

A Psychoanalytic Examination of Visual Art as a Tool of Protesting Hegemonic Masculinities in Nurrudin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and Yvonne Adhiambo Owour's *Dust*

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of art in propagating, challenging and reversing hegemonic masculinities. Art in this context is a form of expression that encompasses music, painting, photography and sculpturing among others. Artistic expressions by women who cannot physically confront the hegemonic masculinities serve as an avenue through which the muted voices of the dominated women are voiced, while also acting as a vortex through which the hegemonic male exercises his domination over the vulnerable woman. The paper is thus an investigation of how art is used either as a platform for advancing hegemonic masculinity and/or confronting and challenging male hegemony. It focuses on the characters who express themselves through art as portrayed in Nuruddin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014) and Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor's *Dust* (2014). Artistic expressions in the two texts are depicted as an articulation of the characters' imagination, some of which are meant to fill the void created through a dominated, unspoken past. The muted past constitutes the unspoken memories of the atrocities committed by hegemonic males, analyzed through the psychoanalytic theory. The paper makes the assumption that art is a representation of repressed memories or wishes stored in the artist's unconscious self that are expressed to the conscious self through the artistic expressions where the dominated characters deliver a subtle message of defiance against the socio-culturally constructed patriarchal structures. The paper therefore concludes that in pursuit of freedom from gender binary antagonisms, art as an aspect of culture is a platform through which either domination is exercised and/or challenged by dominated characters to claim their space in society.

Key Words: Artistic Expressions, Hegemony, Conscious Self, Painting, Photography.

INTRODUCTION

Literature and society are inseparable owing to the fact that literature expounds societal issues and expresses the people's thoughts and beliefs. Ngugi (1981) observes that literature results from conscious acts of men [and women] in the society (p 5). He feels that literature presents a society's tensions, conflicts and contradictions. Among the tensions and conflicts literature addresses are issues relating to gender relationships, where a subjugated female gender protest against domination from the culturally constructed superior male gender. This kind of literature protests and rises against the social injustices within the society and can thus be referred to as protest literature.

Akingbe (2012) defines protest literature as a work of art that discusses protest openly, either as a major theme, a ubiquitous motif, a predominant metaphor, or as a structuring device (p 1). Saikia (2015) states that fictitious works acting as a tool of protest erase boundaries such as isolation and oppression that exist in social space. Literature is in this case used to elicit awareness to the mass and enlighten them of the injustices exercised on them. Through literature, therefore, societal injustices and inequalities like male hegemony are exposed and contested.

In a forward to *American Literature of Protest*, John Stauffer (2006) as cited by Akingbe (2012), observes that literature is capable of stimulating people's want and change. This is achieved through language. Stauffer feels that language in protest literature does not only refer to words, but also to visual art, music, and film. Language that encompasses the visual art provokes the visual sense and that which could have been concealed by reality through words becomes more conspicuous through an artistic piece. Art brings about contentment in the artist's self and it thus fills the void that is created by the absence of a withdrawn personal obsession. This paper analyses how Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014) and Owuor's *Dust* (2014) portray art as a device used by vulnerable women to protest domination exercised by the hegemonic male. Art is therefore, brought out as a graphical representation or expression of artist's muted voices or unspoken ideas and feelings.

An advertising executive, Barnard (1921), stated that a picture is worth a thousand words, meaning that an illustration communicates a stronger message than a word. In the same vein, photography and painting may communicate a protest message from a dominated group more effectively than a verbal exchange. Both Plato and Aristotle pointed out that art is a reflection of nature and that it is an imitation of reality and that good art creates strong emotion in the viewer. Classical Greeks define art as mimesis or imitation of reality. Whereas Plato considered this "imitation of reality" as

dangerous, Aristotle stated that we all learn from imitations because the pleasure experienced from an imitation “brings to mind and confirms something we had already dimly sensed” (*Classical Greek Aesthetics*, p 6). This paper considers art as an imitation, through which the critic is able to visualize and analyse reality, in this case male hegemony, as represented by an artistic expression.

