

Chameleon Imagery as a Strategy of Women Survival in Valiare Tagwira's Novel, The Uncertainty of Hope: A Nego Feminist Approach

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Abstract

African feminism is the type of feminism that bases itself on the real sociocultural wellbeing of Africa. The philosophy behind this theory is that those western and extremist approaches did not help to deal the issues of African women for some reasons. Africa had its own social, cultural, economic and philosophical realities which are unique to the continent. Thus, in the deal of African issues like gender, a suitable approach is found to be relevant for dealing the issue from root and look for solutions. This study takes Nego Feminism as an approach. This is because this theory argued that women efficacy in identifying the appropriate context is relevant for peaceful cooperation between men and women. This analysis is useful in the African context since after independence most Zimbabwean writers reflect the relevance of empowering women for the transformation of a given nation in their workings. Thus, Nego Feminist theory has been used for the analysis of this paper and Valiare Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* is the source of data.

Keywords: African Feminism, Nego Feminism, Chameleon Imagery, Mutual Interest, Negotiations

Introduction

The Nigerian scholar Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) argued in her article that true and rooted transformation and prosperity are possible with the equal participation of women and men in African context. Since woman is half part of the society and influential in the society just like her male counterpart, considering her is important for the development of a given nation. In light of this Kyi said the following.

The true development of human beings involves much more than mere economic growth. At its heart there must be a sense of empowerment and inner fulfillment. This alone will ensure that human and cultural values remain paramount. . . . When this is achieved, culture and development will naturally coalesce to create an environment in which all are valued, and every kind of human potential can be realized (Kyi, 1995, p. 18).

Women and men are very important for one another for survival and development of the society. That is why women's issues have become fertile ground for scholarly reflections. These days' gender issues are very crucial and controversial aspects since those influencing factors continue to prevail in some ways in the world. The patriarchal culture dictates the woman to stay home and accept her suppression since it is natural for her to be so. This cultural perception is affecting the economic, cultural and political growth of the country by half since the woman takes that share. Therefore, lots of theoreticians have been proposing contextual solutions that the woman and man should do for changing the culture of patriarchy in the society.

In the process of dealing gender issues, researchers have been applying certain literary feminist approaches. This is one thing. But showing the oppression of women does not help to tackle the problem from its root for two reasons. First, since the sociocultural reality of Africa is build up on sharing principle, hegemonic culture, heterogeneous or familial based and conservative in religion, and those extreme and radical approaches does not help to understand the problem contextually. Therefore, a theory that appropriately addresses the situation of the continent is relevant for practical way out to the issue. Thus, African Feminism is found suited to the case of Africans since its basement is the social, political, economic and cultural reality of the continent. Therefore, the first rationale of this research is studying gender issues in literary works using one of the African type of Feminism , that is Nego Feminism.

Secondly, addressing the extent of gender oppression in the given society could not give any lesson for the society to be taken as a sample in their real interaction. But, approaching the issue beyond exposing the extent is very relevant. In this regard, Nwanko suggested that "African Literature and the Woman in order to contest the dominant rituals and patriarchal structures that control women's lives, better imaginaries are needed in the African scene" (2006, p. 195). This means more than dealing with the problems related to gender issues, more advanced approaches are important for better understanding and solution. There have been lots of researches that focus on examining women oppression and status. But such researches could not be taken as a lesson that one could use or follow to combat the problem. Berndt underlined that "women were taught that they had to stay at home to cook, to clean, to raise healthy Christian children, and that it was their duty to obey their husbands" (2005, p. 17). Therefore; a study that shows the efforts that women are trying to exercise in the given sociocultural reality of their environment needed to be addressed in studies using appropriate approaches for magnifying the efficacy of women and to brought those efforts to be seen as models for other women in a similar situation. The flexibility of women for the challenges they face in a given situation like the character of the animal called chameleon is one instance.

