People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Tlemcen

Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

The Representation of Women in Postcolonial African Literature: Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*

Thesis submitted in candidacy for the degree of Doctorate in English Literature

Presented by
Mr. Samir CHEKROUN

Supervised by
Prof. Wassila HAMZA REGUIG MOURO

Board of Examiners

Prof. Ilhem SERIR	**President**	(Tlemcen University)
Prof. Wassila HAMZA REGUIG MOURO	**Supervisor**	(Tlemcen University)
Prof. Ghouti HADJOUI	**Examiner**	(Tlemcen University)
Prof. Abbes BAHOUS	**External Examiner**	(Mostaganem University)
Prof. Azzeddine BOUHASSOUN	**External Examiner**	(A-Temouchent Univ-Center)
Dr. Nadia GHOUNAN	**External Examiner**	(Saida University)

Academic Year 2022/2023

DEDICATION

To my dearest Parents, brothers and sisters

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful

Firstly of all, I praise ALLAH who has given me the ability, strength and patience to complete my study.

I sincerely wish to give my deepest gratitude and special appreciation to my inspiring supervisor Professor Wassila HAMZA REGUIG MOURO for her supervision and guidance throughout this thesis. Her expertise and thoughtful, constructive criticism have enriched my work.

My thanks also go to the members of my examiners' committee, Professor Ilhem SERIR, Professor Ghouti HADJOUI, Professor Abbes BAHOUS, Professor Azzeddine BOUHASSOUN and Doctor Nadia GOUNAN, for their careful and reflective readings of my thesis.

Many thanks go to the entire teaching and administrative staff in the Department of English, University of Tlemcen, for their constant support and inspiration in the course of my graduate and postgraduate career. Lastly but not the least, I wish to thank my friends and family for their prayers, love, encouragement and moral support.

And to Allah alone, we turn all our intentions and hopes

Abstract

The present dissertation analyses the literary representation of women in the two novels *Anthills of the Savannah,* by the Nigerian male writer Chinua Achebe, and *Nervous Conditions* by the Zimbabwean female writer Tsitsi Dangarembga. The two African novelists, Achebe and Dangarembga, give a portrayal of female characters within their own countries and according to their Igbo and Shona cultures respectively. By means of textual analysis, the study investigates how the representation of numerous female characters in the two literary works reflects the social and political aspects of African women's subjugation and how these women struggle against it. Through female characterization, the two novelists severely denounce the systems of patriarchy and colonization that oppressed women and hinder their personal development. This illustrates the contemporary African novelists', males and females, commitment to women's fight for social and political justice, regardless of gender-based discrimination. Additionally, the literary representation of women is examined in order to see how education is used as a tool to transform the social and political roles of women in postcolonial African society. The study reveals that the two writers portray women in a way that shows their eagerness to get a decent education despite the many patriarchal and colonial obstacles. In postcolonial Africa, education is regarded as a tool that empowers women to transform their social and political roles both within their families and in community. For Achebe, education is an effective means to transform the social status of African women by according them high social positions that allow them not only to question patriarchy but also challenge the political systems of their corrupt postcolonial governments. Educated African women, in Achebe's novel, are able to make informed decisions about the future of their nation, and fight for other women's human rights. In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga's women have various motivating factors to join school and get a decent education. Education provides those women with knowledge and power to counter gender-based discrimination and enhance their social and economic conditions in modern Africa.

Key words: Postcolonial African Literature, African Women, Patriarchy, Colonialism

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO: *COLONIAL EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S INFERIORITY*

CHAPTER THREE*: WOMEN'S SOCIO-CULTURAL CONDITIONS*

CHAPTER FOUR: *ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF WOMEN*

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The word Literature means different things to different people. As far as literary critics are concerned, there is a growing consensus among them that for a given work to be considered as a work of literature, that work should be produced in a linguistic medium. According to them, these works are limited to include novels, short stories, tales, dramas, or poems, written with sufficient technical skills and possessing aesthetic and cognitive values. Literature is an artistic use of words and sentences in a fictitious way to create a new imaginary world. This characteristic gives the readers and critics the faculty to approach literary works from different perspectives.

From a functional perspective, literature could have a sociological nature such as disclosing what is going on within a given society at a particular time from a given point of view. Following this perspective literature can be defined according to the role it completes in society rather than merely a work of art. As far as the third world countries are concerned, the period that preceded the end of colonial occupation of these countries witnessed the birth of the 'Commonwealth literature.' This category of literature, which is mainly a cultural manifestation of colonialism, tries to glorify and keep together the British Empire which is no longer a political reality. By the 1980s the Commonwealth literature starts losing ground which leads to the emergence of 'Postcolonial literature' as an anti-colonial resistance. Postcolonial literature as a new category of literature attempts to subvert and undo the various forms of patriarchal and colonial violence mainly against third-world women and girls.

The present dissertation aims at analysing the literary representation of female characters in two postcolonial novels written by two well-known African writers. The first literary work is *Anthills of the Savannah* by the Nigerian male writer Chinua Achebe, and the second is *Nervous Conditions* by the Zimbabwean female writer Tsitsi Dangarembga.

Anthills of the Savannah is Achebe's final novel. It was published in 1988, 21 years after the publication of his previous novel *A Man of the People*. It is set in

the postcolonial state of Kangan. Many critics consider it a political novel in which the writer explores themes of political corruption and military takeover and patriarchal oppression in this West African state. *Anthills of the Savannah* is, above all, the story of Beatrice Okah, a Western-educated African woman, who boldly opposes the old patriarchal African traditions and serves as a passion and aspiration for men and women around her. Through his female protagonist, Beatrice, Achebe gives a prototype of the new African women who are actively engaged in forging a new path for their nations after long years of subordination and neglect.

A playwright, movie director and novelist, Tsitsi Dangarembga publishes, at the age of twenty-eight, her first novel, *Nervous Conditions*, in 1988. This novel gained acclaim as one of Africa's most important novels of the 20th Century. *Nervous Conditions* borrows its title from Jean-Paul Sartre's introduction to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, in which Sartre evokes the disassociated self, created by colonialism. The novel is about the pursuit of education by Tambudzai, Tambu for short, Sigauke, who is denied a formal education because of gender discrimination, which prevails her father's family. Tambu's struggle against the traditional patriarchal practices allows her to change her situation by receiving a decent Western education that leads to her freedom. Through her female protagonist, Tambu, Dangarembga portrays women's struggle against patriarchal and colonial oppression that befell Rhodesia in particular and Africa in general during the postcolonial era. The plot revolves around the crucial issue of gender discrimination which most female characters suffer from.

Anthills of the Savannah and *Nervous Conditions* are classified as postcolonial literary works. Postcolonial literature refers to all literary works written in English during or after the colonial period by writers, males and females, from the colonised or previously colonised countries. Generally speaking, these works explicitly expose the oppression and subjugation of the colonised people. Postcolonial literature emerges as a reaction to the colonial discourse which represents the colonised subject as savage and barbarian and his country as dark and backward.

The selection of the two writers, Achebe and Dangarembga, is not fortuitous, for, even though they are different in gender, there are intersections in their selected literary works in terms of feminist discourse. They are vivid examples of committed African writers who have a good reputation on national and international levels, with Achebe fondly called the 'father of African literature.' Achebe, the Nigerian poet, novelist, and critic, has long been criticised as a sexist author, in response to his depiction of women, especially in his early novels, as subordinate to men and playing limited and suppressed roles. In his sixth and final novel, *Anthill of the Savannah*, Achebe deviates from his earlier negative representation of African women and now gives them a spiritual and leadership position in society. On the other hand, Dangarembga is one of Zimbabwe's most famous writers. She is the author of the trilogy novels: *Nervous Conditions*, *This Mournable Body* and *The Book of Not*. Her debut novel, *Nervous Conditions*, the one concerned by the present study, is the first novel written in English by a black woman from Zimbabwe. It is considered one of the best African novels ever written. In this literary work, Dangarembga tackles women's struggle against the double oppression of patriarchy and colonialism.

The two selected novels, *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Nervous conditions*, are considered adequate materials for the study of women's conditions in postcolonial African writings for various reasons. Both literary works fall under the umbrella of feminist writing. They are strongly committed to the emancipation of African women from patriarchal and colonial hegemony. The wide range of portrayals of women in the two chosen narratives is another reason for the choice of these particular literary works. Moreover, the present selection is made with the view of making a balance between the writers' gender.

The close and thoughtful attention Achebe gives to his female characters in his novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, shows that women's social and political issues should not be the concern of African female writers and critics only. Male writers and critics should play their part in changing the perception of women in society along with women. The two authors, Achebe and Dangarembga, seem to agree on

different gender issues in postcolonial Africa. For them, the African woman should not be regarded as a rival to her male counterpart. African man and woman should be seen as real partners, collaborating for a better social life and development for the whole African people. This kind of relationship between men and women is what the African culture emphasises. In most traditional African societies men and women depend on each other. They have complementary roles, free from competition and conflict.

The present investigation is undertaken to ascertain whether postcolonial literary production delineates the modern women for the new postcolonial African society. Another concern is to analyse the differences between the fictional representation of African women and their real living conditions by interrogating whether literature provides convincing or idealised images of women. Additionally, in a postcolonial African context, where a re-evaluation of gender relations seems necessary, a critical analysis of the portrayal of female characters in prominent African novels, by male and female writers, is needed in so far as it can highlight significant ways in which the new African women are seen in this transforming postcolonial African society. To meet these research aims, the following questions have been raised:

- ✓ Does postcolonial literature tackle the theme of African women's rights and how?
- ✓ Why African men and women have unequal rights in getting a decent education?
- ✓ What is the socio-cultural position of women in traditional African societies?
- ✓ Do modern African women have the competence to participate effectively in political and social matters and do they have the ability to free themselves from patriarchal oppression?

The literary production is considered as an effective means that can bring important changes in women's real life conditions. For a number of scholars, the literary representation of female characters can be seen as a starting point to evaluate real women's needs for social and cultural transformation. The two African authors, Achebe and Dangarembga, are more realistic in their depiction of female characters in their novels, *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Nervous Conditions* respectively. Their negative representation of women is a real contribution to the persistence of patriarchal oppression and subordination of women in the real social world. A number of critics observe, after their analysis of the African literary scene, that literary production in Africa is dominated mainly by men. Therefore, these literary texts give women secondary roles and situate them in a backward position.

The present study evaluates the extent to which patriarchal oppression has resulted in a strong determination of the oppressed women to get adequate education and knowledge to denounce their oppression and overcome the constraints that affect their lives. Achebe's and Dangarembga's two selected novels will be examined within the framework of feminist literary criticism, along with postcolonialism, analysing the representation of women in fiction and how it impacts the perception of women in both imaginative and real lives. Feminist literary criticism is a discipline that focuses on gender bias. It seeks to find the main explanations for the inequality of sexes first before it attempts to liberate women from male cultural paradigms through a female perspective to change the tradition that subjugates them. It is worth mentioning here that while Western feminism is committed to female hegemony, it excludes women of colour, especially African women, from its agenda.

To counter the shortcomings of this Western feminism, a group of African American women writers fashion a collective voice, to describe black women's circumstances and denounce oppression, known by the name 'womanism' or 'black feminism'. Since the two terms have a common denominator of black women's self-determination they can be used interchangeably. Both terms embody the black

women's struggle against gender discrimination and their endeavour to establish a sexist-free society.

This dissertation explores how the two writers Achebe and Dangarembga depict the experiences of the female characters as a contribution to the indispensable struggle of women against patriarchal norms to achieve their freedom and have effective participation in the public spheres. The two selected novels explicitly explore the social and political challenges that face African women in a postcolonial context. The present work examines Achebe's and Dangarembga's fictional representation of the social and political activities of African women as evidence of their strong commitment to acquire a decent education and knowledge that allow them to participate, as modern women, in the political and social affairs of the newly independent African societies. In South Africa, for instance, the collapse of the apartheid regime brought nothing for women but disillusionment and oppression. According to him, although African women were involved in the liberation movement, along with their male counterparts, against colonial rule, their struggle for the recognition of their social and political rights continues in the postcolonial world.

The examination of the selected postcolonial novels, *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Nervous Conditions*, is performed according to a comparative approach, with emphasis on parallels and contradictions in Achebe's and Dangarembga's ways of describing the predicaments and emancipation opportunities of African women. Additionally, this approach is adequate for making comparisons between female characters in the same novel or from the two selected authors' works.

The kind of analysis adopted allows for the division of the present dissertation into three main chapters, in addition to a theoretical one. The three main chapters examine the fictional representation of women, in the two novels: *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Nervous Condition*, in both the public and private settings as well as the depiction of their ongoing struggle for gender equity and women's

emancipation in postcolonial Africa. This structure is adopted in a way to highlight the transition made by African women from assuming traditional roles in an oppressive patriarchal traditional society to imposing themselves as part of the solution to the problems of the new African society.

The first chapter, the theoretical one, provides the definition of some key concepts in this dissertation like: literature, postcolonialism, feminism…etc. It also reviews the emergence of postcolonial literature as an anti-colonial resistance, along with its two constituent; commonwealth literature and colonial discourse analysis. The major themes of this kind of literature and the position it gives for women are also reviewed in this chapter.

The second chapter examines the ongoing struggle of African women against gender discrimination in education within a postcolonial context. This chapter explores the representation of female characters through their long and tiring journey looking for a decent Western education. For these African women education and knowledge are prerequisites for their emancipation from patriarchal and colonial oppression. Hence, the analysis of the selected novels concentrates on achieving such specific freedom, focusing on women's struggle and lingering resistance to attain it.

The third chapter of this dissertation focuses on the socio-cultural conditions of African women. It incorporates the depiction of the position of women and the social status they enjoy within traditional African society. Additionally, this chapter tackles the relationships between patriarchy and female subordination and some predicaments that hinder African women's freedom and progress.

