it all. A week later, Odidi, as chief engineer, received top-secret instructions to silt the dams. Contract to “service the turbines” – in other words, render them incapable of delivering power to the public. (Owuor 160)

He, however, stands up against the corrupt dealings of government officials. He protests against irregular importation of diesel generators into the country, “tax-free” and they are “offered five percent of profits for ten years” (Owuor 161). He presents the irregularities to the minister of energy and he is told to put it in writing. He writes but there is no response. He even circulates the letter to the dailies but it is not published (161). Musali compromises. He confesses that they silted the dams. “No choice. We have our money” (163). Odidi is “threatened, followed, summoned, booked for loitering with intent” (163). Yvonne Owuor shows contempt and criticizes the workings of the post-independence regime, its brutal nature, greed and subsequent neglect of the masses, and its quickness to punish those who disagree. The government leaders exhibit an aggressive and selfish masculinity in Dust. In the same novel, Musali, Odidi’s colleague at Tich Lich Engineering, and the minister of energy are a caricature of those in power who bow to corruption, accumulate wealth and influence for personal gain without caring about the thousands in poverty.

The use of force, oppression, torture and killing are atrocities that both the colonial and post-independence governments commit. Indeed, Frantz Fanon contends that in the colonial state the police force is used as an instrument to maintain power, “by
means of rifle butts and napalm” (Fanon 38). Macgoye brings out police harassment when Paulina’s house is crowded by three policemen who apart from overturning her bed, shaking her cupboard, breaking glasses and strewing the contents of boxes, they also graze her back (Macgoye 31). After independence, in Owuor’s Dust, citizens that think differently are subjected to detention and assassinations (Owuor 25, 302). The police who are supposed to maintain law and order mete out their brutality on citizens. For example, Odidi is killed by the police instead of being arrested and arraigned in a court of law. Moreover, the OCPD who had previously hired out his gun to Odidi’s gang in return for a monthly fee alleges that Odidi’s gang had stolen money from a bank. Indeed, Petrus Keah announces to Ajany that the police force always has a thousand reasons to implicate a person (Owuor 185).

3.12 The New Man

While some female writers have portrayed male characters in their traditional roles, others have depicted them as deviating from their traditional roles. Rosalind Gill’s article outlines traits that typify new man-ism as a male who is “highly invested in his physical appearance” and encompasses “many of the traits previously thought of as feminine” (Gill 32, 42). Moreover, the new man is “suffused with emotion and warmth […] caring, vulnerable, and yet playful […] competent” (Chapman, 245). Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner add that the new man is “a college-educated professional, […] highly involved and nurturing father, ’in touch with’ and expressive of his feelings, and egalitarian in his dealings with women” (202). Robert Morrell’s article titled “Introduction: The New Man?” identifies some of the new man’s features to include the following: “introspective, caring, anxious, outspoken on women’s rights, domestically
responsible” (Introduction 7). Morrell adds that the new man shuns competitive sport, sexist jokes, and violent outdoor pursuits. And since he is in danger of being dismissed as aberrant, men should return to their roots and become real men again.

3.12.1 ‘Attractive’ man
Some men cultivate interest in personal appearance which is enhanced through muscular bodies or fitting clothes. Robert Connell notes that the male body represents a form of natural or biologically determined masculinity. Moreover, descriptions of bodies matter for masculinity because male bodies show signs of illness, aging, enjoyment and are the visible exterior of a man towards the rest of the world (Connell Masculinities 51). In Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold, Giorgio Santini is a dashing male on display -- to be looked at and admired. He is handsome and suave (20). Gill, Henwood and Mclean in their article “Body Projects and the Regulation of Normative Masculinity” suggest that male bodies are depicted, “coded in ways that give permission for them to be looked at and desired”(38). Giorgio Santini has “corded muscle and hard bones of his shoulders” (Gitaa 84). He shows his masculinity through his muscular physique which distinguishes him from women. The muscular male speaks to Beynon’s observation that “men have long held muscles especially of the biceps, neck and shoulders, to be signifiers of ‘proper masculinity’” (51). Giorgio is framed not only as physically strong, but also attractive. His appearance can be said to be highly masculine.

After he rescues Lavina from drowning in the ocean, Lavina admiringly looks at his body exclaiming, “That body! That physique! What skimpy, almost all-revealing
swimming trunks! Had the Greeks been thinking of such bodies when they named the god of the seas Neptune? Or the lord of wine Bacchus? The thoughts raced through her mind” (Gitaa 6). Giorgio is an example of a man who is increasingly becoming conscious of fashion and grooming. He can be likened to a ‘metrosexual’ – “the term […] used to describe an alleged trend among men to be fashion-conscious and well-groomed to the point of feminization, such as wearing make-up and waxing to remove body hair” (Macnamara 132). Macnamara further notes that traditional physical aspects of masculinity such as strength, ruggedness and hirsute appearance are negatively represented in mass media. In fact, non-metrosexuals are dismissed as “sexist, football loving, beer-drinking slobs” (134). Mass media seems to favor images of gymnasium-sculpted male bodies such as David Beckham’s and Ian Thorpe’s (132).

Giorgio is handsome; he embodies ‘attractive’ masculinity. Lavina further admires Giorgio’s “thick, dark hair […] plastered in spiky curls onto a deep forehead. High cheekbones and an aquiline nose gave his features a chiseled and almost aristocratic appearance […] This one was definitely handsome! […] it was his eyes that had reduced her to tongue-tied silence. They were azure-blue” (Gitaa 10). At the dinner party Lavina meets Giorgio again and she watches “his lean body taut in an expensively cut gray suit […] She could almost smell the designer labels on him. His tie was definitely Givenchy, his shirt a Stephano Ritchie and his twelve-eye-lid laced shoes looked like Pierre Cardin. His hair was as dark as the night outside” (18). Giorgio looks “virile and attractive” (Gitaa19). He is interested in fashion and personal grooming.
Notably, an expensive suit points to a male’s attractiveness and success. The “expensively cut gray suit” that Giorgio wears is a signifier of wealth. Tim Edwards discusses the wearing of a suit and he notes that “the suit still maketh the man most completely. It remains a potent symbol of success […] it retains an essential continuity, almost tranquility of form and meaning amongst the postmodern confusion of contemporary fashion, standing for social tradition and success […] masculinity” (Edwards 22).

In Macgoye’s text, we can safely assert that Martin Were’s appearance is masculine: “He was twenty-three and the world was all before him. Five feet ten, a hundred and fifty pounds, educated, employed, married, wearing khaki long with a discreetly striped blue and white shirt and a plain blue tie, socks and lace-up shoes, he had already become a person in the judgment of the community he belonged to” (Macgoye 1). He takes keen interest in his appearance.

In contrast, the physique of Ochola’s hostile and isolated neighbor (in *The Promised Land*) is described in negative terms. The narrator says, “an old man emerged from the hut […] He was very tall and thin, his dry skin resembling that of an alligator. He had an unkempt beard reaching up to the hair at the side of his head. His thin lips did not entirely cover his protruding teeth and his small eyes were red and unfriendly, giving him the look of a disturbed buffalo. His long nails were bent inwards like the claws of an eagle” (Ogot 62). Clearly this aging witchdoctor is constructed as less masculine compared to muscular and youthful Ochola, who had strayed into his
compound. Indeed, the old man’s engagement with witchcraft – a feminine occupation – cements the picture of a less masculine male.