In Nego Feminism, Nnameka advises African women to walk as a chameleon. In this suggestion what she means is not to dramatize the way and style of its walk but rather use the unique strategy that this lizard uses in its life track. This can be seen in two ways: the strategy that it applies for survival, and the strategy that it applies for gaining its food (which is the life goal of the animal as any animal). These strategies emanate from its special nature and unique traits of the chameleon among others. A number of scientific studies showed that this lizard has got the following natural abilities.

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1. It has the ability to change color, it can come in many colors, such as pink, blue, orange, red, yellow, green and turquoise. Changing its color can help the animal to protect itself and hide from predators. This is the surviving strategy of the animal in the presence of its predators. This logic can also be functional for African women. Since the women are under certain hindering factors that seem intolerable, by being conditioned and flexible to different situations they face, as the animal did, it is possible to live and negotiate with the system.
2. Chameleons' eyes can move independently of each other, enabling them to look in two different directions at once. Chameleons have a full 360-degree view and can focus their eyes quickly and enlarge what they are looking at like a camera lens. By scanning their surroundings with both eyes independently, that is, one scans the left hemisphere, when they find a target they turn in its direction and then use both eyes focus on it, preparing to shoot out their tongue to catch prey. The implied meaning here is that women should be active and more conscious about the situations and the happenings around them compared to men. They are expected to choose the best option before taking any action. In other words, women should be alerted and clever when dealing with men. This means they should strategically negotiate with patriarchy for mutual benefits in the society.
3. Most chameleons have a prehensile tail that they use to wrap around tree branches. Their hands and feet have large toes that help them cling to branches. As the theory suggests African women should exercise agency in the society. That means since the central idea of Neco Feminism is negotiation; women should have something important to be given for detaining what they wanted from men or the people around them. They need the power and skills to influence people so that negotiation can take place for the welfare of everybody. This can help women to build self-confidence and identity, so as to negotiate or even to detonate patriarchy.

Based on the above characteristics of this animal Nneameka advised the African women to walk like the chameleon. She said; "Black African Feminists should walk as a chameleon" (2004, p. 382). This is understood as, like the animal, African women can disguise its trait of accommodation, adaptation, goal orientation and caution.

This research used Neco Feminism as an approach for its relevance and appropriateness in exploring the efficacy of women characters in exercising different strategies for dealing their sociocultural reality for living successfully and achieving their goal. The texts selected for this study are *Bones* written by Chanjeria Hove and *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Valaire Tagwira.

Neco Feminism is the feminism togetherness, cooperation, complementarity and negotiation. The theory strongly advised African women to be strategic in identifying the appropriate time, place, and situation before appealing the given context.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this research is to investigate and interpret women efficacy in reacting to their real situation as is reflected in the selected Zimbabwean novels using a Neco Feminist critical approach.

Specific Objectives

This study has the following specific objectives:

1. To critically analyze women's strategy in identifying the appropriate situation before dealing with it.
2. To examine the women's style and method that they apply in the given context.
3. To explore the strategies that female characters use for peaceful association with the system.
4. To examine the effectiveness of female characters in achieving their goal strategically

Significance of the Study

This study could be significant for some reasons. First it could alert literary theoreticians to understand the basic pillars of Nego Feminism for their further theory formulation in the area. Secondly, it might offer an insight on how to cope with gender related problems in patriarchal society. Thirdly, it could provide some ways and shape the readers perceptions of gender issues, and people could eventually be induced to alleviate the problems related to gender issues.

The Methodology of the Study

In order to achieve the mentioned objectives and address research questions, a theoretical, analytical and descriptive approach is preferred to be the nature of this study. Thus, the research employs a qualitative research method. The study is the text based analysis of the selected texts. The researcher did a textual analysis of the texts. Textual analysis is known as a method focusing on the interpretation of textual data or concepts within texts (Dodds, 1989).