The last chapter in this dissertation considers the relationship between poverty and illiteracy and the effects these two factors have on the economic conditions of African women. It also sheds light on Achebe's description of the political and social activism of modern educated African women and their

participation in the public spheres as hopeful step for their liberation from patriarchal oppression.

Chapter One
Postcolonial Literature

CONTENT

It's bad enough when a country gets colonized,
but when the people do as well. That's
the end really, that's the end.

— Nyasha, *Nervous Conditions*

1.1 Introduction

The concepts 'postcolonialism' and 'feminism' and the kind of relation between the two have been the centre of interest for many literary critics since the end of the twentieth century. Accordingly, this chapter arouses some relevant issues which are so far considered the basis on which the postcolonial theory and feminism are founded.

Firstly, it is of paramount importance to provide an accurate definition to the stem word 'Colonialism' by taking into account its various political, cultural and economic facets. Answering the question 'What is postcolonialism?' by referencing to a set of definitions provided by prominent postcolonial scholars is also relevant at this level. Furthermore, the temporal and spatial dimensions of the term postcolonialism are discussed. For the purpose of this study, the unhyphenated form 'postcolonialism' is adopted as it indicates, according to Boehmer (1995) to a continuation of the process of colonialism.

Secondly, postcolonial literature, along with its two constituent; commonwealth literature and colonial discourse analysis, is reviewed. Emphasis will be put on the kind of literatures grouped under the nomenclature 'Commonwealth literature' and the aim of the ex-coloniser for establishing such a category. The major themes of this kind of literature are also presented. It is also important to highlight the problematic aspects of 'Commonwealth literature' and its connection with colonialism that led, by the 1990's, to the emergence of

'Postcolonial literature' as an anti-colonial resistance. Of similar importance is the study of the colonial discourse. This literary discipline is mainly concerned with investigating how colonialism is linked to the idea of discourse.

The Last part of this chapter concerns how gender differences have been represented within both colonial and postcolonial discourses. The double colonisation of women constitutes the most thought-provoking and challenging theme within postcolonial literature. This part also reviews a number of problems that Postcolonial feminism has raised related specifically to 'First World' and 'Third World' feminist concerns.

1.2 Postcolonialism

In this section, some particular aspects of the concept 'Postcolonialism' will be reviewed. The different facets; political, cultural and economic of defining the stem word 'Colonialism' will be first presented along with its varied pretexts. Then, the question 'What is Postcolonialism?' will be briefly answered with reference to some definitions given by notable scholars in the field of postcolonial theory. After that, special attention will be given to the prefix 'Post' in order to delimit the temporal and spatial dimensions of postcolonialism.

1.2.1 Colonialism: Meanings and Pretexts

Etymologically, according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the word colonialism comes from the Roman word 'colonia' which means 'farm' or 'settlement'[1], and referred, as Ypi (2013) explains, to the Roman practice of settling in a hostile or newly conquered country by Roman citizens who, while retaining their original citizenship, given the right of owning the hostile land. The OED describes this settlement as

[1] See *Oxford English Dictionary* , <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/36547>

> a settlement in a new country…a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up (Cited in Loomba, 2005, p. 7).

Loomba (2005) argues that by focusing only on the colonisers, this definition completely disregards the indigenous population who have been living in those places which are not in any sense 'new' for them. The new community formed by the coloniser on other people's land is considered somewhat unfair since it is mainly based on the concept of power[2].

1.2.1.1 Political Colonialism

Political colonialism is an imbalance in power relationship between the colonised and the coloniser. Horvath (1972) defines this kind of colonialism as "a form of domination-the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/or behaviour of other individuals or groups" (p. 46). The domination, in Horvath definition, is usually fulfilled through the deployment of military troops. On his part, Jürgen Osterhammel (2009) defines the colonial situation by insisting on the foreign rule over a colonised demographic majority. In his outline, colonialism is a

> relationship of domination between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the

[2] Power seeking is the wellspring of colonialism and imperialism. For a thorough understanding of the notion of power, see: Barbalet (1985) and Riker (1964).

> colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and of their ordained mandate to rule (Cited in Veracini, 2010, p. 5).

The major factor that enables a minority of European invaders, and thereafter Americans, to impose themselves on an indigenous majority scattered around four discordant locations, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific Islands, as Georges Balandier (1966) makes clear, is the material superiority of the colonisers. The industrial revolution originated in Britain during the nineteenth century, the heyday of British colonialism, is what contributes to this kind of superiority. This revolution had twofold aim through the British overseas hegemony: firstly, the exportation of "cultural missionaries in company with their soldiers and business agents" (Gay, 1974, p. 154), and secondly to guarantee the continuous flow of people and raw materials between the metropolis and the colony. Highlighting this fact, Loomba (2005) writes,

> Both the colonised and the colonisers moved: the former not only as slaves but also as indentured labourers, domestic servants, travellers and traders, and the colonial masters as administrators, soldiers, merchants, settlers, travellers, writers, domestic staff, missionaries, teachers and scientists (p. 9).

By linking it to the social reality of the areas of Africa (and Asia), Samuel-Mbaekwe (1986) explains that colonialism connotes three distinct aspects. The first understanding of the concept of colonialism could be given with the following equation:

Colonialism = to conquer + to rule

According to Samuel-Mbaekwe (1986), the two verbs, 'to conquer' and 'to rule' commonly refer to colonisation[3]. The second meaning, which is separate from the first, is built upon the ideology of action and reaction. It "denotes the reactions of those who were subjected to European conquest and rule i.e. to colonization" (p. 82). The two aforementioned conceptions of colonialism, i.e. 'colonisation' and 'reaction', reflect the kind of relationship between the coloniser and the colonised from a historical point of view. Samuel-Mbaekwe (1986) argues, in his third definition of colonialism, that any present-day understanding of colonial societies must be separated from its historical nature to reflect on the current colonial situation. This situation encompasses a complex interaction "between the elements of European culture and of the indigenous culture" (p. 82).

1.2.1.2 Cultural Colonialism

The interaction, or let's say confrontation to call a spade a spade, between the two basically heterogeneous entities, the European and the native cultures, leads inevitably to the prevalence of the colonizing culture over its native counterpart, and which would thus give rise to what is commonly called 'cultural colonialism'. In a lecture entitled 'Swaraj[4] in Ideas', delivered in October 1931, Bhattacharya (1954) argues that cultural subjection is manifested "only when one's traditional cast of ideas and sentiments is superseded without comparison or competition by a new cast representing an alien culture which possesses one like a ghost" (p. 103). According to Gay (1974) cultural colonialism, like the political one, is a form of bondage that "consists in the imitation of foreign languages, customs, and feelings,

[3] Sánchez (2012), following Dommelen's (1997) definition of colonialism, differentiated between 'colonialism' and its *"Active counterpart" (*Dommelen, 1997, p. 306*)* 'colonisation'. According to Sánchez, colonisation refers to movements of people (soldiers, Christian missionaries, merchants…etc.), whereas colonialism implies the existence of asymmetrical socio-economic relationships of domination or exploitation between the indigenous and the settlers.

[4] According to Bhattacharya (1954) the word 'Swaraj', which has a Hindi origin, consists of two words: *Swa* meaning *Self* and *raj* meaning *rule.*

that is, in the absolute loss of the national idiosyncrasy" (p. 153). In effect, losing one's own national peculiarity bestows upon the individual and the society, alike, an unconscious predisposition to colonialism. Panikkar (2003) explains that due to the limitations of coercion in ensuring a continued domination, the coloniser acknowledged the power of cultural colonialism in the perpetuation of domination through an "acceptance of domination by the subjected" (p. 7).

In a previous work, through which he debated the destiny of Africa, Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1986) explains that the biggest weapon used by colonialism against the defiance of the oppressed people is, what he called, the 'cultural bomb'. The effects of the cultural bomb, Ngugi Wa Thiongo argues, is to "annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves" (p. 3). The deprivation of the indigenous people of their cultural rights and identity reflects the malicious divide-and-rule policy of the coloniser. The members of the society which have been culturally colonised are indoctrinated, by the racist coloniser, to feel weak and inferior and to see their past as a barren land not worth living on. If political colonialism is considered as the colonisation, always reluctantly, of people's land and riches, then cultural colonialism is a voluntary and conscious colonisation of peoples' mind.

Kgatla (2018) defines the colonisation of the mind as the possession and control, through a set of beliefs, of the victims' mind (the colonised) by the colonisers. When summarising the many specific responses to the question, what did colonialism do to the native mind? Desouza (2017) explains that colonialism

> Enslaved the native mind, making it believe that what had emerged in the colonial encounter was good. It produced a shadow mind whose creativeness was eroded and which, unknown to itself, adopted an intellectual life that was marked by imitation and mimicry. It led to an erasure of cultural

> memory, producing disconnect with a millennia-old intellectual and cultural life (p. 7).

Cultural colonialism remains the worst type of subjugation. It imposes restraints on the mind and on the inner life of the spirit. Because of the unconscious character of cultural slavery the colonised subject finds himself/herself helpless to resist it or, at least, to bear it as a true evil. According to Bhattacharya (1954), subjugation "begins when one ceases to feel the evil and it deepens when the evil is accepted as a good" (p. 103). Another harmful consequence of the colonisation of the mind is the substitution of the real mind by a "shadow mind that functions like a real mind except in the matter of genuine creativeness" (p. 103). What distinguishes cultural colonialism, compared to political colonialism, is that it may persist even after the colonised people gain their political independence from their coloniser.

1.2.1.3 Economic Colonialism

Political and cultural colonialism are the most known types of hegemony exercised by foreign colonisers over colonised individuals and societies. These two methods of subjugating people pave the way to the emergence of another subtle form of domination, no less dangerous than the former ones, which is agreed on by authors as economic colonialism.

Economic domination, which is one attribute of colonialism, represents, according to Gottheil (1977), "a set of structures that are imposed upon a nation by another in order to affect international distributions of income and wealth" (p. 85). The redistribution of income and wealth in favour of colonial powers can be affected through different means. The most effective and commonplace mean is the use of military force. But other less obvious methods such as: annexations, protectorates, mandates, leaseholds, and naval bases can procure for the coloniser economic privileges in the colonised region that would not have been offered otherwise. The grant of privilege provides the coloniser with the hand to reshape the prevailing economic system for his own benefit and, as a result, leads to the declination of the social welfare in the colonised regions.

According to Fox (1968), the colonial enterprise worked hard, mainly after political independence, on turning the economies of third world countries to crisp and unproductive economies that depend for its survival, solely, on the selling of raw materials and the importation of manufactured goods. From his part, Sherman (1964) describes this colonial economic structure by openly stating that

> In most cases, the imperial country wanted an outlet for surplus capital, which was invested in the colonial countries where it brought astoundingly high profit rates, primarily because of a cheap labour supply and an enforced lack of competition. The capital was mainly invested in extractive industries, which exported raw materials to the imperial country. In the imperial country the cheap raw materials were profitably turned into manufactured goods, parts of which were exported back to the colonial country (Cited in Fox, 1968, p. 2).

In order to retain the hegemonial relation, the coloniser resorted mainly to the use of economic power, for example, "as a primary creditor, or source of investment funds, or source of economic and military aid, or primary market for exportables" (Gottheil, 1977, p. 85). The use of economic aid as a financial tool for the resuscitation of the economies of underdeveloped countries is but a form of deception for "expanding influence" (Lawson, 1988, p. 502) and the preservation of imperialist greed. In the preface of her book 'Aid as Imperialism', Teresa Hayter (1971) points out to the negative effect of financial aids by stating that

> Aid can be regarded as a concession by the imperialist powers to enable them to continue their exploitation of the semi colonial countries; it is similar in its effects to reforms within capitalist countries, in the sense that the exploiting classes relinquish the minimum necessary in order to retain their essential interests (p. 9).

Hayter (1971) adds a number of additional disadvantages of aid. According to him, aid can be used as a bribe in order to conciliate the ruling elite to work for the benefit of the donor country. Additionally to this, the continuous inflow of aid can unavoidably contribute to the accumulation of external debts, which add substantial burden on the economy of the recipient country, and the polarisation of the internal class structure "between a business-bureaucratic-military oligarchy, which benefits from the external economic relationships, and the rural and urban masses, who are impoverished by it" (Abdel-Fadil et al., 1977, p. 209).

1.2.2 Pretexts of Colonialism

In order to conceal their malicious intentions behind the conquest of people and their lands, the European imperial powers claimed their overseas campaigns to have noble ends and innumerable benefits in favour of the subject population. For a long period of time, Africa, for example, was depicted within metropolitan societies as the heart of backwardness, savagery and barbarism, and its people as primitive, ignorant and uncivilised. Therefore, European powers, and in order to legitimise colonialism and imperialism[5], regarded it as their duty, as civilised nations, to carry out quite consciously a "civilising mission" (Conklin, 1997, p. 1) with the seemingly noble aim to "modernize, develop, instruct, and civilize the natives" (Eagleton et al., 1990, p. 74). Interestingly, Thornton (1962), through his criticism of this civilising mission, argues that the white European race,

> Saw themselves as the trustees of civilisation, and they reckoned it their duty to see to it that civilisation was disseminated to as many beneficiaries as could be contrived. They wanted to leave the world better than they found it, and it has yet to be proved that they did not succeed (p. 335).

[5] Colonialism, in Said's (1993) view, is the consequence of imperialism. According to him 'imperialism' can be defined as "the practice, the theory, and the attitude of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory", (p. 9) whereas, 'colonialism' is "the implanting of settlements on distant territory" (p. 9).

Forsgren (2019), in a very recent article, makes clear that European colonisation of North America, home of American Indians, was justified by the idea, which still exists within the American society, of the supremacy of the white race over the other races. This idea makes the Americans believes that it is "their 'manifest destiny' to spread their civilization across North America" (Van Ells, 1995, p. 609) after the eradication of the opposed uncivilised people (Indians).