The new man not only cultivates interest in his appearance, he also looks out for attractive and smart women. Diane Prusank’s “Masculinities in Teen Magazines: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly” adds another characteristic of the new man that focuses on what men want in women. The new man wants a woman who has good looks and who is intelligent, warm and sensitive (Prusank 167). Giorgio Santini is so overwhelmed by Lavina’s beauty that he blurts out “Dio Santo! (My God!). You’re beautiful! An African mermaid, I’ve just rescued!” (Gitaa 10). Elsewhere, the narrator says of Giorgio, “he couldn’t believe it. This lady was driving him completely crazy, if last night had been any indication. He’d hardly slept. He kept dreaming of her” (59). Lavina is also depicted as intelligent and knowledgeable in fine art (204). She uses soapstone to carve. The new man, therefore, appreciates not only an attractive woman, but a smart one too.

3.12.2 Successful man

An ideal masculinity always comes at the top in whichever field. Giorgio Santini is said to be a “multi-millionaire” (Gitaa 34), an owner of a “small light plane, Cessna” and is “financially savvy” (47). He drives a jaguar. His plane, cars, clothes, houses and communication gadgets signify wealth and suggest success. He has put up many housing projects -- mansions that look “like palaces and the bungalows resembling quaint cottages” (50). Some of the houses have been bought by “a most prominent politician and cabinet minister[…] an American billionaire […] one of the most famous super models of our times […] one of the world’s top earners in entertainment, [and] a
former president of a western country” (68). Giorgio has been depicted as ‘successful’ with regards to his wealth and career. Giorgio is an Aero-engineer who does not just ‘work’ – he owns and runs a “multi-million Euro business” (76). Indeed, Giorgio has many signifiers of ‘successful’ masculinity.

In *Coming to Birth*, Martin’s masculinity comes out in relation to his actions in Nairobi. He is depicted as a young, married man who, with determination, strives to improve his lot. “He had a job as a salesman in a small stationery shop […] He had a room in Pumwani […] He had a hundred and forty shillings a month, of which thirty paid rent, he attended evening classes in English and book-keeping” (1). Elsewhere, Martin is described as “smarter, a little more self-confident” (37). Generally, he is depicted as hardworking and bent on self-improvement. Hence, he is portrayed as an embodiment of a masculine man.

Ochola in *The Promised Land* registers significant economic success, though short-lived. The narrator says thus:

That year Ochola had the biggest harvest he had ever known. Some of the maize cobs were so huge that a child could not eat a whole one by himself. The millet was fat and the beans were plentiful. Ochola built three granaries for maize and two for the millet and beans. The seeds were stored in drums in the house. Nyapol was pleased. She had been married for less than two years, yet she had more food stored than her mother had during her twenty years of marriage. (66)
The narrator further says of Ochola, “within a very short period he had acquired a reasonable amount of wealth, and it was clear that, given time, he would fulfil his dreams of becoming a rich man” (69). A man’s economic success defines his manhood. Ochola is a self-made man as he starts off without capital, yet amasses enough wealth to give Abiero and the visiting women items such as money, dresses, scarves, sugar, salt and soap to share with his father and stepmother (81). The narrator says, “The women admired Nyapol’s clothes and were quite envious of her.” They tell her that she is very lucky to live in such luxury when most women of her age group are only living in small huts (81).

3.12.3 Emotional Man

New men can be emotional especially after a loss of a friend, a partner or a wife. In such situations, men’s emotional behavior undermines a doctrine of hegemonic masculinity. According to Bird, “to express feelings is to reveal vulnerabilities and weaknesses; to withhold such expressions is to maintain control” (122). New men, however, express their feelings freely. They do not exercise emotional detachment. In Martin Were’s character (in Coming to Birth) we find weakness – femininity. This is evident when he learns about Tom Mboya’s death. He becomes emotional. “His eyes were hot and hard” (73). The narrator adds that he sits “there over that radio as though he were going to cry […] At last there was a low moan” (74). He loses strength and self-confidence. However, Martin’s having a few drinks with his friends and some roast meat later that day is a key point that brings out his masculinity (76). He engages in manly camaraderie with his friends as they discuss male oriented subjects like political assassinations in the country.
Ali Dida Hada in Owuor’s *Dust* is clearly broken-hearted because his wife Nafisa leaves him and also takes his children away. Nafisa lives in England and is not willing to live with her husband in Kenya. Indeed, after six months, “a fellow officer delivered a message from Nafisa: a writ for divorce on grounds of violence, desertion and neglect” (Owuor 235). Ali Dida Hada learns that Nafisa is “already engaged to a Jaguar-driving trader. She was also pregnant [...] the dalliance had been going on for a long time (235)”. Ali Dida Hada crumples to the ground and he screams, his limbs shivering. He even attempts to kill himself but his pistol self-destructs (235-236). The screaming is an expression of raw grief. In Ali Dida Hada we note that males too can react emotionally. Ali Dida’s reaction elicits an officer’s sympathy who assures him that if he makes “an application, headquarters would give him compassionate leave” (Owuor 235).

Additionally, Ali Dida expresses emotional affection for women. He has loved before and is capable of loving again as seen in his extramarital affair with Akai -- Nyipir’s wife (241-43). Masculinity here is represented as emotionally expressive and loving – traits that are typical of the new man. Likewise, in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*, Giorgio declares his love for Lavina. Giorgio is also said to be “completely, totally, utterly and irrevocably in love” (209). He acknowledges his feelings in Italian thus: “Mai in vita mia! (‘Never in my life!’) Never did I think I will feel this way about one particular woman!”(35). He demonstrates his love through dialogue and actions. He talks about his feelings. Giorgio also expresses empathy and care for Lavina and seeks to alleviate her anxiety by promising support for her. He offers practical solutions and relief from the anxieties and fears of Lavina.
3.12.4 Nurturant man

While men are mostly associated with work outside the home and public life, women are associated with home and domestic life. The new man, however, is comfortable occupying domestic spaces, engaging in traditionally feminine roles such as cooking and cleaning. Giorgio in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* prepares breakfast for Lavina, and he boasts that he has “become quite an expert.” Lavina in turn compliments him on his good cooking thus: “these are the best scrambled eggs I’ve ever tasted, and that includes my own” (106). Elsewhere, while Lavina “stirred the rice with a mwiko, she gave Giorgio some tangawizi to grind for her using a kinu” (134). After their meal Giorgio offers to wash the dishes (135).

In addition, the nurturant man loves to take care of children. He interacts well with children. If he has not yet sired children, he looks forward to being a father and he does not hide his desire to have children. In Gitaa’s text Giorgio accompanies Lavina and a small girl called Makena to a secluded bay to swim. Giorgio has fun with Makena as he babysits:

For a while Giorgio helped Makena with her sandcastle building […]

After a while, he got up stripped off his shorts and tee-shirts, having swimming trucks beneath. He joined them, delighting Makena by taking her up into the deeper waters. (155-7)

Baby-sitting is a demonstration of Giorgio’s easy ability with children.

Giorgio, together with his wife Lavina, is moved to tears as he watches his twins searching for their mother’s breasts to suckle. He even assists the babies by directing
their mother’s nipples into their tiny mouths (257). He shows concern for his children
and his proximity to them is telling. In fact, Giorgio had even designed the children’s
nursery himself. The couple also looks forward to starting an “HIV-AIDS Foundation to
cater for the orphans left behind by the catastrophe” (257). This altruistic decision to
start the foundation shows that Giorgio recognizes the need to help the needy and
unfortunate children in the society. Clearly, he is sensitive and compassionate. He is
presented as a benevolent provider not only for his family but the community as well.
Similarly, Martin Were in Coming to Birth does not hide his desire for children and his
excitement at the prospect of becoming a father after over twenty years of marriage.
The narrator says, “Martin was beside himself, half embracing her, half standing back to
look at her.” He then tells Paulina, “I have no reason not to be happy. All has not been
well with us. You know it. I know it. There were women, and none of them gave me a
child” (Macgoye 147).