Batzou (2011) posits that photographs are able to ideologically transmit charged messages in a subtle way. The reception and interpretation of the intended message is thus free of violent demonstration or any other form of physical confrontation. A hegemonic male may thus convey his hegemonic ideology through painting. Oppressed female characters can also use art in the form of photography or painting to convey their protest message against the oppressive male. This therefore, means that characters in contemporary African literature use visual art as a platform of challenging the socio-culturally constructed patriarchal structures.

According to Katju (2022), the theory of art for social purpose demands that (visual) art and literature (works of fiction) should serve the people by arousing their emotions against oppression and injustice, and increasing their sensitivity regarding people’s sufferings. Art, in this context, is a medium that attempts to provoke people’s thoughts and incite them to protest against the injustices within the society. These injustices include patriarchal domination, which is the vice this paper addresses. The paper also views visual art as an avenue through which patriarchal domination is exercised as depicted in contemporary African literature.

African Literature depict hegemonic masculinities as theorized along cultural lines and therefore, victims of domination find it difficult to challenge them head on given the cultures that contain and perpetuate them. With no authoritative voice to express the injustices they are subjected to, the oppressed characters in such literary works employ visual art as a platform for challenging male dominance and consequently break the vicious cycle of domination. Visual art and literary art are inseparable and as Huyssteen (2023) argues, there is art in literature and literature in art. Visual art which include photography, painting and other art forms communicate human emotions, experiences and even desires realistically just like a written piece. This paper therefore, examines how characters in Farah’s *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014) and Owuor’s *Dust* (2014) use visual art either to advance patriarchy or as a platform for challenging this domination.

PROTESTING HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES

Art may be used to confront the sexist ideology, though not explicitly, through the artist's artistic skills and styles. The beauty in visual art is so conspicuous that the message in it cannot be ignored. Rajagopalan (2020) points out that feminist art rejects the male gaze, setting the women free from male domination and emancipating them and other marginalized groups. Rajagopalan views art as a feminist way of challenging patriarchy, that is, only from a woman's perspective. The current paper considers art not only from the feminist's point of view but also from a psychoanalytic point of view and as a conscious expression of feelings and emotions that are stored in the unconscious mind. Male characters who do not embrace the patriarchal ideology, some of who may be victims of the same, also use art to express their dissatisfaction and to support female victims of patriarchal domination.

Gupta *et al* (2023) posit that parenting plays a pivotal role in indoctrination of gender roles from infancy such that a boy who shows instinctive preferences for what may be considered feminine by the society is chastised and ridiculed whereas a girl is taught to act womanly and remain submissive. The argument is that this indoctrination creates an oppressive environment and at the same time damages the self-confidence of the man or the woman who is assumed to be defying the societal norms. This paper argues that the opposite is also true: that a female child who is encouraged to assert herself and occupy her space grows to be an independent woman, and a male child who is taught the value of respecting the opposite gender grows up more wholesome. The paper further argues that in the process of growing up in a patriarchal society, whatever is taught to the male or female child is retained in the unconscious mind and when the desire to express it is elicited, it is expressed to the conscious mind artistically. It examines visual art as way of exercising and challenging patriarchal domination, and thus demonstrates that challenging patriarchy is a conscious way actualized gradually from a character's formative years.

The paper is limited to the descriptive analysis of characters as presented in *Farah's Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Owuor's Dust* (2014). It is confined to the psychoanalytic analysis of how visual art is used on one hand by the hegemonic male to exercise his hegemony on a vulnerable female and on the other hand, by the dominated characters to challenge hegemony and assert themselves, through the lens of psychoanalytic theory as propagated by Sigmund Freud. According to Freud, the id, ego and superego motivate and influence human behaviour, all which compete for dominance leading to an internal conflict which consequently produces anxiety. Further, the ego acts as the intermediary between the extremes of the id and the superego thus reducing the anxiety using defense mechanisms (Bieber & Ogden, 2010). In

analyzing characters in Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014) and Owuor's *Dust* (2014) this paper considers art in whatever form, as a defense mechanism used as an avenue for asserting gender hegemonic status or challenging this hegemony.