Another argument for the exploitation and conquest of African nations was brought by the British poet Rudyard Kipling (1899), in his famous poem entitled '*The White Man's Burden*' published in 1899. In this poem Rudyard Kipling exclaims

> Take up the White Man's burden —
> The savage wars of peace —
> Fill full the mouth of Famine
> And bid the sickness cease

The poem was originally written, as Brantlinger (2007) explains, to urge the United States of America to conquer the Philippines and "join the imperial club" (Van Ells, 1995, p. 607). Kipling believes that civilising non-white people is a burden borne by the white man, due to his racial and cultural superiority, that he can't get rid of but through colonisation.

Long after its commonness, the idea of the white man's burden received severe criticism. Sherrill (1926), for instance, calls for the "frank admission that the 'White Man's Burden' is after all only a smug phrase coined to cover exploitation of weaker races for the benefit of the white one" (p. 65). Following the same line of thought, Emerson (1969) argues that the aforementioned idea serves "merely to establish the legitimacy of continued colonial rule" (p. 13).

The geopolitical changes that prevail international relations by the end of the twentieth century, especially the ascension of the United State of America as a world power after the collapse of the Soviet Union, leads to the emergence of new

pretexts to colonialism. The war against terrorism, which the United States launches after the ambiguous terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, was a good reason for the invasion of Iraq, though Iraq, as Altwaiji (2014) argues, has no hand in the planning for the attacks. Chomsky (2005), when interviewed by Geov Parrish, uncovers the real motive for the imperialist greed linked with the brutal invasion of Iraq by stating that

> If its main product was lettuce and pickles ... if you have three gray cells functioning, you know ... the U.S. invaded Iraq because it has enormous oil resources, mostly untapped, and it's right in the heart of the world's energy system. Which means that if the U.S. manages to control Iraq, it extends enormously its strategic power…over Europe and Asia (section 8).

What happened with Iraq was duplicated in other regions of the third world, sometimes with different imperialist slogans. Lybia and Syria, for instance, were savagely dominated by occidental powers under the pretext of establishing democracy extorted, as they claim, by dictatorial regimes. The war against al-Qaeda was also used by France to find a foothold in the north of Mali in order to fully control the riches of the Sahel states. Petras (2002) unveils the hidden agenda of colonial empires behind waging war on terrorism by stating that "the 'anti-terrorism' doctrine served to 'legitimate' intervention throughout the world and to abolish democratic right" (p. 3507).

1.2.3 Postcolonialism Defined

Postcolonialism or postcolonial studies mean different things to different people at different times. According to Loomba (2005) and Overbey (2012), it is more helpful to think of postcolonialism as the contestation of colonialism and its legacies. Quayson (2000) defines postcolonialism as a "studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and it's past and present effects" (p. 2) on both ex-colonial societies and global development. Historically, after the Second World War, as Ashcroft et al. (2013) explain, the term had a chronological meaning used

merely to designate the post-independence period. However, from the late 1970s postcolonialism has been widely used within literary circles to deal with the effects of colonial experience on cultures and societies. In this respects Ashcroft et al. (2013) argue that postcolonialism is now used in wide and diverse ways

> to include the study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and, most importantly perhaps, the differing response to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre- and post-independence nations and communities (p. 205).

In a previous work, Ashcroft et al. (1989) argue that postcolonial studies refer to "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft et al., 1989, p. 2). This broad reaching definition has been opposed by those who believe that postcolonialism should be limited either by selecting only certain periods (the period after independence), or some groups of peoples (settlers, for example, although affected by the colonizing process are not postcolonial), or, finally, those societies free of the attitudes of colonization (settler societies cannot be considered as postcolonial). This definition has received further criticism by Bush (2006) and Parry (1987) who stress that postcolonialism's emphasis on cultural hegemony will lead inevitably to the neglect of the material impact of imperialism and the obscuration of the continued dominance of western capitalism.

In literary contexts, some scholars argue that postcolonialism is a "reading strategy" (Ashcroft et al., 2002, p. 201). This process of reading involves, as McLeod (2000) explains, the reading of texts produced either by writers from ex-colonized countries concerned with the past or the present legacy of colonialism, or by migrant writers or those descended from migrant families, which deal with

diaspora experiences and its many consequences, or, the re-reading of texts produces during colonialism which whether address or not the experiences of empire. Due to the crucial role of postcolonial reading in contesting colonial discourses, McLeod (2000) go on to emphasis that conventional reading methods and modes of interpretation have to be rethought to meet the aspirations of postcolonialism.

1.2.4 The Temporality of Postcolonialism

Much has been said on the exact meaning of postcolonialism and when it really begins. The prefix "Post" in the term constitutes a source of vigorous disagreement amongst critics because it implies a temporal and ideological connotation. In its temporality, "Post" means "'going beyond' or 'coming after'" (Sakhkhane, 2012, p. 4). In this light, postcolonialism signifies going beyond colonialism as a specifically historical event that started with the appearance of Europe's imperial greed for expansion and hegemony in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and which was formally brought to an end after the Second World War and the Bandung Conference of 1955. As far as the Algerian context is concerned, on the 5th July 1962 Algeria ceased to be a French colony and became a sovereign nation-state. Therefore, the period in the history of Algeria that comes after the date of its political independence is the history of postcolonial Algeria.

The word "Post," in postcolonialism, could also be understood as a temporal aftermath. In this sense, it denotes the social, economic and cultural situation that prevails within a former colony or diasporic community during colonial rule or after formal independence.

Formal decolonization varies temporally from a nation state to another. At the time when most parts in the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa gained their independence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most countries in Africa and Asia, in contrast, gained their independence in the twentieth century. Pointing to this fact, Ella Shohat (1992) trenchantly asks: "When exactly, then, does the 'post-colonial' begin?" (p. 103). Through this question Ella Shohat

points to the fact that the vague starting point of the postcolonial indicates that the experiences of colonized people with colonial oppression were different, and therefore, their reactions were different accordingly.

Beginning in the late 1970s, as Karen Overbey (2012) explains, the preposition "Post" started to be understood as an ideology rather than a temporal aftermath. Postcoloniality in this sense doesn't represent the demise of colonialism but rather, a preface to a new era of economic, cultural and technological hegemony, generally called 'neocolonialism', which "sidesteps the language of beginnings and ends" (Prakash, 1996, p. 188).

This could be illustrated by reconsidering the Algerian context. Colonialism has many facets or aspects, though the political aspect is the most important one. The political power which France excised over Algeria from the very moment of colonization till the date before political independence, i.e. before the 5th of July 1962, was only part of French colonialism. Apart from the political domain, French colonialism exerted a large amount of influence on the social, cultural and economic spheres of the Algerian society and these influences didn't come to an end after independence. So even today, the legacies of French colonialism still surrounded the Algerian nation-state mainly the French language used by a big number of citizens, including the ruling elite, to communicate.

Abrahamsen (2003) pointes out genuinely to this reality, when distinguishing between the conventional meaning of colonialism and its effects on the socioeconomic situation of Third world nations in the twenty-first century, by stating that

> Colonialism, as conventionally defined in terms of formal settlement and control of other people's land and goods, is in the main over, but many of its structures and relations of power are still in place. The 'post' in postcolonialism is not therefore to be understood as a clearly dividing temporal 'post', but rather as an indication of continuity (p. 195).

By the end of the twenties century the majority of the colonized nations, some are still deprived from their freedom, as the case for Palestine, get rid, in a way or another, of their former oppressor. This sudden and relative change in the political situation adding to that the so many years of colonial hegemony and enslavement, with all its lasting and devastating effects, left the newly independent countries underdeveloped and completely helpless in running its own affairs, and as a result, become to a great extent dependent on the former colonizer.

The idea of 'continuity', in Rita Abrahamsen words, plainly abolishes the temporal dimension of postcolonialism and suggests, as Overbey (2012) explains, that it "exist from the first contact; it is the condition produced in the encounter of imperial and local" (p. 145). In this same line of thought, postcolonialism might be think of as a word that signifies not something that comes after the end of colonialism but as signifying rather things that comes after the beginning of colonialism.

From his side, Aijaz Ahmad (1995) confirms, in a previous article, the continuous aspect of colonialism by claiming that it could be considered as a "trans-historical thing" (Cited in Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 169) started from the very first moment the first European imperial campaigns set out to conquer other people's land and riches up to and including the United States' neocolonialism of the present day. Sethi (2011) accentuates the persistence of colonialism well beyond the date of political independence by arguing that

> Among postcolonialism's many connotations, one interpretation stands out in the contemporary milieu – that it has less significance as denoting 'after colonialism' than in emphasizing the persistence of colonial tendencies in terms of a continuing imperialism (p. 5).

Neocolonialism is nothing but a disguised form of colonialism. It allows an indirect, lucrative rule of former colonies by the metropolitan powers, essentially through political superiority in the international community, economic dominance and

cultural influences. The recrudescence of colonialism in the form of neocolonialism or American imperialism passivates all forms of resistance, and makes the easy shift to a new decolonised era quite problematic. As McClintock (1992) contends, the term postcolonial becomes surrounded with ambiguity after the second Gulf War, because of the new American interventionist policy around the globe.

1.2.5 The Spatiality of Postcolonialism

Apart from its problematic temporality, the postcolonial renders a dubious spatiality. First, it is widely admitted within academic contexts that the postcolonial tends to be associated, as Sethi (2011) states when introducing the implications of postcolonialism, with third world countries which gained their political independence after the Second World War. However, because of the two-way traffic of ideas, goods and people (exiled or voluntary immigrants) between the colonised and the metropolitan country, it is almost impossible to think that colonialism only affects the colonised people and not the colonisers. Therefore, talking about postcolonial Algeria, for example, will lead inevitably to talk with equal justice about postcolonial France. This reality has led Shohat (1992) to talk about the universality of postcolonialism.

> Since the experience of colonialism and imperialism is shared, albeit asymmetrically, by (ex) colonizer and (ex) colonized, it becomes an easy move to apply the 'post' also to First World European countries. Since most of the world is now living after the period of colonialism, the 'post-colonial' can easily become a universalizing category which neutralizes significant geopolitical differences between France and Algeria, Britain and Iraq, or the U.S. and Brazil since they are all living in a 'postcolonial' epoch (p. 103).

Postcolonialism, freed from its third-world confinement, travels and resides in advanced capitalist countries. Within first world academic circles, it gained a prestigious position mainly because of the "homegrown postcolonial population"

(Sethi, 2011, p. 13) capitalist countries have, and which is made up of ethnic groups and migrants.

As postcolonialism penetrates into the inner sanctum of the first world, it took in charge the trust to bridge the wide gap between the opposite binaries such as: east/west, self/other and so on. Postcolonial intellectuals in the metropolitan arena, as Prakash (1990) elucidates, arouse, incite, and affiliate with its subordinated groups. They overcome cultural boundaries and barriers to "connect with the minority voices in the first world: socialists, radicals, feminists, minorities" (p. 403).

However, postcolonialism, as Dirlik (1994) asserts, fails to meet its commitment to abolish all forms of inequalities within heterogeneous societies, between classes and genders that are allegedly legacies of colonialism. Therefore, it seems that the reason of this failure lies mainly in the appropriation of postcolonialism by Europe and North America in a way that it becomes "the reconsideration and reformation of its own history and identity" (Young, 2016, p. 61). As result for that, postcolonialism has been openly criticised, by postcolonial critics, for its bias in favour of the western imperialist hegemony and its exclusion of those intellectuals who live and practice in the real postcolonial world. In this context, San Juan (1998) is provoked to write

> Where were the postcolonial gurus during the Gulf War? What is their stand on political prisoners like Mumia Abu Jamal, Elizam Escobar, Leonard Peltier, and many others languishing in U.S. jails? …How does postcolonial theory …explain the plight of millions of 'overseas contract workers' – women domestics, 'hospitality girls', and mail-order brides comprise this large, horizontally mobile cohort – all over the world? (p. 13).

On her part, Loomba (2005) considers the spatiality of postcolonial theory from a different perspective. According to her, if the postcolonial theory is thought of as an

inevitable reaction to the legacies of colonialism, then the focus of postcolonialism has to be narrowed to include a specific group of oppressed people within a specific location. Therefore, this means that "Postcoloniality becomes a vague condition of people anywhere and everywhere, and the specificities of locale do not matter" (p. 20).

1.3 Postcolonial Literature

It is until the late 1980's and 1990's that postcolonialism became an integral part of literary studies. According to Ashcroft et al. (2013), postcolonial literature brought together two already existing areas of study within the field of English literature; 'Commonwealth literature' and 'Colonial discourse studies'. Then, before launching into the identification of the origin and meaning of these kinds of literary studies and the different concepts related to them, mainly orientalism, sublternity and hybridity, it seems quite practical to start by looking at what does the word 'literature' first mean.

1.3.1 The Definition of Literature

It seems at first sight that the question 'what is literature?' has a unique and commonly known answer, but in fact the word 'literature' implies different meanings. From a layman's perspective, literature is simply a piece of writing. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, when defining literature, puts a restriction on these pieces of writing and limits them to only those "that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays and poems. More restrictions have been made by Morris (1993) when he emphasizes the artistic excellence of literary texts and argues that this body of writings is "perceived to have certain aesthetic qualities" (p. 6).

This apparently accurate narrowing of the field of literature has led Clarke (1927) to conclude, in his article 'What is Literature', that literature is nothing if is it not art, with his emphasis on the oneness of this art. Thus, the definition of literature is equated with the definition of art. In its integrity, art is a reflection of

the human life, and its imaginative interpretation through special use of fascinating symbols. Therefore, Clarke (1927) considers literature as "a continuous imaginative commentary upon Life framed in language-symbols" (p. 62). He goes on exhaustively enumerating the various traits that bestow on literature this feature of continuity. These characteristics could be summarised in: the uniqueness of style, the universality of themes, and the appealing in tone and intonation. Remenyi (1951), when discussing the meaning of literature, argues that literature is an imaginative conception of life in a creative way. The term life, according to him, may be regard as that of an individual (the writer or poet himself), or any human experience governed by external factors.