One may also discover that traditionally men keep away from the activities
associated with a midwife or a doula. Ochola, for example, in The Promised Land
hurries to Okech’s house to call Atiga (Okech’s wife) who assists in delivering
Nyapol’s first baby. Meanwhile, Ochola “went out into the yard to milk the two cows
that Okech had given him. He stayed in the cattle pen for a long time not wanting to
enter the house. He milked one cow but was too nervous to milk the second and allowed
the calf to stay with its mother” (59). Ochola stays away because it is unmanly to be
seen in female spaces. According to Izugbara, men consider being at the obstetric or
gynecological delivery and antenatal care ward as feminizing (30). However in Crucible
for Silver and Furnace for Gold, Giorgio, in the company of his wife, consults a
gynecologist for proper administration and dosages of neveripine to protect the babies (Gitaa 254). Giorgio is an example of a loving and caring husband and father who complements his wife. He epitomizes the concept of the “new dad” who is hands-on and looks after the kids, is fine with changing nappies and engages in domestic chores (Clowes 108).

3.12.5 Gentleman

In *Things Fall Apart* Okonkwo, who is obsessed with masculinity, repudiates gentleness. The narrator says that Okonkwo is “ruled by one passion – to hate everything that his father Unoka had loved. One of those things was gentleness” (Achebe 10). Okonkwo considered gentleness a weakness. However, the new African man is characterized as “gentle, loving, responsible men, with the standard gendered role divisions otherwise unchanged” (Crous 26). In her study of Bessie Head’s short stories, Dorothy Driver observes that Bessie Head “castigates men for their irresponsibility” and “sexist abuse” of women and tries to create feminized heroes to disrupt the patriarchal notions about masculinity and femininity (Crous 26). Some men are nobler in character. They exhibit traits that would be depicted as polite and sociable towards women. The new African man generously expresses sympathy and support towards women. Moreover, his behavior and attitude are critical of other men who are impolite and abusive towards women. Giorgio Santini is a perfect example of such a man. He censures and disapproves Tony Kamunde’s callous and snobbish behavior. Tony unfairly accuses Lavina of being a gold-digger (Gitaa 139) and a promiscuous person bent on spreading the HIV virus to “the highest bidder” (140). Tony’s insensitivity and stigmatizing attitude to Lavina add to Lavina’s loneliness and
devastation. His careless outbursts drain “every vestige of bravado left [in] Lavina’s very being as the tears welled in her eyes” (140). Giorgio later consoles upset Lavina by saying:

He accuses you of sleeping with me for my money and then suggests that there are rumors circulating about your HIV status […] That bastard! That self-righteous swine. When are your people going to learn and discard this notion about HIV and AIDS? When are you going to stop treating your very own who are infected and affected like they are pariahs and with contempt while at it? I am a foreigner and yet I love you. (142-3)

Giorgio’s remarks emphasize his sensitivity towards women. He suggests that men should not do harm to women, who are deemed vulnerable and should not therefore be subjected to abuse. Giorgio understands that a woman should be treated properly. His genteel traits distinguish him from the indecent and inconsiderable Tony and Rawal. His actions show that he is a gentleman. Lavina’s friend’s description of Giorgio shows that he is admirable: “He is such a caring man and I feel this vibe” (Gitaa 65). Giorgio is wealthy, but the qualities he exhibits overshadow the affluence. Moreover, as a gentle and tender man, Giorgio reassures skeptical Lavina that he would “never deliberately hurt” her (Gitaa 99). He behaves kindly towards Lavina, assures her that “we can go for tests tomorrow and every other day after that. Maybe I’ll still be negative and you positive or vice versa, but my feelings for you won’t change. We can work this out, we’ll use as many condoms as you want. I just want to be with you, protect you and
take care of you” (160). Moreover, their blossoming relationship suggests that Giorgio has a progressive view of marriages that cross race boundaries. Talking about interracial marriages, one reviewer noted that, “often when a white man falls in love with a black woman, it becomes a subject of snide remarks about the latter being a gold-digger” (Odhiambo 31). Giorgio, an Italian, treats Lavina with respect and kindness. He shows genuine concern for Lavina. According to Mutunda, the new man not only rejects the idea of subordinating women, but he is also committed to gender equality in a relationship and favors emancipation of women (145).

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the complexity of male characters as represented by female Kenyan writers. Grace Ogot in The Promised Land shows that combat is an exclusive role played by men. She refers to the war between the Nandi and the Luo, and the Luo men who went to fight in World War II in Burma in support of the white man. However, violence is not limited to men alone. Women, too, who carry guns and are ready to use them, such as Akai-ma and her daughter Ajany, exhibit violent traits.

Men are portrayed as unemotional, dominant, self-confident and aggressive. This stereotype is seen in men who, though scared, do not run when faced with his hostile or unfriendly situations. In addition, Giorgio Santini in Gitaaa’s Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold falls in love but does not lose control. Other men, however, such as Martin Were in Coming to Birth, become emotional when death strikes. Martin later has a few drinks with friends and engages in manly camaraderie.
Men are also depicted as rational. This is seen in Ochola’s sole decision to move to Tanganyika. In the face of death, men exude a composed reaction as exemplified in Martin and the old man who advises Paulina and company to disperse after Okeyo’s death. Hugh Bolton’s reaction to Selene’s loss of a baby, in Dust, and Giorgio’s reaction to Lavina’s HIV status in Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold are good examples of rationality.

Heterosexuality is presented as a ‘desirable’ trait of masculinity. Thus, a man’s ability to marry and sire children symbolizes his virility. The four male protagonists in Coming to Birth, The Promised Land and Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold and Dust are all united with female characters in marriage. Impotence, however, adversely affects a man’s identity.

The protective trait of men is also seen in three novels. Men provide both physical and emotional protection to the women. Ochola is afraid but he does not admit this to his wife, for that would undermine his manhood. Giorgio takes the bullet meant for Lavina and looks after her with love and care. Odidi often comforts Ajany when she has a nightmare and frequently comes to her aid when she is in trouble.

The selected literary texts also portray men as competitive and independent. They further provide evidence of changed gender roles where male protagonists take on untraditional roles. For example, Giorgio is obliging and liberal in his relationship with Lavina. Males are also portrayed as unreliable lovers – unsatisfactory and unfaithful. Examples are Rawal in Gitaa’s novel, Martin in Coming to Birth, and Hugh Bolton in Dust.
In addition, the man is debased while the female is elevated. When women get some training and begin to earn an income, they cease to solely depend on men. Instead, they become equal partners in the marriage. The writers seem to suggest that masculine efforts should complement the feminine and vice versa. Paulina, for example, takes the role of the provider in *Coming to Birth* while Martin is reduced to begging from her.

Owuor, in *Dust*, depicts white colonialists as violent, unjust and uncivilized. This is unlike the colonialists who constructed natives as violent, backward and uncivilized. Black men in colonial Kenya are inferiorized, marginalized and thus emasculated when they are referred to as ‘boys’ by their dominant white masters. Christianity also divided Africans and made it difficult for them to unite against colonialism. Masculinities of resistance and anti-colonial nationalism are seen when blacks rebel and murder white settlers. Other men, such as Nyipir, kill their bosses. However, in Kenya, after independence the citizens still deal with repression and assassinations.