Theoretical Framework

Nnaemeka advised African women to walk as a chameleon. She compares the natural behavior of the animal to be applicable to the African woman. As the continent is dominated by patriarchy that undermines women from every aspect, changing the situation requires efforts to be acted on the parts of both woman and man. In such a difficult situation the woman should disguise the chameleon. Here under is Nneameka's advise for Africam woman:

As the chameleon walks, it keeps its head straight but looks in different directions. It does not deviate from its goal and grows wiser through the knowledge gleaned from the different perspectives. It absorbs along the way. If it sees prey, it does not jump on it immediately. First, it throws out its tongue. If nothing happens to its tongue, it moves ahead and grabs the prey (Nnaemeka, 2004, p. 384).

The chameleon is cautious. When it comes into a new environment, it takes the color of the environment without taking over. The chameleon adapts itself with the surrounding without imposing itself. Hence, when Nneameka refers to this animal, the researcher understood that, she wants to alert African woman to act like the lizard deed in its nature. This does mean that the woman needs to walk like the chameleon did means that as the lizard, she needs to have a goal to be looked forward and keeps walking to it systematically. Secondly, since chameleon is very active in understanding its environment, the women should also be cautious in detecting their surroundings. In its very nature this animal is capable of disguising its environment so as to hide itself from harm. Likewise, the woman needs to adapt her environment and see the situation for solutions effectively.

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Analysis and Interpretations

The first novel that is seen in this theoretical approach is

is *The Uncertainty of Hope*. As it was mentioned previously, chameleon is a type of lizard that sees its surrounding carefully using its eyes that help it recognize different happenings at a spot. As the theory of Nego Feminism advises, African women need to walk as this lizard in achieving their life goal and to preserve gender balance in all aspects.

This trait is also reflected in this novel. In the beginning of this novel, the narrator told the reader that the major character Onai was the one who was frequently abused by her husband and the cultural practice in the mentioned setting. She was a hopeful woman on the behavioral change of her husband one day. Her hope did not have any base in her current interaction with him. But she hoped someday that Gari could become a good mate. Her tolerance over his violence did emanate from her family's experience, and the lesson that she got from her mother. Her mother usually feed her how a woman in that culture should behave after marriage. She told her that husband was always the ruler; therefore, Onai should tolerate his violence for the sake of her children and for the continuity of her marriage. Divorce was a bad decision for the woman not for the man. Thus, Onai was polished by this narration, and she accepted her abuse as her feminine lot. But her friend Katy was from a different background. She lived good life economically, and her husband John was a good man relatively. When Katy saw Onai beaten and psychologically hurt by Gari, she demanded her leave Gari and lives a better life by her own. Instead of confronting Katy, Onai did understand the reason that pushed Katy to say so. The author narrated Onai's reaction as follows: "But despite being such good friends, she did not really expect Katy to understand her position. Their lives were different, and their upbringing even more so" (Tagwira, 2005, p. 7).

This means that Onai was active in understanding her environment as the lizard. This again does mean that Onai did not miss her friend by ignoring her idea; rather she understood her and stay critical on the issues. In addition, Onai did not stop her previous degree of tolerance in her marriage. Therefore, as the lizard did, she continued her life in the marriage, and she keeps her good attachment with Katy as always. This is one of the concerns of Nego Feminism.

Adaptability is the other natural trait of chameleon. Like this trait, Onai was very active in adapting the situation that she had faced in her life. Since the country, Zimbabwe, was in a critical economic crisis and highest inflation, those consumption goods were very difficult to find. Therefore, people were obliged to make a long queue in getting them. That was a very tough activity for Onai who was in a hurry to do things at home and sale her vegetables in the market. But she did not mind the happening; rather she adapted it and tried to find good out of this gathering. The extract under reveals this as follows:

"Everything was slowly starting to fall into place. The shortages and the endless queues didn't bother her so much, now. They had become a way of life, even entertaining social events. Didn't one pick up the latest information about anything and everything in a food queue? Didn't one enjoy the greatest number of laughs?" (Tagwira, 2005, p. 317).

As it is seen in this instance, Onai was smart in positing something good out of this trouble. She enjoyed the event that brought her another face. This enjoyment was seen since Onai was optimistic and selfless in her life. Her positive expectation helped her see the good than the worst face of situations. This is important for resisting the problem, and it can also help to have good relations with people around her.

