The Instrumentality of Social Media in the Representation of Gender in Nigerian Literature

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Abstract

The paper valorises how social media has depicted various evolutions of the representations of gender in Nigerian literature. This has affected people's cognition, behaviours and emotions in diverse ways. Social media has employed different perspectives or dimensions in depicting a divergent representation of women in contemporary Nigerian literatures and space ostensibly crystallizing some gender polarities and how they sometimes enhance mere demystificatory remarks and exegeses in their interpretations. These literatures which were either written by men or women have entrenched the bipolar representations of women showcasing different cultural, philosophical and biological classifications that sometimes support or negate the polarity of human existence in Nigerian cosmology. Some of these representations in the social media have directly or indirectly portrayed different 'genderizations' arising from the depicting of artistically and artificially created motifs for women. However, these realizations could be found in major social media platforms which incorporate the technology of blogs that typify the contents of

Youtube, podcast, Wordpress etc. The study also illuminates how other social media networks like Facebook, Wikipedia, Linux, Firefox have showcased the overarching representations of gender feelings and motifs in the re-creation, re-presentations and re-configurations of women and gender identity in Nigerian literature. Other fora of reviews and commentaries which also follow the same tradition of women representations in art include: Amazon, IMDB, Trip Advisor and other 'people creating', 'people reacting' and 'people reacting to each other' have contributed to 'media convergence, participatory culture and collective intelligence' (Jenkins, 2006 as quoted by Gancho, SPM 2017). This research applies the Media Triangular theory of Mckee, (2010) and explains the rhetoric of communication to delineate the trajectory of gender representations in Nigerian literature to encapsulate the trinity of 'networking', 'conversation' and 'community' in avidly expressing different women portrayal in literature, advancing it beyond the ordinary traditional communication which had been in vogue for centuries. This phenomenon articulates the fact that social media is a product of globalisation which has contributed tremendously to the constant changing scenario of human communication and dynamism in society.

Keywords: Social Media and contents, Representations of Gender, Nigerian and Postcolonial Literature and Women and Identity Configuration

Introduction

Social media is advancement to global communication in the areas of information creation and dissemination. It is also a contemporary and recurring incursion of media technology in the communication science that explains some complexities that are embedded in people's collective memory and in the justification of some societal tenets which crystallise events that happen in society. Events are indispensable and social media helps to showcase them to people of diverse cultures in time and space. Consequent upon that social media in ordinary parlance could also be regarded as one of the consequences of global change and globalisation in recent times. Three decades ago, when Akpan succinctly remarked, 'communicate or perish' (Akpan, Emmanuel 1987) little was it known that he envisaged the future of technology and communication to typify or incorporate the teleology of information dissemination to bring about many diverse multiplicities which would ostensibly involve the role of modern day social media. However, social media has endeared extra-ordinarily to communication and filled the lacuna of instant response created by traditional communication.

To be more specific, traditional communication basically involves some dynamic process of a sort that involves person to person contact or group of people disseminating information and receiving some feedback. Moreso, communication has been of interest and has been defined in various ways by scholars, such as Davis Keith (1981), Newman William and Charles Summer (1977), Little Peter (1977) and a host of others and their explications are embodied in the enclave of 'passing of information' 'giving and receiving feedback' and Murphy et al denote

communication as 'a process of transmitting and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages' (Murphy, H.A, Herbert W.H and Powel Thomas, 1997).

Social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp and a host of others have been used by different people under multiple guises to transmit information and reflect major thematic preoccupations ravaging human society regardless of time, place and location. For the sake of this study, attempts shall be illuminated and exemplified to define and also relate how social media havevalorised the discourse of gender in greater dimension and how it shapes the understanding of gender in Nigerian cosmology given different forms of discriminatory behaviours in both literature and society and by analysing the portrayal of women in a number of different contexts. It revolves around the issues of gender, women, identity and the psychological portrayal of masculinity at the expense of femininity. Furthermore, the paper underscores the roles of social media in social re-engineering of society and various configurations of political themes emanating in African society, such as the concept of exile and migration, racism, corruption and other socio-political themes, which have further 'genderized' men/women in their socio-political space. Using the instruments of social media, this study raises the question of the impact that some Nigerians, African writers and some commentators have on society through their representations of women through some vitriolic and invectiveness into negative representations of women in social media have produced insignificant consequences in different opprobrious terms. Some of which have entrenched patriarchy above femininity.