Some writers have presented the new man who deviates from outmoded traditional roles but instead takes on roles and responsibilities that have been associated with femininity. The new man, for example, is fine with cooking, parenting and looking good. Ochola, for example, in *The Promised Land* apologizes to his wife Nyapol after slapping her. “Attractive” masculinity is seen in Giorgio who strives to be attractive through care in dressing and also looks out for attractive and intelligent women. Martin Were in *Coming to Birth* also takes keen interest in his appearance. Financial success is presented as successful masculinity and this is portrayed in Giorgio Santini’s wealth,
Martin’s ambition, and Ochola’s short-lived economic success in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold, Coming to Birth,* and *The Promised Land* respectively.

Masculinity is represented as emotionally expressive, loving, considerate and thoughtful. The new man expresses and experiences emotions. For example, Ali Dida Hada’s reaction to his wife’s leaving him, and Giorgio’s declaration of his love for Lavina are proofs. The new man is comfortable occupying domestic places, for example, Giogio’s and Martin’s love and desire for children in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* and *Coming to Birth* respectively. The ideal masculine man is a gentleman. He is portrayed as sensitive towards women and able and willing to be a partner rather than a boss. The following chapter explores the stylistic choices of the female authors in their depiction of different male characters in varied contexts.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 STYLISTIC STRATEGIES USED TO DEPICT MASCULINITIES

4.1 Introduction
This chapter explores the various stylistic devices employed by the female writers and how they are used to bring out the varied masculinities in the selected texts. The elements of style include dialogue, description, imagery, onomastics, proverbs and sayings, and songs, among others. The female writers under study use different styles to represent shifting conceptions of masculinity.

4.2 Dialogue
Use of dialogue between characters may reflect power relationships not only between men and women, but also between men and men. In Coming to Birth Macgoye makes good use of dialogue to reveal Martin’s authority over his wife Paulina. Hungry and tired, Martin comes back to the house and goes into dialogue with his wife:

“Lying in bed till now?” he roared. And no food ready!”

“There is no water and no charcoal,” she replied meekly.

“No… You employ me as a bloody coolie to bring you water?” he shouted. “Don’t you know where the water is?”

“But you had the key, Martin. I couldn’t get out.”

“Carry my own key, fetch my own water, cook my own food! What the devil am I married for?”
She began to make for the pail to fetch the water, leaning a little
crookedly where her back hurt most.

“And another thing,” he shouted. “What about the thermos?”

“The what?”

“The thermos. The jug I bought you tea in at the hospital. That was
borrowed. I suppose you left it at the bloody police station?”

“No, no. I never had it. It was at the hospital. I didn’t know it was ours.”

“Ours? Damn all is ours. It’s got to be paid for, do you hear? What are
you going to do about it?”

He lifted his hand to strike again, but Amina and her friends started
making a lot of noise in the front room and he let his hand fall. (25-6)

Martin threatens to beat his wife because as a man he has been socialized to act
aggressively and assertively. His manhood depends on his control over his wife and he
uses violence to attain it. Before this dialogue with his wife, he had been cautioned at
work by his Indian employer against being untidy and making several mistakes in
calculation. He consequently decides to vent his frustrations on his wife. Feeling
emasculated at work, he exercises his dominant masculinity or proves his manliness at
home by wanting to beat his wife again.

In Dust, Odidi’s exchange with his father Nyipir carries physical force and
power. In trying to move out from the domination and protection of his father to
becoming his own man, Odidi courageously throws the pieces of his AK-47 at Nyipir’s
feet while chanting: “Aye, aye, aye … I no go agree make my brother hungry, make I
no talk …” After a short while, Nyipir responds with an “interlude of strokes from a
hippo-leather whip that tore at Odidi’s body” (Owuor 10). Nyipir then tells Odidi, “The only … war you fight … is for what belongs to you. You can’t live the songs of people who don’t know your name” (10). This exchange, which involves physical force and power, entrenches the notion that violence is part of maleness. This exchange further makes the reader anticipate a possibility of Odidi taking on the corrupt and lawless tendencies that are evident in his father. He is young but assertively vows, “I no go agree make my brother hungry” (10).

Additionally, in a conversation between Hugh and Nyipir, the superiority of the white man and the inferiority of the black man are emphasized:

Hugh had asked, “Kijana utatumia neno gani kwa lugha yako kuhusu nyumba mpya? Neno sio kishenzi” What word can be used to name this home? Something civilized.

Nyipir, weary of the three and a half years of seeking, recording, decamping, traveling, and plotting new journeys said, “Wouth Ogik?” He was being sarcastic.

“Na maana yake ni nini kijana, ongeza chai?” What does it mean, boy, more tea?

“The journey ends”. Nyipir tilted the teapot into the proffered cup. Hugh slurped the beverage. He rocked in the safari chair. “Damn good. Bleddy good. Write it out, lad, good lad.” (Owuor 316)

Hugh gives Nyipir further orders: “Mtu kishenzi, sweep the veranda, mara moja” (317).

Elsewhere, Selene, Hugh’s wife advises Hugh: “You ought to feed your boy, Hugh. Rather scraggy, isn’t he?” Nyipir is described as less masculine. Hugh’s emasculating language denigrates the native, to affirm the native’s inferiority. Indeed, colonialism
thrived on the subordination of the black man to the white man, such that while the white man enjoyed hegemonic masculinity, the black man was relegated to subordinate masculinity.

Furthermore, a few female authors use **proverbs** or **sayings** effectively to bring out societal expectations of the role of men. These pithy statements that contain folk wisdom are used to guide and can be masculine in content as they reinforce masculine attitudes and practices. Men for example are encouraged to exude power and courage. Ochola in *The Promised Land* uses a proverb tactfully when he says, “a visitor is noble only when he stays for two days” (Ogot 50). The use of a masculine pronoun “he” in the second clause speaks to male supremacy. Okech, his host, replies:

> Our home is open to you and your wife, my brother, and you can stay as long as you like. But I can read your mind. You don’t cook two cocks in one pot and I can’t blame you for feeling that the pot is too small for both of us. (50)

The proverbs used by the two characters suggest their wisdom and politeness – both of which are admirable traits in society. Okech uses a proverb of two cocks (masculine symbol of virility) to suggest that two husbands or men cannot be responsible for one family unit. From the proverb, men learn what is desirable and appropriate in society. Each man has power and authority, and is culturally expected to provide for his family. Clearly, even the use of ‘cocks’, a symbolic representation of masculinity, points to masculine superiority.

In another exchange between Ochola and Nyapol, she blurts out:
Rich, rich, every man wants to be rich”, she was weeping loudly. “It’s all
greed. Greed killed Okal Tako. This is the fate of men who want to get
rich too quickly. (15)

Nyapol uses a proverb to dissuade Ochola, but without success. Clearly, she does not
share his ambition for materialism. Okal Tako is a character in a Luo oral narrative in
which he (Okal Tako) greedily gorges himself on food until his stomach bursts. It teaches against greed. Ochola’s ambition and greed are informed by the success stories of his neighbors who had migrated to Tanganyika. Indeed, it is masculine to be competitive and materialistic. Ochola’s brother, Abiero, though initially opposed to Ochola’s leaving home, appreciates wealth thus: “Of course, it is important to care about home ties, to want to leave and to die in the land of your forefathers, but as the world is changing so much, wealth and comfort are becoming more and more desirable” (80). Abiero embraces the pursuit of wealth.