In his endeavour to give a definition to literature, Stecker (1996) offers a number of principles according to which works are classified either as literature or non-literature. He argues that for a given work to be considered as a work of literature, that work should be produced in a linguistic medium. Furthermore, he restricts the literary genres of this work to include: a novel, short story, tale, drama, or poem, written with sufficient technical skills and possess aesthetic, cognitive, or interpretation-centred value. The final principal Stecker (1996) presents has to do with the author of the literary work who should be, according to him, one of the great writers.

Terry Cochran (2007), in a recent article entitled 'The knowing of Literature', in which he considers the relationship between literature and knowing, champions a different approach to literary discourses which contrast with the prevailing historical model.

> Rather than a subcategory of cultural production, merely a term describing certain forms of commercial artefacts, literature is a process of invention that involves the human mind in its most basic yearnings and capacities to represent (p. 127).

This new elaborated understanding disjoined literature from its institutional or commercial framework as merely a domain of knowledge, among other domains,

and insists on its faculty to accompany, enable and invest thinking. Therefore, literature can be considered as "the storehouse and producer of unpredictable knowledge" (Culler, 2007, p. 232). Cochran (2007) exemplifies the relationship between literature and knowledge by the Freudian model of mind. He explains in a bit of detail why and how Freud used literary abstraction, as a sounding board, to represent psychic phenomena.

Another understanding of the meaning of literary works was given by the American literary critic Hillis Miller (2002) while he was trying to give a clear answer to the question 'What is Literature?' As to highlight its intrinsic aspects of universality and perenniality, Miller (2002) considers literature as "a certain use of words or other signs that exists in some form or other in any human culture at any time" (Miller, 2002, p. 13). This quotation emphasises how important the use of words, in a certain way, is in distinguishing between literature and other forms of writing. For example, a poem can easily distinguish by the printing of words in lines with capitals at the beginning of each line, and a novel by its title pages, whereas drama by the dialogue between the different characters. Furthermore, literature could be distinguished by the simple use of words and sentences in a fictitious way to create a new imaginary world.

Another way of approaching literature was introduced by Todorov et al. (2007) when they speak of the functional and structural definition of literature. Todorov and his colleagues identify the functional definition of literature as "what it does rather than what it is" (p. 2). In this sense literature could have a sociological or ontological nature such as to disclose what really going within a given society at a particular time from a given point of view, or to contribute in a specific way in the creation of being.

On the other hand, the structural definition of literature is based upon "the concept of beauty" (p. 5), and imitation. For the latter, literature is regarded as an artistic imitation through words of something fictional. This fictitious quality doesn't necessitate that literary works are but an accumulation of falsehood and

myths; it is rather preferable to admit that "a literary text cannot be submitted to the test of truth. It is neither true nor false but simply fiction" (p. 3). From his part Frye (1957) asserts this when he distinguished between the inward and outward directions of language meaning. He writes,

> In all literary verbal structures the final direction of meaning is inward. In literature, the standards of outward meaning are secondary, for literary works do not pretend to describe or assert, and are hence not true, not false (p. 74).

In terms of beauty, literature is a work of art that imitates beautiful nature with the aim to please more than anything else. This aesthetic dimension makes literature something integral and signifies itself alone, in other words, it is "a noninstrumental language whose value resides in itself" (Todorov et al., 2007, p. 5).

Wellek and Warren (1948) define literature by distinguishing its particular use of language and contrasting it with the two other main uses: the scientific and the everyday. While the scientific use of language is purely denotative[6], literary language will appear in some ways deficient, it abounds in ambiguities; it is

> Like every other historical language, full of homonyms, arbitrary or irrational categories such as grammatical gender; it is permeated with historical accidents, memories, and associations. In a word, it is highly 'connotative'. Moreover, literary language is far from merely referential. It has its expressive side; it conveys the tone and attitude of the speaker or writer (p. 12).

[6] According to Agung et al. (2016), denotation is "generally defined as literal or dictionary meanings of a word in contrast to its connotative or associated meanings" (p. 7).

Everyday language is in a way a complex concept. It includes a great bulk of language varieties such as: the official language, the colloquial language, the language of religion, the language of commerce, slangs…etc. Therefore, everyday language has many uses, as varied as its variants, and it would be false to limit it merely to communication. Unlike the language of everyday use, literary language is a deliberate and systematic exploitation of language resources. For example, poetic language "organizes, tightens, the resources of everyday language, and sometimes does even violence to them, in an effort to force us into awareness and attention" (p. 14). Moreover, everyday language is purely pragmatic in nature; it is linked with outward or real life actions. Whereas, literary language emerges most clearly under the referential aspect, the events and characters are not literary true. They refer to a world of fiction and imagination exist only in the creative mind of the writer and the capacious vision of the reader.

In his most challenging essay "What is Literature's now" Laurent Dubreuil (2007) takes up the question "What is literature?" by focusing on the special temporality of literature. He insists on the continuance of literary works. Literature, according to him, should not be thought of as something anterior, coming from an obscure source, it is rather an immortal discourse that is generated and regenerated. Notwithstanding literature is the product of yesterday, it is linked, through the process of reading, with the present, with the now. Dubreuil (2007) emphasises that he literary now is

> Diffracted in different presents: tenses and times of writing, steps in reading, constitution of comment, and vital commitment. Each moment is necessitated by the one that follows: there would be no literary writing without audience or readers, no reading without a quest for joy or a better life. Nonetheless, those successive instants are not assembled in a linear or teleological manner. They reanimate yesterday through literature's now, so that what is past stays past and is present at the same (p. 53).

Reading, like writing, is part of literature. Reading's now is the destiny of literary texts; it makes literary writing always alive and function in the present. Unread literature is like a body without soul, a dead body. If to take for granted that the aim of a writer is for his work to "be performed" (Widdowson, 1999, p. 15), then reading is its real performance. Attridge (2004), when discussing the temporality of literary works, states that "the words as we read them produce their effects in the present" (p. 104). He goes on explaining that this present is different from the present conceived as the 'now'; the "very presentness" (p. 104) of the words read is linked with their past, with the time they have been written by a different person in a different present. Furthermore, Attridge (2004) shows the importance of the process of reading in distinguishing between texts as being either 'written' or 'writing'. He explained that as long as a text is read, after being created, it remains a 'writing', once it becomes unread, for a reason or another, then it is merely a 'written' text.

1.3.2 Commonwealth Literature

According to Ashcroft et al. (2013), the term 'Commonwealth', formerly the British Commonwealth of Nations[7], signifies a grouping of sovereign nations which share a common history of British colonialism with the British monarch at it head in symbolic terms only. The 'Commonwealth' gained legitimacy, as Shriganeshan (2009) explained, after the Leeds conference[8] in 1964 when the Association of Commonwealth Literature was formed. One anomaly that plagues this political community is the conspicuous absence of the United State of America's membership, although it was, once, one of the British colonies.

[7] According to Burt (1956) the British Commonwealth of Nation was born after a long process of peace talks between the British parliament and the dominions which were held in London and Paris between the years 1917 and 1919. These talks gave the dominions international status while retaining their allegiance to Britain.

[8] It is the first international conference on Commonwealth literature which was held at the University of Leeds in 1964.

Then, the commonwealth literature conference organized by the University of Leeds in England in 1964 was an effort to bring under the same umbrella the significant amount of literature "penned in English" (Agrawal, 2009, p. 164) that was coming out from the once colonized parts of the British Empire, such as those from the African, Caribbean, Australian and South Asian nations. The conference was an attempt to bring authors from these nations, like Patrick White from Australia, R. K. Narayan from India, V. S. Naipaul from Trinidad, Chinua Achebe from Nigeria, who were being published regularly in Britain and America, to the fore and to form a field of literary studies around their works. This field was referred to as the field of commonwealth literature.

The genesis of a local literature in commonwealth countries by the late 1940s, as indicated by Ashcroft et al. (2013), is mainly the result, according to McLeod (1961), of a revival of national and cultural identity. However, some critics, while acknowledging the historical and cultural constraints that influence commonwealth writers, asserted that the major aim for which commonwealth literature was established is to urge all these writers to go beyond local affairs and to embrace universal themes. As was the case for Jeffares (1975) who argues that, "literature is at best a free trading of the mind, and national boundaries should impose no duties to hinder its free movement" (p. 11). In a similar vein, McLeod (2000) while arguing in favour of the timelessness and universality of commonwealth literature, openly stated that Commonwealth literature

> Whether produce in India, Australia or the Caribbean- was assumed to reach across national borders and deal with universal concerns. Commonwealth literature certainly dealt with national and cultural issues, but the best writing has the mysterious power to transcend them too (p. 13).

The Commonwealth or Third World writers are often concerned with themes shared by the majority, if not all, commonwealth nations that examine the physical and psychological effect of slavery, migration and colonialism. For example in Africa,

the novel Thing Fall Apart, by the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe (1958), describes the downfall of the traditional African society known by the name Umofia, after the death of its chieftain, Okonkwo, as a result of fierce wrestling match with "the new values brought in by English missionaries" (Winnifrith, 1979, p. 19).

A few of these commonwealth writers have immigrated to the metropolitan country. The new and, at the same time, bleak environment these writers experienced in the west urges them to produce literature in English with the core themes summarised by Agrawal (2009) in "The latent social and cultural hostilities, feeling of alienation from their roots and thereafter a constant search for attaching and assimilating these roots in the western surroundings" (p. 164).

In her first novel, *A Change of Skies*, the Siri-Lankan writer Yasmine Gooneratne (1991) exposes the experience of a young immigrant Sri-Lankan couple, Bharat Dava Sinha and his wife Navaranjini, in Australia. Throughout their hard journey to and stay in an alien country, Bharat and his wife came to realise that the only way to overcome depression and culture shock is to delink themselves with their past culture and to assimilate with the new milieu. According to Agrawal (2009) the protagonist in this novel communicates the personal experience of the Sri-Lankan poet and novelist Yasmine Gooneratne as an immigrant who has been living in Australia for more than two decades.

Like the political grouping Commonwealth of Nations, among which American is not a member, commonwealth literature excludes American writings. What is more curious was that the category commonwealth literature never included British literature in spite of the fact that Britain was and still is at the head of the Commonwealth of Nations and the metropolitan country of the British Empire. This is mainly due, according to Niven (1981) to "the increasingly spurious grounds that its rich literary inheritance might, to use a favourite word of Mrs. Thatcher's, swamp the rest of the Commonwealth" (p. 601). In a similar vein, Salman Rushdie (1991), in his essay: 'Commonwealth literature' doesn't exist, claims that there is a politics

going on behind how the term commonwealth literature was being used. According to him

> The term is not used simply to describe, or even misdescribe, but also to divide. It permits academic institutions, publishers, critics and even readers to dump a large segment of English literature into a box and then more or less ignore it. At best, what is called 'Commonwealth literature' is positioned below English literature 'proper'—or, to come back to my friend the don, it places Eng. Lit. at the centre and the rest of the world at the periphery (p. 66).

Rushdie (1991) argues that the hidden politics is to segregate that great bulk of English literature emerging from the colonies as a separate category, and to name them in a manner that shows that this kind of literature (commonwealth literature) is not at par with the British literature, a literature which is almost inferior. This minor importance accorded to commonwealth literature in the West is what made Salman Rushdie came to the conclusion that such a literature doesn't exist, not that writers do not write it.

What also concerns Rushdie (1991) is that in commonwealth literature authors were arranged according to their nations of origin. According to him, "What Commonwealth literature finds interesting in Patrick White is his Australianness; in Doris Lessing, her Africanness; in V. S. Naipaul, his West Indianness" (p. 66). Many commonwealth authors have travelled, during or after colonization, to and settled in the metropolitan country, for different reasons; social, political or economic, and produced relevant writings about their nations and cultures as well as about the host nation and culture. So, those writers have been writing about different places and to contain them inside passports, according to Rushdie (1991) is a conundrum. For instance, Salman Rushdie was born in Bombay (India) and then, at the age of thirteen, according to Goonetilleke (1998), he goes to England as a student and subsequently settled down there. His family moved from India to

settle down in Pakistan. Rushdie has written a lot about India, as well as Britain and Pakistan. Therefore, does this make Rushdie an Indian author, a British author or a Pakistani author? As an answer to this question, Rushdie (1991) states that "I have constantly been asked whether I am British, or Indian. The formulation 'Indian-born British writer' has been invented to explain me. But, as I said last night, my new book deals with Pakistan" (p. 67). It is really a complicated matter, and it is one of the failing of Commonwealth literature as a category.

The attempt to read literature by using a national framework was also problematic in another way. The literature a commonwealth nation like India produces is produced in many different languages. English is one of them but not the only one. Though Commonwealth literature used the concept of nation to group authors and their works it never take into account the various kinds of non-English literature emerging from the colonies. Emphasising this shortcoming, Rushdie (1991) argues that

> if we were to forget about 'Commonwealth literature', we might see that there is a kind of commonality about much literature, in many languages, emerging from those parts of the world which one could loosely term the less powerful, or the powerless (p. 68).

The most problematic aspect of Commonwealth literature is the way in which it connects national literature coming out from the colonies with the colonial empire. According to Bryce (1990), Commonwealth literature could be interpreted as cultural manifestation of colonialism that tries to keep together an empire which is no longer a political reality. In a similar vein, Trivedi (2010) forthrightly acknowledges that "the Commonwealth is primarily not a literary or a linguistic category but a political category. It is above all else a '[British] Commonwealth of Nations,' and not A Universal Republic of Letters" (p. 127). It is no wonder that the feeling of nostalgia for the colonial empire that lurked and still lurks behind the

term commonwealth made "so many of the writers claimed by 'Commonwealth literature' deny that they have anything to do with it" (Rushdie, 1991, p. 68).