Davis (1981:14) views conservative patriarchal representations as the reason why women suffer deprivation and segregation in society. She further asserts that these representations underpin the sexual abuse women suffer subjecting them to physical, mental and sociological alienation which give them inferior impressions about themselves. Thus this study aligns with Davis and

Collins and suggests that Nigerian and African women need to reclaim and re-discover the centrality of their roles and responsibilities in society in order to reverse the trends in deprivation, domination, misrepresentation and exploitation which are facilitated by the writing of some male writers in Nigeria (see Davis 1981:14, Collins 1999: 17). This could be made more manifest when the domain of social media is appropriately used to underpin proper representation and development of adequate human existence.

Social Media and the re-definition of Patriarchal and Femininity in African Cosmology

Social media predominantly focuses on different types of human experiences and their reflections about personal, interpersonal and collective phenomenon (Hanna et al, 2011, Christodoulides 2009 and Gilmore $ II (2002). Liana Evans (2010) ostensibly assumes that one could succeed much online while relying on the usefulness of social media in the supply of information and how such information is articulated. It is sometimes on this basis that social media concurrently and occasionally shares data online and these data have contributed to the dissemination of information about men and women and have also welcomed comments, some of which are ambiguous in manner, some of which depict controversial marginalization of men and women depending whether women are unapologetic or unfettered while reacting to some media comments about femininity or patriarchy. The role of social media is pushed further in order to incorporate personal and collective interests that substantiate that Tech Savvy Seniors programme ably bequeathed cognate information on the essentials of social media by asserting that social media 'helps you to stay in touch with friends and loved ones. Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter let you see what's happening in the lives of friends, and allows you to let them know what's going on in yours…and finally, there are tools like Skype that let you know when people are online and talk to them in an instant- and free' (Victoria Tech Savvy, 2018: 2).

In the course of these communications and reflections, many feminists in Africa have used these

media for depicting some fraught situations and patriarchal projections about women in African literature. Similarly, some men have used this domain to valorise some patriarchal tendencies above femininity without considering the bipolar consequences these might have caused. To others, such bipolar consequences lend axiomatic credence to absurd dispensation of male superiority over females.

To some others, it is a treacherous manipulation of women which becomes exacerbated in the long run. The mysterious apparition of gender configuration in society creates distinction between men and women and sometimes lead to de-legitimization of the anomaly of gender distinction amongst men and women, thereby creating a society orchestrated by the toxicity of patriarchal and inexplicably subordinated women striving assiduously to break male monopoly and creating new feminist epistemologies affirmed to them as depicting transparency and reclaiming women rights and privileges in a dynamic and egalitarian African society.

However, previous research on patriarchal and femininity in African cosmology in existing literatures have shown that addressing the marginalisation of women, supporting their struggle for freedom in every institutional forum, could enhance social transformation in politics, business and in literature (see Kemp et al.1995: 12; Roberts 1983: 9; Stamp 1989: 10;Mbilinyi 1992: 13;Pereira 2004: 2). Women writings in this direction have helped to establish a new tradition for women in Nigerian polity (Ogunyemi, 2018: 129). The socio-political themes and the framework of advancements in modern literary and cultural theories have impacted on how gender is understood in the contemporary time. As a preliminary in some social media representations, there is the distinction between sex and gender developed during the time of second wave feminism, and then presents a critique of this distinction in the work of Judith

