TITLE: REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SELECTED UGANDAN SHORT STORIES

LUCKY ARIHO

Supervisors: Dr Benge Okot and Prof Danson Kahyana

Abstract

The study explores representations of gender-based violence in Ugandan short narratives. Defining gender-based violence as any act of threat or harm inflicted on a person because of their gender, the study reflects on portrayals of such threats or harm against the male and female gender in selected short stories from four Ugandan short story collections by Austin Ejiet, Ijuka Kabumba, Mary Karooro Okurut and Beatrice Lamwaka. The study conducted a textual analysis on 21 purposively selected short stories that uniquely represent gender- based violence. It adopted a qualitative research approach and interpretative design. Data was collected by closely reading the texts, and textual analysis was used to analyse the data. The study's central thesis is that although there is a considerable existence of Ugandan short fiction that depicts violence, there is scarcity of critical attention on gender-based violence. The objectives of the study were to identify the forms of gender-based violence addressed in Ejiet, Kabumba, Karooro and Lamwaka's short stories; the causes, the effects on both the victims and offenders and the stylistic devices employed by the writers to depict gender-based violence. The three main chapters of this thesis are thematically organised to highlight the forms of gender-based violence as depicted in the selected short stories. Using specific aspects of the masculinity theory, trauma theory and African feminist theory, the study focuses on how the segments of a narrative construct undoubted depictions of gender- based violence while using the short story genre as a platform to unearth and expose the occurrences of sexual violence, emotional violence and physical violence against men, women, girls and boys in both private and public spaces in Ugandan societies. The study reveals that short stories are a means through which GBV in its forms is exposed. The findings reveal that both men, women and children are victims of violence. The public and private spaces are depicted as places in which violence is conducted. In addition, the findings reveal that gender-based violence is not solely a consequence of patriarchy but is also sustained by other institutionalised structures such as political, social and traditional structures within society.

Key Words: Gender-Based Violence, Ugandan short stories, Patriarchy and Masculinity