A kind of aversion towards the category Commonwealth literature was best displayed when the Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh refuses, according to Talib (2012), to let his historical novel *The Glass Palace*, published in 2000, participates in the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2001. In a question concerning the reason of this withdrawal, addressed to him by his interviewee Chitra Sankaran (2012), Ghosh answers by saying:

> You know, I feel, aesthetically, do I want my book, which is about the lives of people who were resisting empire in various ways—do I want it to be stuck with this Commonwealth Prize label on the cover? And I decided, "no, I can't live with that. I don't want it." And so I withdrew (p. 4).

The nostalgic glorification of the colonial past which informed the idea of commonwealth was precisely what Amitav Ghosh, and other commonwealth authors, is trying to resist through his novels like The Glass Palace. Therefore, he couldn't allow it to be included in the race for that prize.

From the 1980s, as McLeod (2000) states, Commonwealth literature as a literary category was losing favour because of the various different problematic aspects abovementioned. Consequently, by the 1990s it was the time for the emergence of Postcolonial literature as a replacement for the nomenclature 'Commonwealth literature.'

According to Tembong (2014) the two categories, Postcolonial literature and commonwealth literature, are almost the same. Authors who have been read under the banner Commonwealth literature were also relevant within the category Postcolonial literature. In a similar vein, Slemon (1990) noted that "the term post-colonial is an outgrowth of what formerly were 'common-wealth' literary studies" (Cited in Ako, 2004, p. 6). However, unlike Commonwealth literature, which was

concerned only with literature written in English, it is worth noting that Postcolonial literature, though still predominantly confine itself to the English language, attempts genuinely to include non-English literature within its canon. Ako (2004), for the purpose of clarifying this fact, made clear that

> the term 'postcolonial' not only encompasses a wider field geographically in ways that the term 'commonwealth' does not, since it deals with a re-reading of English, French, and American canonical texts, the literatures of Africa, India and the West Indies etc., as well as the problems of gender, caste, and class as they are posed in these societies and are represented textually (p. 7).

Postcolonial literature, as Tembong (2014) insistes, reacted to the concept of universalism which was a Western made developed to devalues the cultures of other societies. Postcolonial literature showed a keen awareness of the fact that cultures, as well as people who produce these cultures, are not fixed within national boundaries.

The most radical change in the approach to literary texts that distinguishes Postcolonial literature from Commonwealth literature is that the former focus on anti-colonial resistance, whereas the latter informed by colonial nostalgia or glorification of the legacy of colonialism. Postcolonial literature is not merely a grouping of literature emerged from the ex-colonies of Britain it is rather a grouping of literature which attempt to subvert and undo the various effects of colonial violence. This critical attitude which informs the postcolonial studied today is the legacy of what is called colonial discourse analysis.

1.4 Colonial Discourse Analysis

The study of the colonial discourse is mainly concerned with investigating how colonialism, as a violent subjugation of Third World nations[9], is link to the idea of discourse. Firstly, what does a 'discourse' mean?

Tracing the development of the term, Ashcroft et al. (2013) argue that a 'discourse' was used to "describe any kind of speaking, talk or conversation, but became increasingly used to describe a more formal speech, a narration or a treatment of any subject at length, a treatise, dissertation or sermon" (p. 83). From his part, Tayon (1999) asserts that a "discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experience" (p. 285). Similarly, Whisnant (2012) maintained that a discourse refers to specific patterns of language, either oral or written, that reflects specific aspects of the speaker's identity and the social institutions within which he is caught up. Drawing on Michel Foucault definition of 'discourse' as carrier of knowledge, Ashcroft et al. (2013) explain that in such a discourse,

> Speakers and hearers, writers and readers come to an understanding about themselves, their relationship to each other and their place in the world. It is the complex of signs and practices which organises social existence and social reproduction (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 83).

The insight that Michel Foucault bring to the definition of discourse, as Ashcroft et al. (2013) explain, is that though in theory the number of things that we can say or write about is infinite, within practice the number of meaningful statements we can make is strictly limited by certain factors. Michel Foucault (1981) introduces three

9 Mao (1998) organised the countries into three worlds. According to him, the Third World, includes: Asian countries (except Japan), Africa, and Latin America. The two other categories are: the First and Second Worlds.

great systems that control and delimit discourses. He enumerated these systems in the following order, "the forbidden speech, the division of madness and the will to truth" (p. 55).

In every society there are certain prohibition surrounding certain topics. According to Foucault (1981), it is quite obvious that talking about everything, whatever the circumstance is, is almost forbidden. As a good example for him is sexuality and politics whose prohibition may vary from a society to another. Another example of a discourse, given by Ashcroft et al. (2013), is medicine. Within this profession, which is governed by specific set of ethics, it is very difficult to talk about certain things like the nature of the sickness, the identity of the sick and even the process of healing. The second system of exclusion, and not prohibition, is the opposition between madness and sanity. So, if the discourse produced by a sane person is to be understood as composed of well-structured and meaningful statements, then the "whole immense discourse of a madman was taken for mere noise" (Foucault, 1981, p. 53). According to this line of thought, the discourse of a mad person is considered as something that doesn't exist.

In addition to the forbidden speech and madness, Foucault (1981) talks about the will to truth as an important factor that limits the proliferation of discourse. According to him the will to truth encompasses "the range of objects to be known, of the functions and positions of the knowing subjects, of the material, technical, and material investments of knowledge" (p. 55). The production and dissemination of Knowledge, for Foucault (1981), is guided by various institutions like, colleges, scientific laboratories, publishing industry, libraries, so on and so forth. These institutions, therefore, closely control the discourse by prioritising the circulation of certain statements while marginalising certain other opposing ones. But, due to the fact that "power is exercised, not simply held" (Rabinow & Dreyfus, 1982, p. 192), if within a society there is a power imbalance then it is the institutions of the more powerful that regulates knowledge and its manifestation.

Another important idea of Michel Foucault (1995), significant in understanding colonial discourse analysis, is that power and knowledge are interrelated. According to him, the discourse produced by the powerful institution was circulated as the only true knowledge. Therefore, he argues that

> We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (p. 194).

Conversely, knowledge induces effects of power. A good example for this articulation of power on knowledge, given by Michel Foucault while interviewed by Brochier (1980), is the university hierarchy. According to Foucault, it is axiomatic that scientific discourse provides a senior university professor with a soft power within the academic milieu, as well as observable respect within the political arena. The connection between discourse and colonial power relations was most elaborately explained in a book titled *'Orientalism'* authored by the Palestine born American professor of English and comparative literature Edward W. Said[10]. According to Philip Holden (2003), '*Orientalism'*, which was published in 1978, "placed colonial discourse analysis on the critical table in the Western academy" (p. 296). '*Orientalism'*, as Pinggong (2002) describes, open new vistas for the study of colonialism and postcolonialism.

[10] Edward W. Said is regarded as the founder of Postcolonial Studies. He primarily focused on the literature that was produced from within the European colonial metropolis. Four years before his death Edward W. Said (1999) wrote his own biography in his book titled 'Out of Place: A Memoire', through which he narrated his life between Palestine and America.

1.4.1 Orientalism

In his seminal book, *'Orientalism'*, Edward W. Said (1979) contends that the military and economic domination of the Orient was integrally associated with how this latter was conceptualised, researched and talk about in the Occident (Europe). This discourse about the Orient is what Said (1979) refers to as Orientalism. In the introduction of his book, 'Orientalism', Said (1979) presents three different, yet (in his view) interrelated and inseparable meanings of the term Orientalism.

First of all, the word 'orient', which is the root word of the term Orientalism, has its specific meaning. Etymologically, according to Curtis (2009), the term 'orient' was adopted from the Latin 'oriens' which means the "land of the rising sun" (p. 2). Traditionally, in Western Europe, the word 'orient', as Said (1979) stated, was used to refer to what is now called the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent. Similarly, its derivatives, like 'oriental' or 'orientalist', refer to the peoples and cultures of those countries. Therefore, the term 'orient' was used to refer to the land that lies east of Europe (the Occident). The important thing, according to Curtis (2009), is that the words Orient and Occident or "West and East from the beginning suggested geographical as well as cultural and religious differences" (p. 2). Thus, the use of the Orient and the Occident as a contrasting binary offer a conceptualisation of the world by dividing it in two broad exclusive categories where whatever is represented by the Occident the exact opposite is represented by the Orient. According to McLeod (2000), "If the west is assumed as the seat of knowledge and learning, then it is followed that the Orient is the place of ignorance and naiveté" (p. 41). This particular style of thinking is the first aspect of Orientalism, as Said (1979) points out.

The second aspect of Orientalism in Said's (1979) definition is an academic one. According to him, "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient…either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism" (p. 2). As an academic discipline, Orientalism emerged in Europe with the military conquest of the orient during the late eighteenth century.

This military conquest allowed European scholars to scrutinise this region more closely. A good example, given by Lockman (2009), is the Napoleonic conquest of Egypt in 1798. The army of scholars and scientists, who accompanied the military army of Napoleon, transformed Egypt to a field of systematic knowledge, which was "published in many volumes as 'The Description de l'Egypte'" (p. 71).

This knowledge gathering inaugurated during the nineteenth century a new academic field called Oriental Studies. The huge amount of documents, academic Orientalism produced, was acknowledged in Europe as the most authentic way of knowing about the Orient. Soon, these documents formed the basis of many Western academic and literary texts whose writers knew about the Orient only through the hearsays. In this respect, McLeod (2000) makes clear that "Orientalism is first and foremost a fabricated construct, a series of images that come to stand as the Orient's 'reality' for those in the West" (p. 41).

These texts about the Orient were so prevalent during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. This could be explained through Michel Foucault's concept of discourse. Foucault (1981) argues that the discourse which is produced and disseminated by the institutions of the powerful is the only discourse which is accepted as the truth. Said (1979) appropriates Foucault's concept and applied it to the discourse of Orientalism. Since Orientalism was the product of the coloniser's institutions, therefore, it was the only true knowledge about the Orient. These institutions, according to Said (1979), formed the third aspect of Orientalism. In this sense, Orientalism was defined as

> the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (p. 03).

These corporate institutions connect colonial power with colonial knowledge. When the discourse of Orientalism identified the Occident (Europe) as the seat of

civilisation and the Orient as the den of barbarism, it enabled the colonial power to justify its rule over the Orient.

Karl Marx (1853), for instance, describes the British tyranny in India as the morally right thing to do, because it brought a social revolution to a country, he claimed, that had no history and socially disorganised. He writes, "Whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious too of history in bringing about that revolution" (Cited in Macfie, 2001, p. 17). This ideology was criticized by Said (1994) who argues that Western Marxism "is blinded to the matter of imperialism" (p. 278).

It is worth noting that Said's (1994) main purpose, through his book *'Orientalism'*, is not just to reveal the connection between the discourse of Orientalism (knowledge) and the domination of the Orient (power), but to disrupt it through what he called 'contrapuntal reading'. This term, as Said (1994) defined it, means to read a text in a way that questions its inherent assumptions. According to Mortimer (2005) contrapuntal reading is "a form of 'reading back' from the point of view of the colonized that brings to light the hidden colonial history that permeates nineteenth-century European literary texts" (p. 55). In other word, it is reading Orientalist texts against the way its authors intend it to be read. To illustrate this technique of disrupting colonial texts, Said (1994) choose the work of Albert Camus, whose novel 'L'étranger' is concerned primarily with the French colonial population in Algeria, not the Algerians. This way of reading is what "Camus opposed" (p. 67).

So the intention of contrapuntal reading is to question the European centric values of the coloniser's text and to point out and critique the myths and prejudices that underlined them.

1.4.2 Can the Subaltern Speak?[11]

The dismantling of the Eurocentric worldview that marginalised numerous indigenous cultural traditions across the colonised parts of the world was the main ethical agenda of Edward Said's writings. Beside Said, the works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993), a prominent postcolonial critic, which are mostly associated with the subaltern, is another ethical intervention to foreground the voice of the oppressed and to create conditions so that the people subjugated by colonialism can be heard. Within the academic circles Spivak's (1993) name is today most widely associated with her highly influential seminal essay *'Can the Subaltern Speak?'* Through her elaboration of the term subaltern, Spivak makes considerable contribution to the field of postcolonial studies. Before examining this contribution it seems logical to explore the meanings of the word 'subaltern'.

The term 'subaltern' existed in different versions before being used by Spivak. According to Ludden (2001) the term was used in the British army, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, to denote lower ranks soldiers that have peasant origin. The original meaning of the term 'subaltern' is linked with the writings of the Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci (1971) who used it to signify a section of the population who were subordinate to the hegemonic groups or classes. The word 'hegemony', which is a keyword in this definition, is, according to Gramsci (1971), a mode of asserting authority. He further explains that within a society, the effective way for a ruling class to assert its authority, instead of the physical force, could be by convincing the native population that whatever the ruling class does to fulfil its own interest is also in the interest of the entire population.

This Gramscian understanding of the word subaltern was taken up by the influential group of south-Asian historians who formed The Subaltern Studies

[11] This title originally represents the title of an essay published by the Indian scholar, literary theorist, and feminist critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

Collective in the 1980's. The primarily concern of this group, as Ludden (2001) points out, was to rewrite the colonial and postcolonial history of South-Asian societies. Ranajit Guha (1982), the most significant figure within this group, provides an account on how the group was using the word 'subaltern'. According to him, the subaltern classes represent "the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the élites" (p. 8). Thus, the subalterns are all those people within a society who are out of the category of elite. The term elite, as Guha explains, signifies all the section of a society, foreign as well as indigenous, which have political and economic influence. So here, the subaltern represents a negative position, a position of disempowerment, a position without identity.