Daly (1978), points out that patriarchy arises as a result of sex role socialization that happens unconsciously once we are born. Walby (1990) affirms that patriarchy continues to be practiced because of the way the minds are ordered from generation to generation. Patriarchal ideology is thus entrenched in the people's minds and, to dismantle patriarchy would mean erasing how a person was socialized from his/her childhood. Bressler (2007), in the analysis of Sigmund Freud's publication *The interpretation of Dreams* argues that the unconscious mind has a great role in how we act, think or feel (p 143). Dobie (2002) agrees that the unconscious is the force behind what an individual does (p 50). The unconscious, according to Tyson (2006), is the reservoir of a person's emotions, fears, desires and unresolved conflicts. This study thus assumes that visual art is a conscious representation of a character's fears, emotions, desires and unresolved conflicts stored in the character's unconscious mind.

The unconscious self/mind, argues Chase (1911), fills the gaps in our conscious life. Repressions, which are stored in the unconscious mind, cause intrapersonal conflicts that a character tries to resolve in their conscious self. These are as a result of the repressed desires and emotions in the unconscious self. Garssen (2010) defines repression "as non-expression, emotional control, rationality, anti-emotionality, defensiveness and restraint" (p 41). Barry (2002) points out that "repressed fears and conflicts which are causing the problems are brought into the conscious mind and openly faced, rather than remaining 'buried' in the unconscious" (p 70) - to him, repression means "forgotten" or "ignored". This paper makes the assumption that characters' repressed emotions and conflicts are brought from the unconscious mind to the conscious self through visual art, as the character attempts to demystify what is not revealed to them or what they cannot or do not want to verbally express. This is done through a descriptive analysis of characters presented in Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014) and Owuor's *Dust* (2014), which are the focus of this paper, who use photography and painting as avenues of propagating and/or challenging hegemonic masculinities.

CONTESTING PATRIARCHAL HEGEMONY IN *HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT* AND *DUST*

Contemporary African literature depicts a society whose culture elevates man and relegates peripheral roles to the woman. Female characters in such literary works are up in arms in an attempt to dismantle and reverse this

cultural construction. Since patriarchal domination is embedded in the culture of a people and culture dictates a people's way of life, patriarchal domination may not be explicitly challenged. Characters therefore employ subtle ways of expressing their discontent and challenging patriarchy instead of facing it head-on. Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014) and Owuor's *Dust* (2014) have one thing in common: the female protagonists in both texts express their repressed desires and emotions artistically. Each of the protagonist has an only brother who supports them to achieve their goals through visual art. In *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014), Bella's hand is held by her late brother Aar, while in *Dust* (2014), Ajany's foundation is laid by her late brother Odidi. Bella is inculcating art in form of photography in her nephew, Salif and her niece, Dahaba, now that she takes over the responsibility of parenting them after their father Aar dies in a terrorist attack and their mother having abandoned them a decade earlier.

Bella, the protagonist in *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014), expresses her assertiveness through photography while in *Dust* (2014), Ajany challenges domination through drawing. The difference between Bella and Ajany is that Bella pre-empts hegemony through photography before it is subjected to her, that is, her photography acts as a block to any male domination while Ajany paints what her parents don't tell them. Ajany, therefore, paints to fill the void left by her parents' unspoken memories; memories that are retained in silences. The silences are a form of denial. These, Ajany suspects are silences arising as a result of domination and which are retained in her parents' memories, most of which are too shameful to discuss.

Bella's defiance and portrayal of independence is demonstrated right from her birth. Her birth is described thus:

Unlike other babies, she was not born with the residue of birth smeared all over her. Nor did she announce her arrival with the usual primeval cry. Instead, she emerged from the womb with a shock of long jet-black hair and an even-tempered, almost profession that put Marcella in mind of a competitive swimmer emerging from a pool after a hard workout (*Hiding in Plain Sight*, p 44-5).