The lizard walked through many ups and downs in order to get its food, which is its life goal. Like this animal, Onai passed lots of challenges in order to accomplish her goal. Her goal was learning a dress making course. It was a very difficult plan in her situation with her husband Gari and her poor mother. But she did it successfully as Tagwira mentioned it as follows:

“With her machine gone, her earnings had dwindled to what she made from vending. Inevitably, their life had worsened. It hurt that her two years of deprivation, while attending her dressmaking course, now counted for nothing. She had suffered beatings because Gari had seen her decision to go to college as wilful defiance; a deliberate challenge to his authority as a man. The suffering had not ended there. Her mother had sold five of her six cows to help pay for the fees and the practical’s. Her children had walked to school barefoot. They had worn threadbare uniforms. For that, they had borne the brunt of their friends’ taunts. But Onai had been optimistic enough for all of them. Refusing to admit defeat, she had juggled her vegetable vending and her dressmaking lessons with remarkable dexterity. And, at the end of it all, she had triumphantly passed her finals” (Tagwira, 2005, p. 59).

From this extract it is seen that Onai was faced with three troubles. The first was her husband Gari, who felt that after her education she would improve herself and start confronting his authority. Second, her mother’s cattle were expected to be sold to cover the fees. Thirdly her children were supposed to face the economic insufficiency in covering their needs. With all these challenges, Onai passed her exam and finished her lesson. This means she did not bothered by these issues and stopped on the middle of the track; rather she reached at her destiny.

As it is mentioned above, the economic crises had badly affected the life of Zimbabwean people like Onai. Onai was a strong woman who worked as a vender for covering consumption expenditures and school fees for her children. Her husband did not help her in these expenses. Although she was struggling for survival, she had a dream, that one day things could be good. In her way from market to home, she saw a big supermarket and got in there. She looked over things that she could one day buy herself. Here are her words. “She gathered her courage and entered, thinking to herself, ‘Who knows, I might shop here one day. Even better, I might even make clothes for them.’ Dreams, dreams” (Tagwira, 2005, p. 106).

Here the researcher believes that Onai was not simply dreaming. She had the skill of dressmaking, and she knew that one day she could be able to do money by her profession. Moreover, she tolerated lots of violence of her husband since she thought that he could be changed to good after sometime in the future. She hoped about this behavioral change because she heard that Gari was in a frequent quarrel with the company that he was working. This quarrel was very critical that would cause him even losing his job. Thus, Onai believed that Gari was in this condition that she should worry for him. She associated his evil trait with his work situation. Hence, she thought that when things became good in his office, he could also be good in his marriage. Therefore, she assumed that things

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could be better and life could be good. She should tolerate his current character in order to save her marriage and adopt her children under the security of Gari. But these problems in the office of Gari were happened these days. His personal trait was similar before this trouble. But Onai needed to have reasons that could persuade her and people around about Gari's personalities. This could help her protect her marriage and stay good with people. But she knows the truth. She prefers to resist the pain inside to protect her children and her marriage. Such super optimistic trait had cost her at the end of the story. Thus, Onai good woman in facing problems, but she failed to know the exact feeling and need of her husband. Her tolerance and commitment alone was useless to stay in love with Gari. Hence in this section it is her extent of strength and commitment needed to be bolded. Those efforts didn't influence Gari to came to understand her in respose. Therefore, there was no any association.

The market where most of the women mentioned in the novel have been working and help their family to sustain in the situation was closed by the government for the sake of protecting illegal venders. That was very bad measure for Onai whose children were living based on that business. Since her husband was not in a way to consider the situation, she was obliged to look for another way for her children. Even if making business on streets was much prohibited, she had no choice than doing it. Tagwira told this as follows:

"On Monday morning, Onai left home very early for a day of vending in the city center. Along Samora Machel, she found a fuel queue that must have been close to twenty cars long. She was both surprised and happy when Hannah, a colleague from previous market days, joined her shortly afterwards. The two women worked their way down the queue, advertising and making sales as stealthily as they could. Where police officers were concerned, one could never be too careful" (Tagwira, 2005, p. 210).