Butler. Second wave feminism came to understand sex as biological and anatomical, whereas gender was seen as a set of socially constructed characteristics which feed into social roles are attached to biological sex, but which are not essential to it. But for Mahalik, as for Judith Butler, gender cannot be regarded as a stable, isolated and unchanging construct of contemporary society, but it plays a role in identifying the interactions between the individual's cognition and emotional behaviour (Mahalik et al, 2006: 10). What this instability implies is that gender is dynamic: it can change with time. This might occur as a result of the social construction of society or individual proclivity; nevertheless, the way that gender is conventionally constructed plays a major role in identity formation. In Nigeria, gender identities, particularly masculine gender identities, have been actualised through political, regional, religious and ethnic institutions. However, they are now also being actualised, particularly feminine gender identities, through the struggle for equality, participation and representation (Osaghae et al, 2005: 14). However, the distinction between sex and gender initiates thinking about less conservative gender identifications, ones that are performative and constantly changing, although in Nigeria and also in Africa, the identifications primarily follow the heterosexual norm.

Media Triangular Theory in the Articulation of Social Media and Gender Representation in Nigeria

A plethora of social media brands have been postulated by different communication scholars to underscore its significance and its purpose in the social engineering of society. Berthon et al (2007), Kotler and Pfoertsch (2007) and Raman (2009) opined that theories enable a concrete comprehension of social media to accommodate the social enclave in which they occupy in the understanding of communication in society. Similarly, McKee's triangular theory encompasses

the totality of the information, the message and the people involved in the communication process. Throwing more searchlights on McKee's model, Gancho axiomatically submits that:

> {T}he Social Media Trinity Model divides social platforms into three dimensions by a particular purpose *which include*: networking, conversation and community. This is a business making and brand awareness-raising model, in which the brand is at the centre, surrounded by the community, networking and conversation. Conversation creates opportunities for a wide audience. Also, networking *depicts* where one can participate in groups relevant to the industry, example is LinkedIn connecting with other professionals…friends and families (Mckee, 2017: 8).

This theory as posited by McKee is highly fundamental because it showcases the tripe tide nature of 'networking, conversation and community' of people discussing or theorizing concepts, such as gender and femininity in a community of people who network information for global significance. Through networking, the relationship between gender and other social issues, particularly as related to identity formation, must be understood within particular cultural and historical contexts. These contexts facilitate group consciousness which is a factor that mostly encourages awareness among Nigerian women (Gentile 2008: 11). According to Osha, the relationship between gender and identity as expressed in some social media networks is perceived in the way, time and manner individuals enact their own gender, and how they frequently express their gender identities and this is a modern perception. However, historical and cultural contexts also influence this relationship and this affects the portrayal of women in Nigeria (Osha 2004: 16). Underpinning the traditional assignment of roles is the belief that

specific activities can be undertaken by men exclusively. The perpetuation of this belief is what spurs the movement of consciousness-raising amongst women. As Osha affirms, 'group consciousness among people is a major factor which encourages woman's struggle for emancipation in Nigeria' (p.18).

Furthermore, McKee's 'conversation' in the social media triangle summarily depicts the structural understanding of the gendered society as portrayed by men and women when they enter into mutual talk or when comments flow in Twitter, Facebook or in Yahoo messenger. Through social media conversation, Aniekwu, elaborates on this when she observes that African women struggle against gender asymmetry and inequality and is often described in terms of the relationship between public and private spheres, or the domestic versus public distinction in gender roles' (Aniekwu, 2006: 144).This insight points to the fact that, while women were viewed as subordinates in traditional cultures, in colonial times the system itself gendered the public and private spheres as masculine and feminine respectively. Clearly speaking, African society is itself a patriarchal structure, albeit one embedded in communal values. However, both Aniekwu (2006) and Osha (2004) believe that the colonial imposition of capitalism and political and economic hegemonies influenced the re-configuration of gender and the dynamics of sexual politics in many colonised African societies.