This indicates that from infancy, Bella is presented as a unique, strong character who is ready to overcome the cultural beliefs and dictates to emerge as an independent character.

Art brings a sense of fulfilment, rejuvenates and pushes the artists to achieving even more. For example, the carving Bella gets from Giorgio Fiori makes her feel fulfilled, joyful and satisfied with life. The carving drives Bella to work harder in school, she becomes more purposeful and organized (p 49-50). This carving arouses her interest in photography and this is tapped and

nurtured by her brother Aar while she is still young. It is Aar who buys Bella her first camera and assists her to master the art of photography (p 16). Her desire to be self-reliant drives her to taking photographs in weddings and occasions. It is thus through art, that Bella becomes an independent woman. The carving and the camera are, therefore, unconsciously planted in Bella's young mind and gradually nurtured into her maturity. Through photography, she sets herself apart and does not become a victim of patriarchal domination even in her maturity. Bella has therefore, succeeded in deconstructing the cultural belief that a woman must be dependent on a man.

Photography is elevating and places the vulnerable photographer at a level higher above the hegemonic characters. For instance, Bella rises to stardom through photography. Aar and Bella are inseparable from the time Bella is born. Aar takes it upon himself to protect his sister from real and imagined enemies. At the age of five, she threatened to kill every girl she imagined was taking Aar's affection from her (p 46). Their mother, Hurdo, was worried that Bella's affection for her brother might never allow her to fall in love with any other man in future. When Aar fell in love with a girl in Rome, Bella was mad about it. The affectionate feeling for Aar was replaced by her celebrity status when her photograph appeared in a fancy Sunday supplement in Rome (p 47). Through this, she earns a lot of money as a teen model. Celebrity status makes her become independent; not dependent on her brother's protection both financially and physically. Through photography, therefore, Bella is contented and the unconscious jealous obsession of her brother and the protection she so much needed and received from him is no more craved for. Bella in this way uses art to assert herself; she no longer needs the presence of her brother to feel secure.

Marcella says that Bella has the true artist's knack of showing the ugliness inside those she detests (p 18). To bring out the reality that is hidden behind the disguised self, Bella takes time before taking the photograph of the person posing for a portrait. This makes the person nervous and fidgety, thus bringing out the hidden authentic self of the person (p 50-51). Asked why she does this; she responds that she wants to take a photograph when the person being photographed no longer thinks of what she is doing (p 53). She argues that this makes her to be in charge. She always wants to be in charge and to totally take control of her subjects. Through photography, Bella is taking full control of the subject's emotions and the entire self. According to Bella, photography is the "genesis of renewal via expression in everlasting images" (p 26). It is through photography, therefore, that Bella is able to assert her authority over others and break the chains that would limit her from achieving her objectives. Photography also makes her not a subject of

domination but a woman who is in charge. She states that photography carries with it some special status that accords the photographer a feeling that he or she is in authority. This authority is felt as her nephew Salif and niece Dahaba, and their friends Qamar and Zubair take photos. She feels that the camera accords the children a special status. Bella observes that the adults are following the children's instructions meticulously (p 330). The children are thus controlling the adults who are assumed to be in authority through photography.

Bella has risen to the top in the fashion industry through her photography. As a woman, she desires to come up with a photography that will set the women free from manual labour (p 55). To her, manual labour translates to oppression. She believes that she "only reaches for the unattainable when it comes to photography, where her ambitions soar. And yet not only as a woman but also as a Somali woman, she has to defy harsh social conditioning to establish herself as a person equal in all aspects to a man" (p 43). She says that she would like to have her own series documenting the end of women's manual labour. She sympathizes with women who have no chance of challenging hegemonic masculinities. To her, having a profession where she is respected and which gives her financial stability makes her feel more privileged than the other women (p 222). Therefore, photography makes Bella feel equal or even better than the men who dominate. This indicates that Bella desires to end hegemonic masculinities through her photography.