Lavina in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* also uses a Swahili proverb “*Yaliyopita si ndwele, ganga yajayo*” (Gitaa 20). This is loosely translated, “What has already happened is of no consequence, look to the future.” Lavina had been engrossed in thought, trying to suppress bad memories of an attempted suicide after being infected with HIV, and she recalls how Giorgio rescued her. Her use of this proverb suggests women’s helplessness and passivity in the face of injustice. Conversely, it speaks to male activity as Giorgio not only rescues her from drowning, but he also actively searches for a cure for HIV. Unlike Lavina who cannot get anything done about her HIV infection, Giorgio gets something done and that makes him a man.
Meanwhile, in *Dust*, Baba Jimmy, a war veteran, advises young and cowardly Nyipir to courageously pursue his dream of going to Burma. He tells Nyipir, “Only a hyena travels the same road twice” (157). Orphaned Nyipir who has killed his uncle is on the run, yet he entertains the thought of going back home. Using a saying, Baba Jimmy cautions him against looking back because it is unmanly. Nyipir is expected to bravely and courageously complete what he started.

Dialogue is further used to exercise power over other men. The struggle to achieve power and status over other men is evident in *The Promised Land*. When Ochola takes a “wrong turning” into the home of a jealous and hostile Nyamwezi neighbor, the following dialogue ensues:

“I’m sorry I’ve entered your home,” stammered Ochola. “But I happened to be passing here and I…”

“There’s nothing to be sorry about,” the old man answered, cutting him short. “You’re another Luo, aren’t you? And you’ve come to settle like the rest of them? But who put into your head that this is no man’s land, for all Luo people to come and settle as they please. You come like masters to rob us of our land. You want us to work for you, but you don’t want your children to work for us. You appoint yourselves chiefs and oppress those who have no quarrel with you.” (63)

Ochola settles in Tanganyika with a condescending attitude toward the natives. He sees vast virgin land that “was hardly cultivated at all” (48) and wonders what the natives
eat. He feels a sense of superiority over the natives. However, the Nyamwezi old man makes up for his lack of influence and power by engaging in witchcraft.

4.3 Use of Kiswahili, vernacular or foreign language

The selected female writers use words drawn from Kiswahili, vernacular or a foreign language (Italian) in the narrations. The use of Kiswahili and vernacular allows the reader to appreciate the Kenyan setting where Kiswahili is a national language and it also adds local flavor. Some Kiswahili expressions help the reader appreciate the denigration that African natives suffered. For example, in Dust, Hugh addresses Nyipir in a domineering tone as *kijana* and *mtu shenzi*, and Nyipir addresses him as Bwana (Owuor 313, 316). The black man is considered subordinate to the ‘superior’ white man. The reader appreciates the marginalization of blacks who are slave-like servants of the white masters. But African citizens also suffered during the post-independence era. One such case is seen when a “jeering colleague” of Nyipir’s angrily tells Nyipir:

“Nyinyi! Heee! Mambo bado. Mtaona! Mnacheza na Mzee?” (274): This is loosely translated “You! Heee! More suffering is underway. You’ll see! You joke with the Old man?” The colleague’s utterance emphasizes the marginalization and torture of the perceived opponents of the Old man -- presumably, the president of the nation.

In another instance, after Nyipir has been discharged from police force, after Tom Mboya’s murder, he is tortured so much at the headquarters that he cries “Af-fande, n-n-naomba un-ni-nisamehe. I beg you, forgive me, Nihurumie. Have mercy” (300). Nyipir politely implores his torturers to forgive him. His plea emphasizes the pain he experienced and the brutish cruelty of the police officers. The narrator says that
“a trail of bowel-loosened muck stained his [Nyipir’s] trousers, the floor. Shit, urine, sweat, blood, tears, and shame” (300).

There is use of vernacular to capture concepts that cannot be adequately expressed in English; for example, Corporal Gakui’s use of “Kihee” in reference to uncircumcised Nyipir (Owuor 274). The condescending and unkind remark leaves Nyipir wondering: “How does a mutilated penis make a man more of a man?” (274). The circumcising communities stereotype the uncircumcising ones as unmanly. Gakui’s remark speaks to the inferiority and unmanliness ascribed to Nyipir. Gakui does not perceive Nyipir as a ‘real’ man.

In Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold, Giorgio is fond of using Italian expressions in his casual conversations with Lavina. The expressions, such as Mia cara, (My love); Grazie (Thank you); Ti voglio bene (I like you); and “I love you con tutto il cuore (with all my heart)” (163) help to depict him as a loving and romantic man, and therefore emotional. Giorgio, on several occasions, reassures Lavina that he admires and likes her.

4.4 Vivid description

In The Promised Land, the writer contrasts the great life in Tanganyika with the near miserable life in Nyanza. The narrator says, “Ochwonyo’s visitors had said that wide expanses of the land were virgin territory. You could take as many acres as you could cultivate. He was getting tired of living in Nyanza, with its unscrupulous tax collectors, its petty tyrants and its land feuds. Whatever money anyone could make went for school fees, hospital fees and so forth. Sub-chiefs regularly recruited forced
labor to work on public projects. Why were people made to pay taxes as well, then? He pondered the beauty of Tanganyika in his mind. Perhaps people did not even pay taxes there?” (Ogot 6). Ochola’s discontentment with conditions in Nyanza suggests that men aspire for quality life for their families and themselves. The pressure Ochola feels from Ochuonyo’s neighbors explains why he migrates to Tanganyika to be seen as a real man.

There is further use of vivid description when the laborers in Kisumu load cargo on the ship. The narrator says:

The men had not finished uttering the words when one man stepped forward and bent below the wagon. His friends whisked the bag load and rested it on his back lengthwise. The man trotted pitifully with the load towards the steamer. He hesitated on the pavement, bent to one side and the bag fell to the ground. The man straightened his back and ran back to the wagon. // The song continued several times as the men tottered along with the bags, which looked bigger than themselves […] Nyapol found it inconceivable that the same men she had watched trotting with heavy bags on their sweaty backs went back to the wagon laughing amongst themselves and grinning at the stupefied passengers. (33-4)

The menial tasks in towns have inured the laborers so much that they do not feel any sense of pain or exploitation. The men work hard to provide for their families and keep their respect and power.
Additionally, the old medicine man that bewitches Ochola is described in interesting terms. Medicine men are respected and feared, and they wield power because they communicate with spirits. The narrator comments about the wizard’s physical appearance thus:

He walked briskly past his wife and stood facing Ochola. He was wearing a whitish kanzu with short sleeves and had a small black cap perched on his head. He was very tall and thin, his dry skin resembling that of an alligator. He had an unkempt beard reaching up to the hair at the side of his head. His thin lips did not entirely cover his protruding teeth and his small eyes were red and unfriendly, giving him the look of a disturbed buffalo. His long nails were bent inwards like the claws of an eagle, and while he eyed Ochola curiously, several snakes wriggled out of the little hut from which he had come a few minutes earlier. The snakes slithered up to him and twisted round his legs. (62)

The description suggests a fierce and aggressive personality that is indicative of hegemonic masculinity. The wizard’s claws are likened to those of an eagle, a bird that mythology generally equates with the imagery of masculinity. Through description, the writer uses words to create characters, setting or event to capture the imagination of the reader. Description is of great importance to prose as it appeals to the reader’s senses.