From this extract it can be said that Onai was a smart woman who always tried to look for solutions for problems that she had been facing. The problem of the queue had helped her in another face. Since the detection of the police was a bit loser there, she made good money for buying food for her children. This was happened because she was active in predicting the happening of this massive queue and the weak detection of the policemen in this area. This was another relevant quality of Onai. Looking something good out of the problem is also the trait of the lizard. When something bad comes to hurt the animal, it changes its color. Therefore like it, Onai changes the problem that she faced in the market with this idea.

Another challenge that Onai was forced to confront with was the situations that followed the death of her husband. Since the house that she and Gari were living was the inheritance of his families, after his death it was culturally approved that the other elder brother of him was supposed to took it. Therefore, his brother arrived there in the house to take the house based on the culture. Onai was trying to convince him to consider the situation of her and her children and to allow them stay in the house. But this man was very strong and ignorant of her words. Since the culture was much respected and even associated with spirit, different family members including her own mother warned her from taking the issue to court. In addition to that, since their marriage was done culturally, there was no legal evidence that could help her confront this man in the court. After realizing his ignorance and the impossibility of the case to be legally solved in any way, she did her best to control her feeling and hide her emotion that could otherwise could make her to be perceived as weak and lower

in the eyes of this man and her children that were there viewing the happening. Tagwira narrated Onai's reaction as follows:

“Onai realized that any further pleading would simply be twisted and used against her, or that she would be perceived as weak and malleable. She rose from the goatskin mat with as much dignity as she could muster, and gathered her children and their bags together. ‘I see I was wrong to believe that you might pity the children of your brother, now that they have no home. So we shall manage on our own.’ She spoke as clearly as she was able and was glad that her voice, low and level, gave no hint of the anger, hurt, rejection and despair that clutched at her heart” (Tagwira, 2005, p. 257).

From this reaction it is seen that Onai was very active in understanding her environment. She identified the degree of Gari's brother ignorance, and she identified the impossibility of any legal action. Next to these she saw her children and the possible fun that this man could portray if she reacted emotionally. Thus, she managed herself according to her situation. Here, the researcher understood that if she was emotionally and indecently out of the culture of the society, this man could hurt her in many more ways, and her children could take these bad reactions to their personal trait. But Onai was cautious in realizing these consequences, and she controlled herself and left the house as nothing as she never care about.

The other instance of Onai's strength was seen in the following event. As she was taken out by the brother of Gari as the culture dictated to be, she was running to the sister of Gari that she thought could understand her problem and take care of the children so that Onai could come back to Mbare for making business for the life of her and the children too. But, Gari's sister was another strong woman to push Onai out with her children. Finally Onai went to her mother. Her mother accepted her and her children to stay with her as long as Onai wanted. Then Onai managed the children schooling for some time to be in there till she found a way for living. With these troubles, Onai tried to find the good face of these obstacles. Tagwira told about Onai as:

“Onai could not find suitable words of comfort. With the advent of AIDS, many elderly parents outlived their sons and daughters. Many grandparents had been left with the demanding task of raising orphans, when they should have been the ones to be looked after in their twilight years. At least her mother had escaped such a predicament...” (Tagwira, 2005, p. 273).

This trait of Onai was very relevant to enable her effort for other troubles that could arrive in her life path. With these inconveniences, she looked far from her current situation. She had a goal to be achieved. That was having good money and raising her children as they demanded. When she was in her mother's house she was walking to her twin brother and her father's grave. Since it was not appropriately done as other graves, she promised that she could do it some day in the future. She assured her mother as follows: “One day, I will have a tombstone erected on each of the three graves, Amai.’ Her mother replied quietly, ‘You do that, Mwanangu. You do that.’ Onai nodded, with complete understanding” (Tagwira, 2005, p. 273).