Nevertheless, some people's reactions in social media networks distinctively catapulted the notion that, there are different understandings about the questions of gender and identity at different times in African history: Jacob (1987), Osha (2004) and Aniekwu (2006) all argue that feminist research has been determined by the past experiences of Africans, when they lived in communality before the coming of the Europeans and their theorizations of women in literature in extant literatures. Gender roles in traditional African societies have drastically changed as the

cultures change, thereby exposing divisions, risks women suffer as a result of patriarchy in Africa (Ogunyemi, 2020a: 7). In shedding more light on the differences between modern Africa and traditional African communal experience, Acholonu seemingly asserts that 'the individual in all African societies during the early epoch, at every stage of life had a series of duties and obligations to others in society as well as a set of rights: namely, things that he or she could expect or demand from other individuals' (Acholonu, 1995: 12). In similar vein, Aniekwu also outlines the roles of African females and males before colonisation including various activities which could enhance our further understanding of the roles of social media in relation to concerns about sexuality, identity and gender in the reproduction process, in family union, in marriage union, and in terms of other cultural responsibilities in Africa.

Therefore, in the light of communality as titillated through the concept of community as buttressed by McKee, the instruments of social media, and to further examine the uniqueness of some of the social issues in Nigerian literature, this paper cites, not just gender, but ethnicity as a social factor contributing to questions of identity which some writers in Nigeria attempt to examine. O'Neil defines ethnicity as 'a social group of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural, or national experience' (O'Neil 2013: 7). This is important because it is an indication that ethnicity plays an important role in the deconstruction of gender identities. It also raises the question of what happens to ethnicity and gender construction in the colonial context. According to Mwakikagile (2001: 12), Nigeria's one hundred and seventy million people were divided among three hundred different ethnic groups. However, only three major groups were identified by the British. These groups include the Yoruba ethnic group which constitutes ninety-five percent of the South West population, the Igbo ethnic group of the South East which constitutes seventy-five per cent of the area and finally the Hausa/Fulani group which constitutes sixty-five per cent of the population of the

North. Other ethnic groups were usually silenced as if they were not significant. The impact of this was exemplified in the Nigerian/Biafran War of 1967 to 1970 which occurred as a result of the divisions caused by identity and ethnicity during the military regime of General Yakubu Gowon who is from the *Angas* minority North in Plateau State of Nigeria (Mwakikagile 2001: 54). In Nigeria, the military frequently suffer some setbacks because of the creation of divisions among their ranks based on ethnicity and tribalism. For example, some officers may benefit from promotion while others are abandoned and this affects the military's productivity and morale. With the help of social media in most instances, diverse proportions of history, gender display and societal experiences have been showcased for all to see.

Literature and Nigerian Society, moving trends in the use of Social Media and Ideology

Social media have incorporated the instruments of society and literature in its articulation of facts and figures, particularly in the presentations of issues revolving the instrumentality of 'networking', 'conversation' and 'community'. What then is literature and how has social media articulated it? Rice and Waugh maintain that literature 'may challenge, reflect, refract, mediate, break up, defamiliarise, distance from, expose contradictions in and/or reinforce ideology' (Rice and Waugh, 2011: 104). Similarly, Alexander Kure, opines that '[l]iterature has always been put at an uncomfortable defensive as to its essence in the trajectory of human development' (Kure, 2011: 81). He notes that 'the shift in human perceptions based on the various changes in time have been brought to bear on the course of human development in the last quarter of the last century and up to the present century' has had a unique impact on Nigeria:

> {N}igeria has had to grapple with her independence struggle, civil
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> war and the process of rebuilding the nation thereafter; quest for
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> technological development in line with what is obtainable the world

over; military interventions; aborted, truncated and ill-defined

democracy; neo-colonialism of various shapes and sizes; monumental

corruption at all levels of governance; and the imbroglios in the

Niger-Delta. Whereas the events that led to those momentous

incidents were and are many and interrelated, even literature was, and

still is, expected to use the skills of interpretation, power of intuition

and capacity to exhaustively explain the trajectory of these events and

their consequences on human (in particular) and national (in general)

developments (2011: 81).