As a teen, Bella's image is published on a fancy Sunday supplement and she is handsomely paid for this. Her mother Hurdo believes that Bella's ambition to stardom will not be curtailed by Digaaleh's (Hurdo's husband) argument that earning through her image is equivalent to prostitution (p 47). Bella feels that her globetrotting is interwoven with photography. To her, this is the beginning of "her renewal via self-expression in everlasting images" (p 26). Photography has thus given Bella the voice and fame; it is through the images that she keeps from her photography, that she is able to express her independence. Photography has given her financial stability, and she is thus not dependent on man. Bella engages in photography to become self-reliant (p 50). She had always wished to be an independent girl "determined to make her own way in the world, working hard and doing well in whatever profession she chose" (p 51). Bella's photography is also a form of a revenge. She keeps the secret that before she gets intimate with her lovers, she first takes their nude photographs. She feels that this is equivalent to the nude portraits of native Americans and Africans and nude photographs of women taken by American photographers for the tourist trade (p 53). Through this, she proves her power over them, just as the American photographers proved their mighty power over the weak. She thus feels that she has achieved in

reversing a domination which she believes would automatically be exercised by these men. She is therefore, lording over the unsuspecting men who, to her, represent the larger group of hegemonic male.

Bella's busy schedule is sharply contrasted with the idle men who are gazing at her. The idle men gaze at her along the streets of Nairobi and she feels like they are undressing her with their eyes. Bella takes control of the situation by asking one of them for a photo (p 68). He agrees but she refuses to give her expensive camera to any one in his group to take the photos. She instead suggests that they use his iPhone so that he will have the photo. The man then poses next to her "as if he were the happiest man ever" (p 68). He is elated by standing next to her feeling as if he is in charge. By asking them for the photo, she has not only taken control of the men since they no longer stare at her suggestively, but also their reasoning. The men are thus, unconsciously obeying Bella. She is therefore, using photography to dismantle male domination.

Whereas *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014) describes art in form of photography, artistic representation in Owuor's *Dust* (2014) takes the form of painting. In *Dust* (2014), art as an aspect of culture is used, on the one hand, as an avenue where patriarchal domination is exercised and, on the other, as a way of challenging patriarchal ideology. Hugh Bolton vividly brings out his patriarchal nature through a drawing he had made of Akai-ma. Ajany's description of her mother's image in Hugh Bolton's art explains a helpless creature suffering under a vicious male. She describes it thus:

The woman, not just naked, exposed, raw to the soul. Intricate body scars jump up the canvas. Languid. Indolent. Poured out woman. Etched into it, sorrow, hunger, beauty, anguish, worship and defiance. One hand on her knees, the other beneath her head; something arcane suggested in the fecund swollen belly (*Dust*, p 65).

Akai-ma (Ajany's mother) had been subjected to the inhumane treatment by Hugh Bolton. This is the painting that unravels the mystery of Akai-ma's painful past, that Ajany tries to demystify in some of her paintings. In the painting, Ajany detects defiance in Akai, but due to her vulnerability, Akai is not in a position to defy Hugh's cruelty. Ajany can't understand how their pregnant mother, a fierce, wild woman could be painted. The painting therefore reveals how egoistic and cruel Hugh Bolton was. Patriarchy as an ideology arises as a result of one's socialization. Those who view it as an oppressive force unconsciously carry it through the course of their lives only to challenge it when they can no longer retain it in their unconscious self. When Odidi and Ajany join a boarding school, the school principal is unfriendly and this infuriates Odidi. Odidi and his sister had focused on their

studies with Ajany turning to painting while Odidi perfected playing the piano. Through painting, Ajany had covered shame with vivid colours. The narrator says that "Music and painting bandaged soul-holes. Music and painting canceled memories of annual February humiliations ..." (p 14). Ajany's financial independence while in Brazil is from her commercial art. Music and painting are thus avenues through which patriarchy is deconstructed.