Gayatri Spivak (1993), who engaged with the definitions of Gramsci and Guha, focuses mainly on subaltern Indian women. In her intervention, she defined the subaltern as another negative position characterised by the inability to speak. Therefore, according to Spivak (1993), the answer to the title question, can the subaltern speak? is an unequivocal no, "the subaltern cannot speak" (p. 104). Spivak's essay, *'Can the Subaltern Speak?'* was mainly criticised for it doesn't recognise that the subaltern does speak, on which Spivak (1996) comments by saying that "even when the subaltern makes an effort to the death to speak, she is not able to be heard, and speaking and hearing complete the speech act" (p. 292). Both statements, 'the subaltern cannot speak' and 'the subaltern cannot be head', refer to the same inability of the subaltern to generate discourse.

The observation that the subaltern cannot speak for her own interests leads Spivak (1993) to ask another crucial question, in which the question of woman seems the most problematic. The question is "What must the elite do to watch out for the continuing construction of the subaltern?" (p. 90). The simplistic answer, Spivak gives, is that since the subaltern cannot speak it is the elites who should speak for the subaltern. However, this desire to speak for someone else is fraught with its own danger, because the elites could end up speaking for their own interests, "and the subaltern woman will be as mute as ever" (p. 90).

This danger is exemplified by Spivak (1993) through the position of the subaltern Hindu woman Sati who immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband. Spivak argues that although lot of discourses, both colonial and postcolonial, exist on this barbaric practice claiming to be the voice of Sati, no one actually brings out the voice of the widow. As was the case for the Sati Act passed by the British coloniser not to protect Hindu women but to justify colonialism as being a civilising mission need to root out these barbaric practices and to save "brown women from brown men" (p. 92).

According to Spivak (1993) since it seems almost useless to speak for the desires of the subaltern, then the only ethical intervention is to help this 'Other' speak for herself and thus can get out from the condition of her disempowerment. This help could only be possible after "seeking to learn to speak to…the subaltern woman" (p. 91). In this quotation, Spivak points out that even learning about the needs and desires of an individual who cannot speak is not an easy task. That is why, she argues, it is important, as a first step, to know how to learn to learn from the subaltern. So it is only when we face the subaltern as a learner, as a listener that we can empower her to speak.

1.4.3 Cultural Hybridity

Colonialism is constructed by Europeans as a civilising mission, in which a distinct and superior culture of the coloniser comes in contact with the inferior culture of colonised subject. This notion of distinct cultures separating the coloniser and the colonised also informs the nationalist discourse which emerges, according to Fanon (1963), to fulfil twofold aim. Firstly, to uncover the colonial practices that work to wipe out the distinctive and pure indigenous cultures and, secondly, to call for a reverting back to the civilizational values of a precolonial past which represents an era of cultural purity. Against this pure culture which can be kept separated from another foreign culture, Homi K. Bhabha (1994) proposes the idea of cultural hybridity.

According to Bhabha (1994) the idea of a pure, uncontaminated and isolated culture, advocated by anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski (1960), is untenable. From his part, Lévi-Strauss (1958) claims that "all cultures are the result of a mishmash, borrowings, mixtures that have occurred, though at different rates, ever since the beginning of time" (p. 152). Similarly, Homi K. Bhabha[12] contained that all cultures are characterised by change, flexibility and mixedness, which he referred to by the word 'hybridity'. Hybridity, therefore, can be conceived of as a space within which several disparate cultural elements are being melted to mould an international cultural identity. In this respect, Bhabha (1994) argues that

> It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory…may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (p. 38).

So, how this notion of cultural hybridity impact the understanding of postcolonial condition? The assumption that culture is a dynamic process, characterised by change, flux and hybridity, negates the binary of a superior culture of the coloniser and an inferior culture of the colonised. The colonial discourse, according to Bhabha (1994), cannot admit this because "the attempt to dominate in the name of a cultural supremacy" (p. 34) is at the core of its justification of colonialism as a civilising mission. The annulment of the coloniser's cultural supremacy over the colonised subject leads, immediately, to the disappearance of the illusion of the civilising mission and, therefore, colonialism is revealed just as an exploitation of other people's land and resources through brute force. Bhabha (1994) celebrates

[12] Homi K. Bhabha is an Indian English scholar and critical theorist. He is part of the 'Holy Trinity' in the field of postcolonial studies, with Edwad W. Said and Gayatri C. Spivak.

hybridity as a symptom of resistance by the colonised and a re-appropriation of colonial discourses to create "cultures of postcolonial contra-modernity" (p. 6).

Along with hybridity, Bhabha (1994) introduces the concept of 'mimicry'. According to him, "mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of a difference, that it is almost the same, but not quite" (p. 86). Mimicry, then, is a colonial discourse emerges as an attempt to stabilise hybridity and reaffirm the supremacy of the coloniser. This supremacy was crucial in defining colonialism as civilising mission to culturally educate the natives so that they could attain almost the same level of civilisation as the coloniser. Though the coloniser wanted the colonised to mimic him, to imitate him, he never expected the latter to be like him. All the coloniser wants, claims Lord Macaulay (1835), was "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in: tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (Cited in Bhabha, 1994, p. 87).

Homi Bhabha (1994) points out that "mimicry is at once resemblance and menace" (p. 86). The idea of the colonised subject mimicking the superior coloniser turns the act into a sort of mockery of the coloniser's culture. This comic undermining of the coloniser and his superior civilizational position is what Bhabha refers to as the 'menace' of mimicry. The menace of mimicry, Bhabha argues, lies mainly in the disruption of the colonial discourse. Since, if ever the project of mimic men succeeds then it will erase the assumed colonial gab between the superior coloniser and the inferior colonised, and thereby the entire colonial process, justified as a civilising mission, will be undermined.

1.5 Postcolonialism and Feminism

The two concepts 'postcolonialism' and 'feminism' are firmly linked to each other. Debates concerning the representation of gender differences, within both colonial and postcolonial discourses, constitute the most thought-provoking and challenging works within postcolonialism. Postcolonial feminist critics have raised a number of problems related specifically to feminist concerns. This section is

concerned with the unfolding of these problems after providing brief definitions of some relevant terminologies.

1.5.1 Some Definitions

It seems almost indispensable to start this section by considering how the two pivotal terms 'feminism' and 'patriarchy' have been defined. It is admitted that to define feminism is as challenging as it is to define postcolonialism. June Hannam (2007) provides a comprehensive definition when she argues that feminism is a

> set of ideas that recognize in an explicit way that women are subordinate to men and seek to address imbalances of power between the sexes. Central to feminism is the view that women's condition is socially constructed, and therefore open to change. At its heart is the belief that women's voices should be heard (pp. 3-4).

The feminist issues raised by Hannam (2007), especially those linked with the representation of women by themselves, are among the major preoccupations of postcolonial critics.

From a cultural perspective, McLeod (2000) points out to the importance of reading in achieving the goals of feminism. According to him, reading a text through feminist lenses might reveal facts about women and gender difference. In view of the imbalanced gender relations and the struggle for change, feminist reading practices could be conceived of as part of the contestation of patriarchal authority.

The term 'patriarchy', contends McLeod (2000), "refers to those systems – political, material and imaginative – which invest power in men and marginalise women" (p. 173). According to Walby (1990), patriarchy is composed of six structures: "the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions" (p. 20). These structures show how

patriarchal oppressive practices are adapted to the change in women's position. Feminism has, as postcolonialism does, as a goal the challenging of all forms oppression.

The two phrases 'First World' feminism and 'Third World' women are of paramount importance in postcolonial feminism. According to McLeod (2000), 'First World' or 'Western' feminism is an "unhappy generalisation which glosses over the variety of feminisms, and the debates within and between them, in Europe and America" (p. 119). Western feminist discourse is often criticised, claims Bayu (2019), because of its prejudice for women in developed industrialized countries, and ignorance or downplaying of 'Third World' women. This latter category represents a body of women who often share a common history of colonialism.

1.5.2 The Double Colonisation of Women

The term 'double colonisation' was coined by Peterson and Rutherfold (1986) to refer to the simultaneous oppression women experienced, as a colonised subject and as a woman, under colonialism and patriarchy. What is more serious, in addition to these two forms of injustice, is that these women also suffer at the hands of Western feminists who misrepresent them by "imposing silence on their racial, cultural, social, and political specificities, and in so doing, act as potential oppressors of their 'sisters'" (Tyagi, 2014, p. 45). Postcolonial theory has been criticised by feminist critics for being a male-centred field that has not only excluded the concerns of women, but also exploited them and obliterate their role in the struggle for independence.

Ali (2015) looks at the way Orientalists' paintings and writings, of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, produced Eastern women as exotic and passive creatures whose sole purpose is to be available for sexual activity. Additionally, these paintings provide an ominous portrayal of patriarchal oppression when depicting "Oriental men trading naked women (who are fair- skinned) for goods" (p. 41). Patriarchal hegemony was experienced, with slight difference, by both colonised and colonising women. In this respect, Mackenzie (1995) characterizes

Orientalist works as "condemnations of the 'heavy-handed bourgeois morality' of the artists' own Western societies, displaying in the process their 'particular brand of nineteenth-century dominant masculinity'" (Cited in Ali, 2015, p. 41).

Victorian ladies had their fair share of neglect in colonial India. These white women, Haggis (1990) explains, "are seen as essentially peripheral appendages to the colonial political economy" (p. 106). He went on arguing that, in case work opportunities could be available for a white woman, this latter finds herself with a very restricted options in hand including nursing, teaching and running boarding homes. Contrary to white men, women received low wages with jobs primarily available for single ones only. Similarly, Callaway (1987) points out to the way Western women were looked at in Nigeria during the colonial rule. Prior to 1920's this colony was considered as a masculine world in which there was "no place for a white woman" (p. 5). White women, claims Callaway, were considered unnecessary and a hindrance to the male colonial rule.

The Western patriarchal values brought about by the coloniser, argues McLeod (2000), had a profound effect in disrupting the indigenous gender role. In order to impose the Western family structure model, colonialism

> Attempted to destroy kinship patterns…disrupting, in the process, female organisations that were based upon kinship systems which allowed more power and autonomy to women than those of the colonising nation (Carby, 1982, p. 223).

The breakdown of the indigenous social system, which could be more equitable than the one brought from the colonising culture, claims Hazel Carby (1982), weaken considerably the position of women within colonised countries.

1.5.3 Postcolonial Critiques of 'First World' Feminism

Western or 'First World' feminism has received much criticism from postcolonial critics due to the lack of attention paid to the problems suffered by colonised women. In this section, attention will be given to the extent to which 'First World'

feminist discourses are able to address the double colonisation of women living in once-colonised societies and in Western locations. Therefore, two important issues will be tackled: Feminism and race, and the problems in thinking about 'Third World' women.

1.5.3.1 Feminism and Race

The term 'race' is used to signify, in Gunaratnam (2003) words, "the organizing category around which has been constructed a system of socio-economic power, exploitation and exclusion - i.e. racism" (p. 4). Hazel Carby (1982) is among the early critics who explored how differences in women's racial identity could have impact upon feminism. Carby (1982), in identifying and discussing the condition of Western feminism in the 1970s, explains that black and Asian women struggles and experiences are barely made visible within its discourses. And when they are addressed, it is only to represent them "as victims of 'barbarous', 'primitive' practices in 'barbarous', 'primitive' societies" (p. 221), from which black and Asian women need rescuing by their Western sisters. In this respect, Carby (1982) argues that Western feminism presents

> Asian women as being in need of liberation, not in terms of their own her story and needs, but into the 'progressive' social mores and customs of the metropolitan West. The actual struggles that Asian women are involved in are ignored in favour of applying theories from the point of view of a more 'advanced', more 'progressive' outside observer (p. 215).

The process of liberating black and Asian women fails to consider their own struggles and needs, or consider the specificity of their indigenous cultures.

In Herr's (2014) view, white feminism in the West frequently assumed that women "everywhere face similar oppression merely by virtue of their sex/gender" (p. 4). As a consequence, white feminism has been criticised for neglecting the complex oppression faced by women of colour because of racism and patriarchy. In

addition, white women, claims McLeod (2000) have failed to "see themselves as the potential oppressors of black and Asian women, even when adopting benevolent positions towards them" (p. 123). McLeod proceeds by asking the question: How can this be changed?

Herr (2014) argues that as a response to this question "some white feminists began to espouse "global feminism" in the 1980s" (p. 4) as an attempt to recognise the diversity in women's oppression across the globe. From her part, Carby (1982) urges white women to listen to and learn from black and Asian feminists to help them articulate the way they are oppressed as women of colour. Additionally, she suggested that white feminist researchers should try to uncover the gender-specific mechanism of racism amongst white women.

1.5.3.2 'Third World' Women

As noted earlier, 'Third World' women have always been misrepresented by 'First World' feminism. Western feminist scholars have depicted, throughout their writings and studies, 'Third World' women as a singular and monolithic category which damagingly creates the "discursive homogenisation and systematisation of the oppression of women in the third world" (Mohanty, 1991, p. 54). Mohanty recognises the many attempts Western feminists initiate to help their 'Third World' sister mainly by forging international links between different women. By so doing, those scholars disregard the specificities and the historical backgrounds that set 'Third World' women apart from western feminist experiences.

According to Chandra Mohanty (1991), Western feminist analysis of 'Third World' women was based on worrying presuppositions. She contends that Western feminists presume that women everywhere exist as "an already constituted, coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location" (p. 55). This coherency, argues McLeod (2000), is established by assuming that all women, by virtue of their sex/gender, are victims of different kinds of oppression by men. Furthermore, McLeod (2000) explains that "the different types of social relations between women created by social and ethnic

differences" (p. 126) are given little attention. Herr (2014) points out that by the late 1970's and early 1980's 'Third world' women in the west launched a campaign to criticize the implicit racism and imperialism of white feminists, which rendered these latter "oblivious to complex and multiple oppressions faced by women of colour" (p. 4).