As he says, these events have fed into a process of social, cultural and economic integration

integral to a world in the process of globalising which has exacerbated and deepened class

divisions and inequality. 'Literature' he points out, 'like all other fields, is expected to explain

the logic and how to circumvent, in the final analysis, this existing paradox' (2011: 81). From

his perspective, then, gender would be central in the examination of other social issues in the

colonial and then post-colonial periods and how it is represented in Nigerian post-colonial

literature would be a crucial focus of analysis. Through a series of media display, it has been

demonstrated that post-colonial literature during this time also attempts to 'write back to the

centre' with cultural replacements for the ideologically dominant European value system and this

has been the preoccupation of Ashcroft et al in *The Empire Writes Back*. In the introduction they

point out that 'more than three quarters of the people living in the world today had their lives

shaped by the experience of colonialism' (Ashcroft et al, 1989: 2) - British, Portuguese, Spanish,

French – which leads them to affirm that post-colonial literature introduces indigenous and

native contents from these former colonies re-contextualising in such a way as to investigate

contemporary knowledge of the so-called literary tradition using a very unique English, peculiar writing and other languages of the diasporas for expression and realisation of social themes (p. 178).

These writers agree that the post-colonial time encompasses all the cultures which were affected by the European's imperial processes beginning from the colonial period to the present. They go further to observe that there is a plethora of European preoccupations with imperialist sentiments which have unabatedly and continuously affected the post-colonial literature even up until till the present time (1989: 9). Likewise, post-colonial works attempt to replace the colonial texts and appropriate a distinct use of language which foregrounds the cultural experiences of the people (p. 44). The troika otherwise submit that post-colonial literature re-writes the canonical perceptions of the Europeans showing the people's current world views and how their perceptions of life are being re-configured.

This act of writing back decentres the positions of authority which have thus far controlled the interpretation of literature – what stands as canonical, what is considered aesthetically valuable – as well as the English language that is used for communicational purposes. In addition, writing back replaces the European hegemonic discourse because post-colonial theory has helped to construct the textualities of former colonies in different kinds of writings on cultures and sexualities (p. 154). Not only do they discuss relationships within post-colonial works and show how they constitute a radical critique of European centred notions of language, literature and aesthetics, but look at how in Australia, India, and most especially in Africa, the received 'tropes and modes' (p. 194) which were salient features in colonial and canonical writings have contributed to the development of new themes and viewpoints. In African literature they

facilitate the construction of African literariness in arts and they also re-present events in different historical periods ignored or excluded from the European historical perspective.

For example, some reactions on social media and most especially the Facebook by scholars have shown dramatically that the Nigerian post-colonial literature experiences a myriad of social events thematised in Nigerian writings, such as the aforementioned corruption and the military in politics. As stated, others include violence and protest, religious and ethnic problems which some writers sometimes use in perpetuating gender violence in their portrayal of women in society. To shed more light on this, Amuta remarks that to fully understand the process of class struggle and violence in society, Nigerian and African literatures revolve around societal factors which associate the socio-political with the cultural. According to him, Nigerian literature examines self-assertion, self-realisation and self-determination which have led to protest and violence in the writings of some of these writers.

Successive writers in Nigeria like Achebe, Tutuola, Osofisan, Soyinka and Okigbo use their works during their time to reflect social themes which tend to explain societal experiences (Amuta 1983: 121) and are responses to the social consciousness created by the political and economic class (p.122).   Consequently, class struggle and self-identity among other issues are some of the problems facing the people of Nigeria (p.181). He further observes that social issues emerge in the formation of any society, but in Nigeria, social issues bring about certain ideologies which determine political trends (p.185). He continues that 'social issues constitute a range of critical reflections that could possibly lead to discriminations among people' (p. 125).

Norris observes that the coming of Europeans to Africa led to a great change in African ways of life which affected African perception about life. According to him, 'the culture before foreign intervention was pure and unharmed, yet when knowledge of literature began to expand, West

Africans began to push away from their mother language into the foreign language which had seemingly corrupted the pure nature of these societies' (Norris, 2006: 2). Also in Africa before the appearance of Europeans, oral traditions influenced the religious and cultural behaviours of the people and allowed them to live in unity (Norris 2006: 3, Pereira 2004: 7).