In the same text the migrating Banyarwanda families are vividly described:

The morning was marred by the spectacle of the Banyarwanda, in a single long queue waiting to board the steamer. They were scantily
dressed with only colored blankets round them, tied with a huge knot on their left shoulder. The women wore blankets tied with strings around the waist and a loose *suka* over their breasts. They were migrating to some distant country due to a famine. They carried large bundles of assorted belongings, either threaded on strong/cords, or tied up in blankets. The men and young boys carried long sticks, some women were carrying their belongings on their heads, as well as naked babies tied round their waists by a cloth. (42)

Clearly, the Banyarwanda families, like Ochola’s family, are motivated to migrate due to economic factors. The impending famine does not allow men a chance to earn and provide for their families. They are unable to attain manhood, hence the urge to migrate. Ines Raimundo studies the relationship between migration and masculinity in Mozambique and he notes that “the man who does not migrate or has never experienced migration is not a man” (201-2). Men are therefore obliged to migrate in order to provide food for the families and fulfill their household needs.

In *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*, the narrator provides a vivid description of a bank robbery and how Giorgio hurled himself between the pistol and Lavina. Giorgio is shot and Lavina screams in desperation (222-3). Here, there is a representation of exemplary masculinity that brings out traits of bravery and sacrifice. He valorously takes the bullet for her.

In *Coming to Birth* the reader forms an image of Martin from the description below:
He was twenty-three and the world was all before him. Five feet ten, a hundred and fifty pounds, educated, employed, married, wearing khaki long with a discreetly striped blue and white shirt and a plain blue tie, socks and lace-up shoes, he had already become a person in the judgement of the community he belonged to. (1)

From this description the reader appreciates Martin’s brilliant career prospects, considering his dress code. Moreover, Martin is excited as he thinks to himself that, with the coming of Paulina to the city, “he would be a man indeed” (2). Marriage gives Martin a sense of manhood, a man who has a wife.

4.5 Literary Onomastics

Onomastics has its etymology in the Greek word onomastikos – which has to do with names of persons in literary works. The selected female writers commendably name their characters. The qualities and the roles of characters are reinforced by the names they are given. Grace Alvarez-Altman observes that “literary onomastics is a more specialized literary criticism in which scholars are concerned with the levels of significance of names in drama, poetry, fiction and folklore” (220). Names may reflect on character attributes or appearance and emphasize thematic motifs. They may also reveal a character’s behavior. Kyallo Wamitila, in his essay titled, “What’s in a Name: Towards Literary Onomastics in Kiswahili Literature” also emphasizes the important role that names play in any reading exercise. He says,

There is an interest among critics in the names of characters that tends to go beyond the narrow limits and confines of seeing them as mere tags
that distinguish one fictional character from another into broader
figurative import and implication of those names. Character names may
be used as expressions of experience, ethos, teleology, values, ideology,
culture and attitudes of varying shades. (35)

Names, therefore, do not simply label; they may be instructive in advancing the plot or
in describing characters. For example, in *Dust*, Aggrey Nyipir Oganda is mostly
referred to as Nyipir. This is reminiscent of the ancestral brothers (Nyipir the great
hunter and Nyabongo) who led the Luo migration down the Nile, through Sudan, South
Sudan, Uganda, Congo, Tanzania and into Kenya. Juliane Okot Bitek comments that
“Nyipir and Nyabongo (or Gipir and Labongo, depending on what Luo one speaks)
were brothers who betrayed each other and forced a separation at the banks of the Nile
with each brother on a quest to find dala, gang, to wuoth, to wander until they found a
place to call home.” In the context of *Dust*, we may say that the protagonist’s name
foregrounds his quest for a home. Since his displacement from Nyanza to Northern
Kenya, he has been seeking a home for himself and his family.

In the same text, Odidi, a big rugby star is called *Shifta*. Shifta, which also
means bandit or rebel, is reminiscent of the 1963-1968 Shifta War by the Somali
guerillas who wanted to secede from Kenya due to isolation of their region. The
rebellious trait in Odidi is evident on several occasions in the text. For example, after
joining university, he rebels against his father’s wish to own a gun for terrorizing other
people. His father tries to whip him into submission; he even breaks Odidi’s left arm,
but Odidi sticks with his decision. He actually leaves his home, Wuoth Ogik, despite his
father’s entreaty (Owuor 10-11). The rebel in Odidi is also shown when he as chief engineer opposes a corrupt deal given to his company Tich Lich Engineers to “render them [turbines] incapable of delivering power to the public” (160). Musali, his friend and co-founder of the company, confesses that they asked Odidi to “back down and shut up” but he did not. Odidi wanted the company to decline the offer and instead expose the corrupt leaders. However, because he is critical of corruption, he is kicked out of the company and his mortgage is withdrawn. This frustrates him so much that he joins a robbery gang. Odidi’s stance against corruption is consistent with his nickname, Shifta. His patriotism speaks to a desirable masculinity.

In *Coming to Birth*, the Latin name Martin suggests quick temper, outbursts of anger, generosity, affection, and ambition. These traits are brought out in Martin Were’s character. He is ambitious as seen in his enrolment for evening classes. He also loves his wife though he batters her at times. The name Giorgio, in *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold* is associated with determination, efficiency, resourcefulness, energy, and courage. It is also associated with the love for luxurious living. Giorgio is depicted as an ideal man. He is not only wealthy and daring, but he is also determined to inspire hope in a hopeless and abused woman, Lavina.

Yvonne Owuor’s characterization of Moses Odidi Oganda connotes the Biblical Moses who played a big role in leading Israelites out of oppressive Egypt, even though he dies before reaching the Promised Land. Odidi is aptly named Moses as he is daring, rebellious, athletic and gifted with intelligence. Odidi is eager to stop the evils and the corruption that bedevil his society. He objects to the selfish and corrupt idea of
silting dams, but the corrupt system is too complex for him to beat. In addition, while in school, Odidi is also nicknamed Shifta for excelling in the game of Rugby (Owuor 8). The name Shifta is reminiscent of the secessionist Somali militia group that was wiped out by the government.

**4.6 The third-person narrative voice**

All the four female writers adopt the omniscient narrator point of view to depict the experiences of their characters. Michael Meyer in *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature* captures the significance of point of view in a story thus:

“What we know and how we feel about the events in a story are shaped by the author’s choice of a point of view” (124). M.H Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* note that the omniscient narrator knows everything that needs to be known about the agents, actions, and events, and privileged access to the characters’ thoughts, feelings, and motives; also that the narrator is free to move at will in time and place, to shift from character to character, and to report (or conceal) their speech, doings, and states of consciousness. (301-2)

The third person narrator effectively captures the experiences of men in the selected novels. *Coming to Birth*, for example, opens with an observation by the omniscient narrator thus:

Martin Were pushed a ten cent piece into the slot and marched on to the platform to meet his wife. He was twenty-three and the world was all before him. Five feet ten, a hundred and fifty pounds, educated,
employed, married, wearing khaki long with a discreetly stripped blue and white shirt and a plain blue tie, socks and lace-up shoes, he had already become a person in the judgment of the community he belonged to. (1)

The passage captures some of the masculine ideas that men pursue, such as marriage, education and employment. Martin is presented to the reader positively as young, educated, employed, married, optimistic, and hardworking. However, he is contrasted with men who are “older, shabbier, more worried, back from leave maybe a day late and only a bag of beans between them and payday” (2). The text depicts men degenerating and more diffident and cynical.

Bukenya notes that the third person narrator, makes readers “see things from inside the characters’ heads and hearts” and therefore “builds up a tremendous lot of sympathy and understanding for them. Even where we disagree with them or disapprove of their actions, as is the case of Paulina’s affair with Simon, we do not rush into condemnation, because the characters’ problems and conflicts are laid honestly bare before us” (73).