While emphasising the effects of colonialism on gender and patriarchy, Chandra Mohanty (1991) draws attention to the heterogeneous nature of 'Third World' women experiences, goals, interests and perspectives. Additionally, Herr (2014) states that by admitting the backwardness of Third World cultures imposed by colonialism white feminists view "Third World women's oppression as simply worse than that of white women in the West" (p. 5). Thus is generated a homogeneous conception of an 'average third world woman.'

> This average third world woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and her being 'third world' (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.) (Mohanty, 1991, p. 56).

According to McLeod (2000), by conceiving the 'average' third-world woman Western feminists construct an image of the colonised women which is in contrast to the implicit self-representation of Western women "as being sexually liberated, free-minded, in control of their own lives" (Tyagi, 2014, p. 49). Furthermore, the assimilation of 'Third World' women within Western feminist discourse suggests, as McLeod (2000) points out, a new layer of colonisation that as a consequence, deprive them of their historical and political agency.

In order to deal with the weaknesses in Western feminist's representation of 'Third World' women, a number of solutions have been offered. According to Mohanty (1991), careful studies that take into account historical and socio-political backgrounds of different and diverse third world women will help to empower them. Tyagi (2014) sees the possibility of building new, vigilant relations between

women across "First" and "Third World" feminism. These relations, states Nasta (1992), will lead to creative dialogues where "First" and "Third World" feminists, through a "cross-fertilisation and Creolisation of cultures and languages" (p. xvi), can contribute and learn from each other.

Mohanty's (1991) critiques of white feminism have led Herr (2014) to identify two constitutive ideas of Third World feminism that adequately address 'Third World' women's oppression. According to Herr (2014), the first is that Third World feminists "must carefully examine and analyse Third World women's oppression and resistance on the ground in their historical specificity" (p. 5). Studies linked to this idea reveal that 'Third World' women's resistance is not merely limited in achieving feminists goals like: gender equality or social restructuration. Instead, 'Third World' women with a strong passion for communal change tend to collaborate with both the local social movements (such as national, pro-democracy, or human-rights movements) and their male counterparts "to improve living standards of their families and of the community itself" (p. 5).

The second constitutive idea, according to Herr (2014), is "the importance of recognizing Third World women's 'historical and political' agency and paying due respect to it" (p. 6). It should be admitted, argues Herr (2014), that 'Third World' women's serious participation in bringing about positive changes in local societies in clearly discernible through their active engagement in various forms of local activism. Because of this active engagement, "'Third World' women's viewpoints must receive due respect" (p. 6). The other reason for which 'Third World' women's viewpoints deserve respect is given by the standpoint theories. According to Harding (1993), these theories argue that starting off thought from the marginalised 'Third World' women's lives will enable "to generate less partial and distorted accounts not only of women's lives but also of men's lives and of the whole social order" (p. 56).

Therefore, Herr (2014) urges Third world feminists to recognise the agency of Third World women and respect their diverse viewpoints and activisms. Third

World feminists must "identify and re-envision forms of collective resistance that women, especially, in their different communities enact in their everyday lives" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 515) instead of imposing their own feminist preconceptions on Third World women.

1.6 Conclusion

Colonialism, as conventionally defined in terms of formal settlement and control of other people's land and goods by Western powers, is in the main over, but many of its structures and relations of power are still in place. The Western colonizer, from a position of superiority, often inscribes inferiority and backwardness on colonized people and cultures as a way to justify colonization as a civilizing mission.

Subsequently, postcolonial studies emerged as a resistance to the colonial power and its discourses that attempt constantly to distort the experience and realities of colonized people. Orientalism could be a good example for the colonial discourse. By identifying the Orient as the den of barbarism, Orientalism enabled the Western colonial powers to justify their rule over the Orient as a civilising mission. Postcolonial studies is also concerned with the English and non-English literature produced by colonized peoples that articulates their identity and reclaims their past in the face of that past's inevitable Otherness produced by the colonial discourse.

The concepts 'postcolonialism' and 'feminism' are firmly linked to each other. Postcolonial feminism is primarily concerned with the representation of women in once colonized countries and in Western locations. It concentrates on presenting the double colonisation of 'Third World' and 'First World' women in both colonial and postcolonial discourse and how these women, under the umbrella of sisterhood, can collaborate to make their voices heard.

Chapter Two

Colonial Education and Women's Inferiority

CONTENT

The surest way to keep people down is to educate the men and neglect the Women. If you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a whole nation.

—JAMES EMMAN KWEGYIR AGGREY

2.1 Introduction

Education is a central issue in postcolonial African studies. It is of great importance in the enlightenment of gender issues. Because of the long traditional subordination of African women by their male counterparts, education seems more than necessary for those women. It gives them the power and determination to fight against the economic and social injustices imposed on them by colonialism and patriarchy.

The big challenge the White men face once they invade the African continent is how to domesticate the indigenous people and use them as servants to achieve their colonial interests. For this reason, they launched, from the very beginning, a planned scheme for the evangelisation of Africans with the assistance of missionaries, and the substitution, through colonial educational systems, of the traditional language and culture by Western ones. The term educational system very often refers to school, but there is another crucial system used by the colonialists which is the church. Naturally, the schools in colonial Africa were managed by the colonial government whereas the evangelic church is led by White missionaries. The two colonial entities work cooperatively to produce Western-like African elites, mainly from men. The new male elites, educated both in Africa and overseas, were alienated from their own peoples and cultures and collaborated with Europeans to entrench colonialism in Africa.

This chapter tries to bring to light African women's experiences with colonial education in a patriarchal community. It also shows how personal sacrifices and displacement of women, away from the oppressive authority, can provide them with the opportunity to overcome gender discrimination and achieve a good education. Finally, it draws particular attention to the disillusionment women encounter in their quest for education, happiness and real social equity.

2.2 The Role of Gender in Colonial Education

From a feminist perspective, Third World women are marginalised by their men counterparts who impose upon them their masculinity and restrict their access to social, physical, political or financial assets. As Becker (1999) points out, in patriarchal cultures, "women are seen as less than fully human and as less than trustworthy" (p. 26). Women, undoubtedly, are indispensable elements in the social fabric. They deserve equal rights and should be treated as fully-fledged partners in societies. They need to be trusted and empowered psychologically to resist patriarchy and colonial rule.

Colonialism brought about so many means, military and social, to control African people and benefit from their resources. The school was one of the means that the white missionaries used to domesticate Africans to facilitate their indoctrination. Western education helps Africans, especially those who went to school, in reaching descent standard of life. These African literates were the cream of the crop in their societies and the most privileged and fortunate among their people. White (1996) argues that "European schools…were concerned with educating an African elite that could eventually fill the lower ranks of the colonial civil service" (p. 12).

However, despite the promising future the school can secure for Africans during the colonial era they never welcomed it and viewed it from the very beginning with resentment and aloofness. This was mainly due to the Africans opposing the religious teaching that the missionary schools offered their children

along with education. For the majority of them, the principles of Christianity were a real threat since it undermined their traditional beliefs. For this reason, amongst others, many Africans were reluctant to send their children to mission schools. According to Odinga (1974),

> In the beginning, only orphans, foster children, poor nieces and nephews and never the favourite sons were sent, for the villagers distrusted the pressure on them to send their children out of the home and away from herding the animals; and the more alert objected to the way the Christian missions taught... for they could see that the children at the mission would grow up to despise Luo[13] ways (Cited in Kane and Ruzicka, 1996, p. 105).

The rush towards school began after the Africans started recognizing the dangers of colonialism. As the European colonialists established their grip on the Africans and their land, these latter started losing faiths in the ancestors upon whose power and goodwill they had relied for victory. Consequently, education came to be seen as having a dual role; a way through which the Africans excel themselves to achieve personal fulfilment, and an essential strategy for acquiring or countering the power of the white men.

Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* is a good example of the Africans' desire to learn the colonialist's wisdom and knowledge to stand up to him. Ezeulu, the chief priest of the god Ulu, was worried about the coming of the Europeans, he sent his son Oduche to a church school to learn the white man's ritual and wisdom as being believed to be the source of his great power and conquest. Within a short time, increasing European intervention

[13] The Luo are the fourth-largest ethnic group in Kenya, after the Kikuyu, the Luhya and the Kalenjin

> Reinforced the view which had been gaining ground that the best way to deal with the white man was to have a few people...around who knew what the white men knew. As a result many people - some of them very important - began to send their children to school. Even Nwaka sent a son - the one who seemed least likely among his children to become a good farmer (Achebe, 1964, pp. 214-215).

To Ezeulu, education is important as long as it raises the natives' consciousness towards the conservation of their traditions and land. Otherwise, it is only a waste of time and energy. Later generations of Ezeulu's people, both adults and children, enrolled in the church school and even sent some of their brightest children to study in England, after being persuaded that without education outsiders would come to rule them.

This highlights the fact that education is a sine qua non for any society moaning under all forms of oppression. The educated elites are called upon to use their knowledge for the well-being of their people. Education could be seen as the definite and unique pathway for the achievement of freedom. As the Black Nationalist Malcolm X puts it,

> For the freedom of my 22 million brothers and sisters here in America, I do believe that I have fought the best that I knew how, and the best that I could, with the shortcoming that I have had. I know that my shortcomings are many-I don't have the kind of academic education I wish I had been able to get….If I had the time right now, I would not be one bit ashamed to go back into any New York City public school and start where I left off at the ninth grade (Cited in Haley, 1965, p. 236).

For Malcolm X, education is believed to be the effective means for those who immolate themselves in the fight for freedom and equity. In women's writings, as is

the case for male writers, the school held a revolutionary dimension for marginalized groups. For example, African women writers use the symbol of school to overthrow double colonization, i.e., patriarchy and colonialism. In the coming sections, we shall seek to explore the strong passion of women, especially girls, for Western education and the various effects this latter has on their social and psychological states in Tsitsi Dangarembga's and Chinua Achebe's works.

Both writers centre their novels on female characters. They show the unprecedented determination of the main female protagonists to get a good western education and reserve for themselves a decent place within their communities. For these characters, education is something prerequisite since it was considered the key to future success. The theme of education and its impact on women's personal and public life seems to prevail in both works.

In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga's heroine, Tambu, from a very early age struggles against the patriarchal traditions in her community to receive the same education as her brother, Nhamo, "I shall go to school again" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16) she announces to her parents. Tambu's father considers her endeavours for education a waste of time, money and energy because at the end of the day, she will find herself in her husband's house cleaning, cooking and bearing children. Her husband would be the one who will benefit most from her education, not her parents. In contrast, Tambu's brother looked upon as the rescuer of the family from the moor of poverty, benefits from all the family's resources to continue his education in the mission school. Affected by this sexist discrimination, Tambu painfully recounts how, at an early age, her family chose to send Nhamo to school.

> My father thought I should not mind. 'Is that anything to worry about? Ha-a-a, it's nothing,' he reassured me, with his usual ability to jump whichever way was easiest. 'Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 15).

Similarly, Tambu's cousin, Nyasha, also suffers from sexist discrimination. While she was restricted to get her education at the mission school, where her father is a headmaster, her brother, Chido, was sent on a scholarship, arranged by the white missionaries, to a boarding school.

Through the two female characters, Tambu and her cousin, Nyasha, Dangarembga maintains that African women in general are discriminated against in the field of education in favour of their male counterparts. According to Niara Sudarkasa (1982), in most countries, especially the developing ones, there are unfair inequalities in the realm of education. These inequalities are mainly the results of gender and race differences.

> In the developing nations, educational delivery systems are directed mainly toward males. Women partake of formal and nonformal education in fewer numbers and for shorter periods of time than do men. At the higher levels of schooling, women and men typically pursue different courses of study (p. 279).

Even after Tambu earned money, from selling her maize crop, to pay for her own school fees, she was banned from resuming her education. The only reason she was faced with by her patriarchal father is "Because you are a girl," (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 21). According to Chekroun and Hamza Reguig Mouro (2022), in Shona as well as Igbo traditions "boys' education is of utmost importance, and is given top priority because an educated and economically powerful woman will marry one day and benefit the family of her husband" (p. 48). This distinction between girls and boys is explained by Okereke and Egbung (2014), who state that "male children are valued more highly than female children because they secure the lineage through procreation, while the female children marry and leave their natal homes and are, therefore, seen as a loss to their families" (p. 2059).

More interestingly, boys benefit from females' incomes to secure their education. For instance, when Tambu's uncle, Babamukuru, the only provider of

her poor family, travelled to England, Nhamo found no options but to rely on his mother's small income that she earned from gardening and poultry farming to pay his school fees. Additionally, following the death of Nhamo, Babamukuru reminded Tambu of her financial responsibility towards her youngest brother. Therefore, when she was granted a scholarship at the Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart, her uncle volunteers to keep aside some amount of her money for the future education of her younger brother.

> Although there would still be a lot of expense on my part, you have your scholarship, so the major financial burden would be lifted. But I feel that even that little money could be better used. For one thing, there is now the small boy at home. Every month I put away a little bit…a very little bit every month, so that when he is of school-going age everything will be provided for. As you know, he is the only boy in your family, so he must be provided for (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 180).

Through this arrangement, the author points out that the African woman is forced to hold the responsibility for the wellbeing and success of her male relatives, and should sacrifice herself completely for that. Babamukuru did not ask for Tambu's approval about the deduction from her scholarship for her brother's education. Her consent did not concern him. He undervalued her because of her gender. This shows clearly gender discrimination in the Shona tradition. According to Chekroun and Hamza Reguig Mouro (2022), through this discrimination, girls are socialized in a way to accept a low status in life. Consequently, this gender-based socialization curtails their social development and exploration instincts. It is considered a precondition for any society which looks out for a bright and prospering future to invest in all its children, boys and girls alike. The African novelist and activist Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1993), for instance, while defending the cause of children, argues that,

> Children are the future of any society. If you want to know the future of society looks at the eyes of the children. If you want to maim the future of any society, you simply maim the children. Thus the struggle for the survival of our children is the struggle for the survival of our future. The quantity and quality of that survival are the measurement of the development of our society. Enslave the children and you enslave parents. Enslave the parents and you enslave children. Thus if you enslave children, you are enslaving the survival and development of the entire society - its present and its future (p. 76).