Through many constructive comments, writings and projections in some social media outfits, the appearance of the Europeans in Africa, their writings and the effects of their coming have been produced in West Africa through the efforts of the Christian missionaries and this fostered new skill that writers used to express their views which later culminated into writing novels, poetry and drama for educational and self-awareness purposes in their own times. Soetan believes that major issues and debates on culture, gender and social development are some of the remarkable results of the coming of Europeans to Africa because the event initiated the creation and development of African arts or artefacts, African folkloric writing, African literature, African music and dance and entertainment among people (Soetan 2001:   5).   So the question of European colonialism seems to be a double-edged sword.

In addition to the expansion of the arts generally and in the examination of the relationship between social media and literature, both literature and social media have come to examine the role of women in history and in national development in Nigeria in different times. This could be seen in the changing roles played by women in the pre-colonial times to the 21st century. According to Soetan (2001: 10) women's roles during communal times in Africa contributed to an oral aesthetics which has culminated in the export of African music and arts in the contemporary period. 'The African orature and its application to contemporary development reflects the African literature in many ways, likewise Nigerian women have continuously emerged as leaders in different spheres of life' (2001: 19).

Nigerian Representations of Gender and Women Motifs in Social Media

In recent times, YouTube network and Facebook technology have shown reactions and counter-reactions to women and gender matters among Nigerians through perspectives and comments and these have taken divergent twist in the representation of women in contemporary literature. This media reaction is predicated on the result of the hierarchical division that exists between men and women in Nigeria. This was a major factor that contributed to the construction of gender roles during the time after independence in 1960 and this was because most offices and sectors were then controlled by Nigerian men. The emergence of the tribal/ethnic custom of promoting male superiority in society has led to crisis and tragedy and it manifests in churches, schools, hospitals and in other social and economic institutions, but many Nigerians end up heaping blame on the government. Consequently, some Nigerians feel that the government is responsible for the tragedies they suffer in these public arenas, they have resulted in exile and migration. It is in this context that Fabiyi in a social media publication of *Sahara* claims that 'Nigeria's tragedy is that its people, particularly its leaders have not been able to turn the potentials offered by the amalgamation of 1914 into enduring benefits' (2014: 1). His assertion could be seen as correct in many ways because this amalgamation brought Nigeria's various nationalities and ethnic groups together with the aim of uniting them so that they could internalise all their resources to form a stronger economic block. The fact that this could not be achieved, however, was not the fault of Lord Lugard, the architect of the amalgamation.

Consequent upon that the IBST Media outfit went to YouTube and aired a two and half minutes broadcast that specified how Nigerian women have been significant over the independence within 1914 to 2014 and till now. This YouTube broadcast demonstrated that within the one hundred-year period of time as a testament to Nigerian national development, the importance of

women in the history and development of Nigeria is given representation in the *Nigerian Centenary 1914-2014* documentary (2014). The documentary shows that Nigerian women are not just oppressed minorities who strive for relevance. They are found running businesses, making laws, commanding troops, educating the nation. Examples abound. The Sango of Ijebu popularly known as the Queen of Sheba saved her people from destruction in 16th century in Yoruba land. Moremi of Ife sacrificed her only son and became a slave of the Igbos to learn their military secrets so that Ife could develop militarily.

This view supports Soetan's claim that women have what it takes to 'perform males' roles' in society (Soetan 2001: 8). Furthermore, the documentary shows that Emotan, the 16th century woman trader in the Benin Empire saved the Oba of Benin on many occasions from destruction and she was significant like Queen Amina of Zauzau (now Zaria) who ruled the kingdom for thirty-four years and protected the Hausa North from being carried away into slavery. Similarly, in 1929, the Aba women riot later exempted women from paying heavy colonial taxes which relieved them of a huge financial burden. Madam Alimotu Pelewura in 1930 singlehandedly spear-headed protests which led to the exemption of Lagos women from the payment of heavy colonial taxes and the government felt her impact on the Lagos economy. Her burial warranted over 25, 000 sympathizers across the country. These acts of bravery shown by Nigerian women are a demonstration and acknowledgment of the capability of women to contribute to nation building (Johnson 1969: 11). Social media has been used to show the contributions of these legendary women have helped to stimulate other younger women, aiding economic development which some men now enjoy in Nigeria today (Johnson 1969: 12. Soetan 2001: 17).