Chameleon runs forward to get the food that it wanted to stay strong and healthy in its life. As this trait of this animal, Onai made herself strong and passed those troubles for the sake of her children's good life in the future. It was only her who knew the potential and possible destiny of the children, not Gari. She was sure that she could had good life in the future. Here, the researcher wanted to

praise this character for two reasons. First Onai was hoping good regarding the behavior of her husband. But he was not changed as she expected. Rather he was subverting her in many ways. Thus, this inconveniency might had a degree in affecting her from hoping well in the future again. But this incident did not influence her from hoping better happenings in her life.

Second she had been facing troubles at each movement. But these troubles again did not affect her from hoping well in her life. Thus, this character is the strongest character that women could take lesson from. She had a goal, hence she run to meet that goal in any situation that she was in. This is very important representation that showed the efficacy of the woman in doing their own life. She had the courage in ding her life good. The source of her courage was the fate of her children. She identified herself to be strong and passionate on her job. The extract under is evidenced for the above raised point.

“The children would all be all right. Fari was very bright. He would do well at school and maybe go to university, as would Ruva. Maybe Ruva would become a doctor like the young woman at the hospital; or a lawyer, like Faith. Rita would probably make a very good wife and caring mother. Thoughts of her children made her smile. Yes, it was time to return to Harare to prepare for their future” (Tagwira, 2005, p. 275).

Although knowing and worrying about the status of children could emanate from being mother, Onai was more than the mean of mother. As a mother she was so sympathetic to them and took good care of them as much as she can. But beyond that she did her best to resist her emotion that could affect their mood and concern for their education. She was good at hiding her troubles from them in order not to affect their focus on their study and personal trait. Therefore, instead of pausing her way from achieving her goal by those difficulties, she watched forward to meet her goal. In this regard the theory of Nego Feminism is practically seen in the life of Onai. As the animal, she walks strait to her dream.

The other important trait of chameleon is its cautiousness. This animal is very conscious and active in identifying things. Like the animal, Onai was seen as very active and alerted character on happenings that she was facing. At the setting of the novel, the issue of HIV ADIS was very hot. People were reacting wrongly and those patients were in dangerous state. But Onai was active in understanding about the disease, and she was cautious on the feelings of people who had got the virus. This was visible in the following dialogue that she had with Sheila who was lodging in Onai's compound.

“Sheila said, you are so good to me. There was a time when I thought you would ask me to leave because I have AIDS. I'm so thankful that you gave me lodgings when nobody else would. My own family have disowned me.’ She was once again close to wailing.

‘Don't worry Sheila. Zvichanaka chete. Everything will be all right. You are welcome to stay here for as long as you like” (Tagwira, 2005, p. 62).

From this dialogue, one can see that Onai had relevant information about the disease, and she was aware on how to have to relate with patients than anyone else mentioned in the novel. Like other people did, for instance the family of Sheila, Onai updated herself on the virus and got knowledge on it. She knew how the virus was transmitted; therefore, having a positive person in her lodgings did not mean that the virus could be transmitted to her and her children. This helped the patient, Shiella, to stay safely with her daughter in the house she rent from Onai. In this respect, Nego Feminism

argued that African woman needs to stay alerted and active on the happenings in her surroundings. This cautiousness is relevant for creating active family and society at large. This was what happened in Onai's family too. Her reaction to Sheila was also viewed by her children. Therefore, they could act accordingly, and some other people around could also follow them in the same way.

Another cautious and active character in this novel was the daughter of Katy, Faith. She was frequently arguing with her boyfriend, Tom, regarding those issues that she was concerned about in order to form a decent interaction with her future husband. For this reason, she confronted Tom on issues related to her family and the poor people in her surroundings. Since she was in doubt about the source of Tom's money, she asked him for the reality behind him. But her friend, Melody was pushing her not to confront Tom with that intensity. Though Faith was strong on her stand, she replied to Melody on such issues as: "Discussions and arguments about principle were better than silence or indifference" (Tagwira, 2005, p. 203).