Ajany's use of art makes her overcome the feeling of inferiority complex. She is described as non-performer while in school, she was either position twenty-one or twenty-three in a class of twenty-four students. Through art she is able to consciously express her unconscious self, she brought whatever ached her to the fore. At last, she was applauded in a school that she hated and she managed to be position seventeen in the class of twenty-four. Though the paintings had reminded her parents of their dominated painful past, Ajany is able to counter the domination and emptiness she had once felt while in school. She had thus become equal to her oppressors. After the death of Odidi, Ajany goes to Nairobi in search of her brother where she meets Petrus Keah. Petrus is the hegemonic man, a police officer in detention camps who had tortured Nyipir, to a point of deforming his hands. He had then helped rescue Nyipir since he and Nyipir belonged to the same ethnic community. He had then taken it as his responsibility to protect Odidi and his criminal gangs against the other police officers. Petrus had requested Ali Dida Hada to talk to Nyipir who could in turn warn Odidi against engaging in criminal activities. Nyipir, Odidi's father, had pleaded with Petrus through Ali Dida Hada, to protect Odidi. Petrus had even moved Ali Dida Hada to the police headquarters on promotion in order to monitor Odidi and relocate him to Wuoth Ogik. When Ajany comes to his office, he sees her presence as a form of accusation. He had been bypassed in this particular episode, and Odidi loses his life. Ajany is irked by Petrus for not saving her brother's life. She says "she would need to carve Petrus' profile into black-ice stone. She would pound in jagged craters to reveal ravenous eyes of fathomless reach. Black hole" (p 187). By painting Petrus, she is revealing his hegemony and the fact that, as Ajany believes, Petrus is behind her brother's death and that he had the ability to prevent it.

In her second year at the University of Nairobi, Ajany always achieved the lowest grade the university could allow. She later comes across an advert in a design magazine and after applying for the same, she is given a chance since she is the only African applicant (p 119). She had defied her brother's insistence that she stays in Kenya. This means that she wanted to be independent. This is the first time she gets out of her brother's shadow to

forge her own path. Art has thus opened ways for her to become an independent woman.

Unlike Bella's photography in *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014), Ajany's painting in *Dust* (2014) is provoked by the unexplained painful past that her parents have retained in their memories. It is Odidi, her brother, who encouraged her to paint. He had suggested that she paints a river out of Wuoth Ogik, their home, then paint an ocean and a ship and inside the ship, he and her going far away (p 52). The ocean and ship, according to Freud are female or yonic symbols (Dobie, 2002, p 60). The ocean may symbolize vastness and diversity of their reasoning. This indicates that they cannot be chained to a place and culture that dominates them. Wuoth Ogik symbolizes the source of their domination. They are under a force they don't seem to understand and that which they wish to escape from. Wuoth Ogik is said to be the land of antagonists (p 55). These could be Nyipir and Hugh Bolton since Nyipir had fallen in love with Akai but she had chosen Hugh instead. Through painting, therefore, Ajany and Odidi are able to deconstruct this dominating force.

When Odidi and Ajany had visited the forbidden red cave, they had come across a skeleton with eyeless sockets whom Odidi had named *Obarogo*. Odidi had told his sister that *Obarogo* needed eyes to see girls whose eyes were open when they were supposed to be asleep. *Obarogo* avoided boys. This is because boys are strong. *Obarogo's* scary image is imprinted in Ajany's young mind and is brought to her consciousness in her nightmares. *Obarogo* is a symbolic representation of hegemonic male. The skeleton belongs to Hugh Bolton, the white hegemonic male who had painted a pregnant nude Akai, and whom Nyipir had shot dead while protecting Akai from further mistreatment. Akai and Nyipir had then hidden his body in the cave to conceal their action. To express what is in her unconscious self, Ajany sets to painting the skeleton in the forbidden cave. She wants to fill the eyes, the nose and the mouth. She asks Isaiah Bolton, Hugh Bolton's son, for his father's photograph. The photograph revives memories of the cave and its skeleton. She drops the photograph but still continues applying clay to the painting (p 265). Although Ajany is afraid of the skeleton (*Obarogo*), through this painting, she is in charge of the man who had oppressed her father and mother. Hugh Bolton now has no control over what Ajany does to his skeleton. When asked by Isaiah whether she was painting his father's skeleton, she says she was painting the feeling (p 296). This is the feeling of domination that had been exercised by Hugh over her parents. Her artistic skills have thus challenged that hegemony.