Above all, the *Nigerian Century 1914- 2014* as expressed on YouTube and published four years ago observes that the role of women in nation building in Nigeria has been central and has

helped to promote literature and the Nigerian economy. This can also be seen in the significant roles played by Madam Funmilayo Ransome Kuti in 1957 which led to Nigerian Independence in 1960. Apart from being the first Nigerian woman to drive a car she was one of the delegates who met the Queen of England to demand independence for Nigeria. Other prominent women who contributed to Nigerian development include Margaret Ekpo who organised youths in 1955 to outnumber the incumbent man in the House of Chiefs. She became the first Nigerian woman to secure a seat in the House of Chiefs in 1960. In addition, Mrs. Wuraola Esan was the first woman to be elected in the House of Assembly in 1960 and the first woman Commissioner as well. She used this position to empower other women politically (Johnson, 1969: 16).

In 1983, Franca Afegbua made history as the first woman Senator and she contributed to the socio-economic and literary development of Nigeria by encouraging the girl-child to get a qualitative education. Hajia Gambo Sawaba helped to re-organise the Northern Elements Progressive Party (NEPU), a minority party in the Northern Nigeria which nearly wrestled political power from the leading political parties in Nigeria. The girl- child education in the Northern Nigeria was promoted by Madam Priscilla Kuye, the first female president of the Nigerian Bar Association. She successfully led the Nigerian lawyers to protest the military rule of General Sani Abacha in 1992.

In addition, many women put in their own contributions in the development of the nation alongside men in different ways (Ogunyemi, 2020b: 6). An example is Professor Mrs Grace Alele-Williams, the first Nigerian woman Vice-Chancellor; she successfully helped the University of Benin to get rid of students' cultism. (Some Nigerian students form cult associations as pressure groups on campus against the University administration in order to protect some selfish interests. By so doing they unleash terror on the University community).

The first woman Army General, Aderonke Kale was also very significant in her roles in society with regards to security and defence. These are roles which were occupied by males in Nigeria for over a century. In this current 2014 political period, Nigeria has thirty-two women in the House of Representatives out of the total three hundred and sixty members and six women in the Senate out of one hundred and nine members making laws for Nigeria. Other women in different capacities have also taken leads in social and economic developments, such as in sports, business, and in the entertainment industries. Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* published in 1966 was the first novel by a Nigerian woman. The novel examines society's impact on women and the quest to break free from the stronghold of culture and tradition. Mwakikagile and O'Neil acknowledge vividly that the successful activities of women in Nigeria demonstrate that a country cannot develop unless it recognises and appreciates the contributions of women to its economy, society and government. They believe that some male writers have frequently used their works for self-promotion without acknowledging the contributions of women in this context and that there is a need to reverse the trend in the devaluation of women (Mwakikagile 2001: 11 and O'Neil 2013: 14).

Conclusion

From the ongoing, the research has demonstrated that social media is a global phenomenon which has contributed tremendously to the teleology of gender representations in Nigerian literature. It has obviously shown a myriad of opportunities to the expansion of traditional communication. The dimensions of social media to traditional communication to some scholars could constitute treats because social media is fast replacing those traditional forms of communication which had already created a vacuum or lacuna for the inability to produce instance feedback. Instant feedback is projected in some social media which is not dysfunctional

like some other forms of communication that is static and not dynamic in a broader spectrum. It has been explained that the triangular theory of networking, conversation and community had facilitated the relationship and clearer understanding of gender in the articulation of Nigerian literature in the contemporary time. Therefore, social media did not only add to the new technologies of communication but to the re-definition of literary tenets for human and social development in Nigeria and in Africa at large.

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