This personality of Faith is very important to understand what issues are going around her. Knowing the things around her can help her plan for the future and run her life accordingly. She had tried to know about the background of her future husband by her own. She was facing him about his family and their source of wealth. She did this for clearing confusions for her future marriage. This showed her cautiousness in her life.

Faith was a very smart young girl reflected in this novel. For the happenings she faced, she viewed situations from certain perspectives. This was seen when she founded out about the boyfriend of her friend, Melody. Melody was with this married man since he was her only benefiter. He covered her school fees and other necessary things in her stay at the university. When Faith knew about the life of Melody, she associated the case with those people that were around her and realized the severity of the country's economy. Here is what was inside her:

"She thought of her mother engaging in unlawful foreign-currency dealing to put her through university, and build a dream home. She thought of mainini Onai struggling to raise three children within an abusive marriage; of Melody, trading her innocence for university fees and groceries. How far was she from promiscuity? She thought of mainini Onai's lodger, Sheila, a self-proclaimed ex-prostitute whose fear of hunger had been greater than her fear of AIDS. Even she had niggling suspicions about the man she loved, and his farm. Hadn't the promise of security been an initial attraction? Was Melody right in saying, 'Blame the economy for forcing ...' May be working with the disadvantaged was where her calling lay. She recognized that she had choices, and determined to make them wisely" (Tagwira, 2005, p. 82).

From this extract two important qualities of Faith are seen. The first is she was very active in trying to understand the things around her logically. It was said logically since with the instance of Melody case, she recalled similar issues of her mother and Onai. The second point is from these issues, she mirrored her relationship with Tom. She was not resistant for what she had said with Tom. She doubted her suspicion and was ready to realize things from certain angles. This means that she was ready and open for discussion. This is very relevant for the life that she is going to build with her boyfriend.

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Onai was very critical and conscious on issues in her surroundings. Unlike her friend Katy, she examined things from many ways. The following incident is an instance for this. Katy and her husband John were illegal dealers of foreign currency. One day Onai had asked her about it. Katy responded with certain remark about the way out that they had as follows:

“Don't you know, the law has two sides? One applies to us ... the people they deal with; the other applies to ordinary people, people without contacts, connections or money to pay bribes. And like John says, this assistant commissioner will be the man to get us out of trouble, if we're ever threatened with arrest.’ Onai was unconvinced. Her friend seemed to be playing with fire. Didn't she know that there was no honour among thieves? And when it came to survival, the weaker thief would always lose out!” (Tagwira, 2005, p. 290).

From the above paragraph it is interpreted that Katy was very fool and one directional in her deal, but Onai was very smarter and more conscious than Katy. Even the logical approach of Onai was persuasive and showed her degree of efficacy in such issues. Katy was very dormant in viewing the point of Onai. Therefore, the consequence was ended up as Onai suspected. Tagwira move the destiny as Onai perceived in the following way:

“Handcuff him, guys!’ the officer ordered and threw the wad of notes to his colleague, saying, ‘Take that as evidence,’ Katy sprang forwards. ‘Do you want to come along, too? I will book you in as an accomplice if you like,’ he snarled. Katy stepped back. Onai put her arms around her friend's trembling body” (Tagwira, 2005, p. 318).

From this paragraph it is visible that the cautious and active Onai is very smart in realizing things better than her friend Katy. This can mean that African women are supposed to be active and realistic in their interaction for living good life.

Conclusions

In the novel discussed above the chameleon imagery is mainly reflected in the character of the protagonist Onai. Even if what she was sure about to be good in the future did not had any sign of its certainty, she hopes that some good could happened in the future. That was why she was passing all the troubles passionately. In this novel, Onai's destiny was ended up with the unexpected surprises. What enables Onai to be strong and active was her good hope that things in her regard for sure could be harmonious. Thus, she exhibited the mean of chameleon walk in her life track. As Nnameka wanted African women to be as the animal, Onai reflected the lizard's trait and finally reached at good destiny.

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