The third-person narrator presents to the reader a character’s truths and pretenses. For example, the reader sees Ochola’s façade of bravery when he strays into the hostile neighbor’s compound and snakes twist round the old man’s legs. The narrator says, “it was embarrassing to tremble openly when a woman stood looking on. His great grandfather Ochola, whose name he bore, was a great warrior. This stranger was only a man like himself. He would not run, he would stand there and see it through,
come what may […] Ochola could hear his heart beating louder and louder” (Ogot 62). Ochola pretends to be brave like his grandfather, yet in reality he was terrified.

The third-person narrator also allows the female writers objective distance as they present delicate economic, political or social issues. The dictatorial leaders, for example, who assassinate and torture citizens, are presented without appearing to be biased. Ngala, Tom Mboya, and JM Kariuki are presented as having died in not very clearly explained circumstances. For example, the narrator in Coming to Birth says with objective distance thus: “Tom Mboya, the voice said, had been shot in Nairobi and rushed to hospital in a critical condition. By the time the news came that he was dead, they were already being shooed out of the ground” (Macgoye 73).

The third-person narrative voice also enables readers to read men’s thoughts, emotions and motivations for acting the way they do. Giorgio in Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold is depicted thus: “He was, almost forty years old. He had not realized how lonely he was. He had everything, or so he thought, until he had looked into Lavina’s black deep eyes. He knew he was hooked. Where was he headed? He was a multi-millionaire. But of what use was the money if he did not have children to spend it on? A wife? A family to take on vacation? The minute he had looked into Lavina’s eyes he had known what he wanted” (34). The reader appreciates Giorgio’s interest in Lavina and his acts of kindness towards her.

The omniscient narrator further highlights the effects of World War II, that is, the war in Burma, in which Kenyan nationals were recruited. Many men died in Burma and the few who came back were less productive. Through the third-person narrator we
also get to learn about men’s infidelity. A number of men take part in extra marital affairs to satisfy their selfish sexual desires.

4.7 Songs

Songs can be used either to bring out ideal images of masculinity or to feminize other men. For example, while Ochola and Nyapol are waiting for the steamer in Kisumu, a wagon train stops and it is surrounded by half naked men who break into a song as they offload cargo: “Harambee! ee! Harambee! ee!” (Ogot 33). The men continue singing as they totter along with bags “which looked bigger than themselves” (34). The slogan Harambee which was introduced by the first president of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, means working or pulling together in order to accomplish a task or project. The half-naked men exhibit joint effort which speaks not only to their homosociality but also to the male provider model of masculinity. Ochola explains to empathetic Nyapol that these men “are neither slaves nor prisoners; they are just normal men who have come to town to earn money to buy things for their wives” (35).

Just before the steamer leaves Kisumu, a harpist sings a war time song in remembrance of the men who died in World War II in Burma:

Listen, Sons of Ramogi, listen!/ Listen, you who have been spared to live and eat!/ They were young like you. They were fathers like you/ Some were engaged to be married/ But they had not felt the worth of a woman/ It was warm and the fields were red with millet/ The men were resting after the midday meal./ The women were nursing their babies. / The brides were ripe for marriage. / Then the hour struck. / It was the year
1939. / The chief’s drum throbbed. / The people gathered and the chief spoke to them. / Hear, all of you, Sons of Ramogi. / The white man is at war with his brother across the seas. / Orders have been forced down my throat. / Let your people go across the seas to help me fight my enemy. / […] We are brave people. We will fight. / So the men went to war across the seas to fight for the white man. / Opiyo went. Adhiambo was left behind heavy with child, their first child. / Oigo went, he left a bride weeping. / Nyanyiwa went. He was strong and brave, he had paid dowry but his bride had not come to him. / Sigana went, his children clung to him weeping. / He soothed them, Papa will come home after the white man’s war. / So they went, one man from each home” (Ogot 39).

This song upholds heterosexuality as a hegemonic ideal of masculinity. The brave men who are said to have gone to war are fathers and those engaged to be married. The harpist lists men and their heterosexual relationships with women. He sings of men who went to war and left behind expectant women. Other men left their brides weeping, yet others had paid the bride price and were waiting for their brides to come home.

Secondly, the touching song suggests that combat and aggression are the preserve of men, a test of manhood. It is men who voluntarily engage in war to assert their masculinity. By participating in war as soldiers, men reaffirm their masculinity and superiority over women. The narrator in Dust says

able-bodied men in Nyanza were summoned for King George’s war by persuasion of the paramount chief, and a trumpet-voiced member of the
regiment-recruiting safaris offered King George’s shillings, thumbprint-on-paper, and reduced taxes for the prestige, honor, power, and glory of membership in the King’s African Rifles, Agoro and Theophilus had both left for training in Maseno.

The steam train taking men to foreign battlefields stopped in Kisumu. Petronilla, his mother, who was pregnant, had held on to Nyipir’s arms as Nyipir’s body twisted toward his father. (155)

Soldiering is honorable, prestigious and an appropriate career for a man. But while men joined the war for honor, Baba Jimmy’s Gangrene-eaten toes, and his hobbling body (155) suggest irony and emasculation. Even his singing voice was “condensed sadness” (156). Thirdly, the war song in The Promised Land points to the sacrifices which men, women and children made in King George’s war. Lastly, while the war song mourns the deaths in World War II, it also speaks to the migrating men aboard the ship that their return home is not certain.

Young Nyipir and Baba Jimmy make a song out of Baba Jimmy’s story. The song, which moves Nyipir to tears, highlights the challenges orphans face in the hands of cruel relatives:

Listen…. Chon gi lala, a greedy hyena, had a brother. The brother was a warrior and went on a journey. This hyena opened its big mouth to swallow his brother’s home. He also tried to swallow the brother’s son, except this son was bigger than the hyena’s open mouth…. (Owuor 156)
The song represents Nyipir’s misery in the home of his unjust and exploitative uncle. Nyipir had not only lost his mother, but he had also lost his father and brother in war. He was thus taken in by an uncle who seemed insensitive.

4.8 Conclusion

The selected texts employ varied stylistic devices to illuminate ideas about masculinities. The texts use dialogue to reflect power relations not only between men and men, but also between men and women. Male characters are depicted as using language that denigrates other men and women. The writers also use Kiswahili, vernacular and foreign language words. While the Kiswahili expressions add local flavor, they also distinguish between dominant, powerful group or individual, and the oppressed. The use of Italian expressions brings out a man’s care and love for the woman. The female writers further use description to evoke their perceptions of men. The chapter has also attempted to show how the use of characters’ names contributes to the advancement of the plot. An understanding of the meanings of men’s names adds to characterization. Lastly, the chapter established that the female writers effectively use the third-person narrator and songs to comment on the men and their motivations. The next chapter presents a summary of the findings, a discussion of the conclusions, and it also makes recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the findings drawn from previous chapters. It summarizes the masculinities presented in the selected texts and suggests areas for future research. This study set out to examine masculinities presented in selected Kenyan female-authored novels. It had three major areas, including the examination of men’s functions in economic, political and social contexts and deduction of resultant masculine identities as reflected in Grace Ogot’s *The Promised Land*, Marjorie Macgoye’s *Coming to Birth*, Moraa Gitaa’s *Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*, and Yvonne Owuor’s *Dust*; second, the exploration of how the selected female writers regard gender stereotypes and alternative models of masculinity in their depiction of male characters; and finally, the examination of stylistic choices used by the selected authors to depict masculinities.