When Ajany learns of her father's suffering under Hugh Bolton's hegemony, she sketches Hugh Bolton, "trying to find Akai-ma in what Nyipir does not

say" (p 313). She sketches Nyipir's restlessness when he explains how Hugh Bolton looked down on everything that was African (p 314-315). She feels that the domination her father was subjected to may have severed his relationship with his wife. She reads bitterness in Nyipir's words and suspects that her mother might have gone through the same form of patriarchal domination from Hugh. Ajany's use of art is thus meant to replace Nyipir's painful feeling of being looked down on by a male partner.

Ajany paints her feeling of pain too. When Bernardo cheats on her with another woman, a feeling of betrayal sweeps within her. She feels that she would paint that night. "Furious violet and dark-blue hues, rubbed into paper with fingers" (p 140). In this context, Bernardo is under no obligation to be attached to Ajany since he is the ultimate authority in this relationship. Isaiah tells her that she calls Bernardo in her dreams and that he makes her cry. She had stabbed him for cheating on her (p 267). Ajany's painting of the feeling of betrayal acts as a form of relief.

As Nyipir is leaving Wuoth Ogik, he requests Ajany to draw a picture of them shaded in death. The picture should also capture forgiveness (p 361). It is at Wuoth Ogik, translated by Nyipir to mean "the journey ends" (p 316), that Hugh Bolton's machoism comes to an end when Nyipir shoots him. It is at Wuoth Ogik that Odidi's remains are buried. Therefore, the painting shaded in death represents the death of Odidi and Hugh, since their life journeys end here. The painting 'shaded in forgiveness' describes several instances where characters forgive each other. It is here that Nyipir forgives Akai and takes her as his wife. It is in Wuoth Ogik that Nyipir forgives Petrus Keah for having tortured him while in detention. It is in Wuoth Ogik that Nyipir forgives Ali Dida Hada, his rival as far as love for Akai is concerned. It is also at Wuoth Ogik that Petrus Keah and Ali Dida Hada come to a consensus as far as their illegal dealings in cattle rustling are concerned. It is at Wuoth Ogik that Isaiah no longer wants Ajany with an intention to avenge his father but to enfold her and protect her as advised by Akai, lest he is 'dethroned', which in Akai's context means being castrated. These hegemonies that are sealed with forgiveness are what Nyipir advises his daughter to draw. The art requested by Nyipir will therefore, represent the society where hegemony is deconstructed and equality, mutual respect and inclusivity are achieved.

CONCLUSION

Following the discussion in this paper, we can conclude that art is a skill that is developed from the early stages of a child's development and gradually develops as the character develops to maturity. Bella, the character in Nurrudin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight*, develops this skill while still a child and uses it in form of photography, as an unspoken artistic expression to

either counter a hegemonic advance or block the hegemony that may be exercised on her. Visual art, is therefore, used as an indicator of assertiveness. We also conclude that visual art, in form of painting as used by Hugh Bolton in Yvonne Owuor's *Dust* is a medium through which the hegemonic male exercises his hegemony over the vulnerable female character. Therefore, through the painting of the nude pregnant Akai, Hugh Bolton demonstrates his hegemony over the vulnerable weak Akai. The painting also brings out Akai's inability to fight this hegemony. We finally conclude that visual art is a form of defense mechanism and a conscious expression of the repressed emotions, desires and conflicts stored in the unconscious self of the character. Therefore, art as used by Ajany in Owuor's *Dust* helps her to unravel the mysteries surrounding the unspoken painful past in her parent's memories and consequently challenge the hegemony that has subjected them to the psychological torture. Visual art is therefore used to demystify the silences arising from hegemony.

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