The conceptual framework for this study was derived from Robert Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity, Judith Butler’s concept of performativity, and John Beynon’s theory of new man-ism. For analysis, the study delimited itself to four female-authored novels which included *The Promised Land, Coming to Birth, Crucible for Silver and Furnace for Gold*, and *Dust*. They ranged in publication from 1966 to 2014.
5.2 Summary and Findings

Objective one of the study examined the functions that men serve in different contexts and the resultant masculine identities in the selected texts. It emerged that varied masculine images are produced in different economic, political and social contexts. The study confirmed the plurality, fluidity, and diversity of masculine identities, some of which are good and desirable, yet others are undesirable. When men relate with women, they take on an image of hegemonic masculinity while subordinating women. Men exercise their oppressive and impudent masculinities through violence or traditional practices, such as polygamy. Moreover, while some women resignedly accept their subordinate position, other women resist and strive for independence and freedom. Men generally enforce compliance in women and younger men through the use of violence. Only a few men, however, shun violence as they relate with women and/or their sons.

The study further found that while some fathers perform a dominant form of masculinity to offer direction to their sons, a few other fathers abdicate their provider and protector roles. Some sons, as a result of exposure through education or peer influence, choose to reject their fathers’ models of masculinity. They instead forge their own unique masculine identities. In addition, men perpetuate hegemonic masculinity by crafting strong homosocial bonds where they support and care for one another.

Furthermore, the wage economy triggers varied masculinities. Because men are stereotyped as active, they are attracted to urban areas to work, acquire wealth and provide for their families in rural areas. However, the rural-urban migration adversely affects the man’s position as he loses power and status at home because the woman
takes up roles that were originally meant for the man. Moreover, a few empowered women strive to support their broke or ailing husbands, thus reinstating male dominance. Notably, white hegemonic masculinity subordinates blacks. Some adult black males engage in feminine chores especially during the colonial times. These emasculated men work in kitchens and gardens and are denigrated as boys by their white employers.

In terms of sexual exploitation, the study found that men exhibit inappropriate or exploitative masculinity, which is evident when men inappropriately exercise power over women by sexually harassing them, deliberately infecting them with HIV, or having many sexual partners. Men compete not only to have the most sexual conquests but also to win in sports activities. Also, the dominant gender, that is men, propagate violence as evidence of masculinity. Men embrace different forms of violence to reaffirm their manliness and power. Government agencies, such as the police force enforce cooperation from individuals and communities, of course, with adverse effects. A few disgruntled men deal in arms and engage in cattle rustling as masculine activities.

The second objective of this study was to explore how the selected women writers regard gender stereotypes and alternative models of masculinity in depicting male characters. The study affirmed the intimate link between violence and masculinity. Indeed, it is men who go to war or engage in violent acts to dominate over other men or subordinate women. Warrior masculinity is seen during the Mau Mau war where the subjugated men engage in combat to claim power and resist oppression. It is worth noting that the weapons used in war, including guns, panga and machetes are phallic objects and key features of hegemonic masculinity.
The selected texts also presented men as not only violent, aggressive and dominant, but they are also expected to be unemotional and rational. Men are expected to repress their feelings and be composed when in love, pain or fear. They should act rationally, reason, lest they are sidelined like women, children and animals that are perceived as lacking rationality. Rationality is what enables men to be pragmatic and make decisions for the family or society.

Similarly, hegemonic masculinity demands that men demonstrate heterosexuality so that they show virility by siring children. Impotence or the lack of children adversely affects a man’s masculinity as he suffers humiliation and a low self-esteem. A ‘real’ man not only exhibits sexual prowess but he also protects his family physically and emotionally. Moreover, men are expected to be competitive, independent and ambitious, striving to be ahead of the pack in sexual conquests and material possessions.

Moreover, while some men are portrayed as unreliable or unfaithful lovers who exploit the patriarchal dividend by engaging in promiscuity or adultery, a few other men are feminized as they begin to depend on their wives for emotional, financial and social needs. Patience Awua-Boateng who studied *Coming to Birth* argues that Martin’s subtle comeback into Paulina’s life is a demonstration that men need women just as women need men for psychological and emotional fulfillment and identity. Therefore, men and women are complementary to each other’s total identity (Awua-Boateng 85).

Again, the study found that during colonialism, a gendered institution itself, a number of masculinities were forged. The whites assert their power over the blacks to affirm their hegemonic masculinity. Meanwhile, supported by the Christian
missionaries, the colonialists denigrate the colonized and dismiss them as effeminate and uncivilized. Black Africans are inferiorized and marginalized as savages and boys. The emasculated and repressed blacks, however, retaliate violently in a bid to reclaim their land and freedom. They rebel and fight back, hence putting on masculinities of resistance. Meanwhile, there are a few sell-outs (chiefs and askaris) whose masculinity perpetuates colonialism. Sadly, after independence the new African leaders take on an aggressive masculinity by carrying on with the colonizers’ repression and torture.

Lastly, the study revealed that few female writers present the new man, one who does not conform to traditional hegemonic masculinity. The authors also suggest that the ‘new man’ and others like him are rewarded. The new men take on roles and responsibilities that have been associated with femininity, for example, cooking, parenting, looking attractive and looking out for attractive and smart women, displaying emotions and showing care for women. The new man is comfortable with occupying domestic spaces and is generally supportive of women. He performs aberrant masculinities.

The third and final objective of the study sought to examine the stylistic choices used by the selected female authors to depict masculinities in their works. It emerged that the female writers’ works employ varied stylistic devices that foreground masculine identities. The authors use description to bring out their perception of men in different contexts. Men are revealed as ambitious, providers of their families, and ruthless. They take risks by, for example, migrating to foreign lands in order to fulfill their household needs. Additionally, dialogue brings out power and authority that one man exercises over another or over a woman and it also entrenches the notion that violence is
masculine. The proverbs used point to male superiority in society, and the Kiswahili or foreign language expressions help bring out the predatory nature of men, and the condescending attitude between whites and blacks, and blacks versus blacks. The use of onomastics, songs, and third person narration reveals men as constructing varied masculinities in different contexts.

5.3 Recommendations

This study investigated the representation of masculinities in four female–authored novels. The study has shown that all the four female writers depict an array of masculinities – some stereotypic and others aberrant, some desirable and others undesirable. The study makes the following recommendations concerning further avenues for research. Firstly, since this study focused on Kenyan female writers, other researches could concentrate on representation of males in women’s writings from different African countries or traditions. Additionally, there is need for further research to focus on masculine women in female-authored texts. In any case, even biologically sexed females perform actions that are conventionally regarded as masculine. Women have been known to perform versions of masculinity. Lastly, it would be interesting to compare male and female authors’ representation of masculinity to identify the convergences and divergences between them.
WORKS CITED


http://www.jstor.org/stable/189829


--- “Teaching the boys: New Research on Masculinity, and Gender Strategies for schools.”


etheses.bham.ac.uk/6934/1/Cousins01PhD.pdf


Donaldson, Mike and Richard Howson. “Men, Migration and Hegemonic Masculinity.”


Dover, Paul. “Gender and Embodiment: Expectations of Manliness in a Zambian Village.”


http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1357034X05049849


[https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum2003.10.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum2003.10.003)


Muchoki, Samuel M. “[In Australia] What Comes First are the Women, then Children, Cats, Dogs, followed by Men’: Exploring Accounts of Gender Relations by Men from the Horn of Africa” *ARAS* 34.2 (2013): 78-98. Web. 30 May 2017.


http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2221-4070/2018/v7i2a6


https://doi.org/10.3149/jms.1502.160


Webster, Wendy. “Elspeth Huxley: Gender, Empire and Narratives of Nation, 1935-64.” 


10.1080/09612029900200219