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o explicitly denounces all forms of exploitation and abuse against children. According to him, children should benefit from a good quality education. They are considered the mystery for the survival of any modern society and the cornerstone on which it can establish everlasting development and success.

Similarly, women writers, in their fictional and non-fictional works, are "strongly committed to the issue of the education of children, mainly girls. Their discourse is a means through which they denounce patriarchal oppression against female members of society and their deprivation of the right to education," (Chekroun and Hamza Reguig Mouro, 2022, p. 49). Virginia Woolf (1929), for instance, asserted that the exclusion of women from schooling began with the wrong idea that "there was an enormous body of masculine opinion to the effect that nothing could be expected of women intellectually" (p. 45). On the contrary, women writers are strongly convinced that enthusiastic girls and women, if given the adequate opportunity to get a good education, as their male counterparts, can solve many of the world's social, economic and political problems.

In Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions,* the determination of the heroine, Tambu, to continue her colonial education, despite all the frustration and disillusionment she experienced at the homestead, is a consequence of her firm belief that education is her only hope for escaping her two biological, subaltern

roles - blackness and womanhood. It is a unique and efficient tool for self-emancipation from poverty, deprivation and gender discrimination. This is observed in her forthright confession,

> Consciously I thought my direction was clear: I was being educated. When I had been educated, I would find a job and settle down to it, carrying on, in the time that was available before I was married into a new home, Babamukuru's great work of developing the family. Issues were well defined for me at that time: these were the goals and this was how we would reach them. Babamukuru was my touchstone who showed me that this was true (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 151).

As far as Tambu is concerned, education equips women with knowledge and consciousness of their legitimate rights as human beings. Furthermore, it guarantees for them economic independence so as to insure an influential position within patriarchal societies and honourable life for themselves as well as their dependents. Tambu's hope of a prosperous future made her brother's death, from mumps, not simply an event of sadness for her. Nhamo's death opened the door wide to a potentially bright future for her through education.

> I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologizing for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling. For it is not that at all. I feel many things these days, much more than I was able to feel in the days when I was young and my brother died, and there are reasons for this more than the mere consequence of age. Therefore I shall not apologize but begin by recalling the facts as I remember them that led up to my brother's death, the events that put me in a position to write this account (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1).

After the sudden death of her elder brother, Nhamo, Tambu seized, with great zeal, the educational opportunity that was denied to her because of her gender. As a result, the poor village girl Tambu became, overnight, a student at the mission school of her affluent uncle, Babamukuru. The professional and social successes of Babamukuru set him up as a model for Tambu and motivated her to pursue her education. Babamukuru was the headmaster of the mission school which Tambu passionately attended. He is a diligent, intelligent and prosperous black African leader who managed, through colonial education, in booking a place for himself among the elitist members of his society.

Babamukuru's success story started at a very early age. As a child of nine years old, he was given to the white missionaries by his mother, Mbuya (Tambu's grandmother). This latter "had begged them to prepare him for life in their world" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 19). The missionaries took good care of her son and provided him with a good education. After missionary school, Babamukuru went to South Africa where he got his degree. After that, he was offered, in addition to his wife Maiguru, a five-year scholarship to pursue a graduate course in London. Babamukuru, after his missionary education, was conditioned to stay loyal to and respectful of the white laws and values, as well as to maintain a watchful distance from his indigenous culture.

Tambu observed that the missionaries were very generous towards young African boys as long as they were sure that these boys will stay loyal and not rebel in any shape or form, "Whites were indulgent towards promising young black boys in those days, provided that the promise was a peaceful promise, a grateful promise to accept whatever was handed out to them and not to expect more" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 106). Babamukuru was the headmaster of the mission school and despite his good education and training did not question, in any form, the injustices of the segregated African society in which he lived. Rather, he openly displayed his gratitude towards the white missionaries and their culture, and his contempt towards native African traditions.

When Babamukuru and his family returned from London, he became the headmaster of the mission school. He was the only African who lived in a white house where the missionaries used to live. After Tambu arrived at the mission school, she stood dazzled by the house's location, beauty and opulence in which her uncle lives with his wife, Maiguru, and two children Nayasha and Chido. Tambu could not imagine that her uncle was so wealthy and fortunate.

> At the time that I arrived at the mission, missionaries were living in white houses and in the pale painted houses, but not in the brick red ones. My uncle was the only African living in a white house. We were all very proud of this fact (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 63).

Basically, Babamukuru is a good example which proves that perseverance and hard work, regardless of your class, race or gender, to get a good education can be a guarantee for a socially and economically successful future. Babamukuru supported Tambu, the eldest child of his brother Jeremiah after the death of Nhamo, because he was absolutely certain that her academic success would undoubtedly benefit the whole family. Considering his own experience of school, he asserts that "These children who can go to school today are the ones whose families will prosper tomorrow" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 45).

Babamukuru opens the door wide for Tambu's success. He helps her to fulfil her dream, the dream of becoming an educated and independent woman like her aunt Maiguru (Babamukuru's wife). The day she left the homestead to join her uncle's family at the mission marked an important shift in her life. She was set on the right and straight path towards glory and success, the same path her uncle travelled. The opportunity offered to Tambu by Babamukuru, through education, was priceless and worth her consciousness. It was an ideal way to escape from the misery of the homestead and the subjugation of her patriarchal father.

> I was to take another step upward in the direction of my freedom. Another step away from the flies, the smells, the fields and the rags; from stomachs which were seldom full, from dirt and disease, from my father's abject obeisance to Babamukuru and my mother's chronic lethargy. Also from Nyamarira that I loved (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 183).

According to Chekroun and Hamza Reguig Mouro (2022), Tambu considered education as the only alternative to standing up to colonialism and patriarchy. By moving to live with Babamukuru's family at the mission, "Tambu was provided with the opportunity for financial support as well as an adequate atmosphere to ensure her success in school" (p. 52). She believed that the precarious living conditions in which her family lives, adding to that the irresponsible and unambitious father and powerless mother, were real hindrances in her pursuit to achieve freedom. Far from being ungrateful to her family and culture like her brother, who forgot even how to speak his Shona language, Tambu showed a strong connection with her family and the kind of life she left behind on the homestead by disclosing her love for the river Nyamarira.

Dangarembga depicts colonial education as an indispensable tool in the ongoing and fierce struggle, conducted by young African women, against gender oppression under colonialism. It is also the main road to attaining high status in the colonized society, especially for the most ambitious ones. Particular attention is given by the author to girls' education since they are victims of the double colonization of patriarchy and colonialism.

In *Nervous Conditions,* Dangarembga uses two female protagonists. Along with Tambu the omniscient narrator of the story, Nyasha is the second heroine. She is Tambu's cousin and close friend. She is three years younger than her, and the only daughter of Babamukuru and Maiguru. As a young girl, Nyasha, and her brother Chido, went to England with her parents. There, she spent most of her childhood receiving Western education. Consequently, Nyasha forgot about her

traditional Shona culture and language and starts blindly embracing the alien Western culture.

Colonial education is expected to fulfil its role in liberating and offering more avenues of discourse and thought outside the oppressive systems. Instead, it is implicitly used by the colonialist to weaken the indigenous language and culture and administer control over the colonized mind and land. In other words, colonial education is part of "the colonial project to dehumanize Africans by imposing both inner and outer colonisation" (Shizha et al., 2011, p. 14). The African novelist and activist Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1986) reiterates that

> Colonial education [in Africa] was far from giving people the confidence in their ability and capacities to overcome obstacles or to become masters of the laws governing external nature as human beings and tends to make them feel their inadequacies and their inability to do anything about the conditions of their lives (Wa Thiong'o,1986, p. 7).

The five years Babamukuru and his family spent in England, before they return to their native country, caused Nyasha to lose a great deal, if not all, of her traditional Shona culture. She no longer had the ability to communicate through the Shona language. Her mother, Maiguru, admits that "they have been speaking nothing but English for so long that most of their Shona have gone" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 42). Additionally, her Englishness was apparent in the manner she dressed up. Dazzled by this behaviour, Tambu observes that

> There was no other explanation for the tiny little dress she wore, hardly enough of it to cover her thighs. She was self-conscious though, constantly clasping her hands behind her buttocks to prevent her dress from riding up, and observing everybody through veiled vigilant eyes to see what we were thinking (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 37).

The arrogant behaviour of Nyasha at the homestead annoyed Tambu because it was beyond the Shona women's codes. Nyasha was fully conscious of the bad effects colonial education and culture had in moulding her new identity. She even referred to herself as a 'hybrid'. The concept of hybridity, or double identity, is described by Barry (1995) as "the situation whereby individuals and groups belong simultaneously to more than one culture (for instance, that of the coloniser, through a colonial school system, and that of the colonised, through local and oral traditions)" (p. 192). Through her hybrid identity, Nyasha showed her strong desire to unify the two distinct English and Shona cultures into one. This behaviour led to disagreements between her and Babamukuru, who saw these actions as loathsome and have damaging effects on her personal characteristics. Unfortunately, and to Babamukuru's disappointment, Nyasha is no longer "the sort of young woman a daughter ought to be" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 157).

When speaking of the goals of education under colonial rule Frantz Fanon (1963) states that it is to empty "the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it" (p. 210). Among the strategies colonialism relies on to sustain and consolidate its domination over the colonies is to destroy the indigenous cultures and values (religion, language, habits…etc.) and supplant them with totally distorted versions. Frantz Fanon (1963) expatiates to explain that for the colonialist to justify these acts, he usually recourses "to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness" (p. 211).

Nyasha and Tambu were strongly affected by this colonial ideology. They considered colonial education as a liberator. The kind that provides them with the faculty to think more freely about their situation as women and colonized individuals, ignoring at the same time, the boundaries being placed around them by the traditional culture. As far as Nyasha was concerned, the years she spent in England as a young girl had generated an unbridgeable gap between her and her original culture. She seemed to refuse to adopt any of her original culture back into

her characteristics. Instead, she identified herself with the English people and culture through displayed actions and behaviours. This transformation in Nyasha's persona causes extreme damage to her relationship with her family, especially her father, and even her schoolmates who start resenting her, because "'She thinks she is white', they used to sneer, and that was as bad as a curse" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 94).

Through the character Nyasha, Dangarembga depicts the downfalls of colonial education on young African women. Colonial education can be regarded as a double-edged sword. Although it provides women with enough knowledge and strength to face male domination and lead a full and free life, it alienates them from their indigenous cultural and linguistic frameworks. As Katrak (1995) argues, "Education is not always a tool for liberation….The content of a colonial education that made England the centre of the universe denigrated indigenous cultures" (p. 75). In the same vein Olive Senior (1985), in her poem the *Colonial Girls School*, states that colonial education

> harnessed our voices to madrigals
>
> and genteel airs
>
> yoked our minds to declensions in Latin
>
> and the language of Shakespeare
>
> Told us nothing about ourselves
>
> There was nothing about us at all (p. 26).

In his final novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, Chinua Achebe reconstructs the place of women in postcolonial African society. Through his main female character, Beatrice Okoh, he shows that Western education can help African women disrupt and alter oppressive imperialist and patriarchal structures. In contrast to his earlier domestic and passive female characters like Ezinma in *Things Fall Apart* and Hannah Okonkwo in *No Longer at Ease*, Achebe Portrays Beatrice as an intellectual, independent, unmarried and educated woman. He introduces this

character in the fifth chapter where Mad Medico, kangan's hospital administrator and a friend of Beatrice, reveals that Beatrice "took a walloping honours degree in English from London University" (Achebe, 1987, p. 57). This is considered by many scholars as an explicit shift in Achebe's vision concerning the future role of women in the newly independent African states.

Achebe confirms this new orientation when he was interviewed by Anna Rutherford (1987) shortly after the publication of the *Anthills of the Savannah*. He said that Beatrice represents a new generation of African women, well-educated and full of enthusiasm, who can stand up to male oppression and be the harbinger of a new social order.

> We [Achebe] have created all kinds of myths to support the suppression of the woman, and what the ground Beatrice is saying is that the time has now come to put an end to that. I am saying the woman herself will be in the forefront in designing what her new role is going to be, with the humble co-operation of men. The position of Beatrice as sensitive leader to that group is indicative of what I see as necessary in the transition to the kind of society which I think we should be aiming to create (p. 4).

Beatrice's Western education enabled her to gain respect and recognition within her masculine-dominated society. Sam (His Excellency), the head of state, was very proud of the great achievements of this young African woman. When reciting Beatrice's CV to Miss Cranford, a journalist from the American Unite Press working in Bassa, his Excellency states that she is

> One of the most brilliant daughters of this country…She is a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance- the only person in the service, male or female, with a first-class honours

> in English. And not from a local university but from Queen Mary College, University of London (Achebe, 1987, p. 68).

Achebe values the education of his heroine, Beatrice, so that she can access the patriarchal realm and break the myth of women's uselessness. He does so in recognition of the fact that education enhances the notion of responsibility and respectability in society. This could be felt when Beatrice acknowledges that she is invited to his Excellency's "small private dinner" (Achebe, 1987, p. 64) party because of her education and position within the government. The respectful position of Beatrice within the Ministry of Finance brings radical changes to her relationship, as a powerful free woman, with the other strong political men in the government. For instance, Beatrice decided to stand up to His Excellency's abuse and ill-treatment of his surrounding women as she refused to be his bedmate. Furthermore, this position provided her with adequate political authority to make a place for women within the patriarchal society of the Kangan state.

Patricia Hills Collins (1990) considers education as an important means for the empowerment of black African-American women in the political arena. She explains that "educated black women traditionally were brought up to see their education as something gained not just for their own development but for the purpose of race uplift" (p. 149). According to Collins (1990), black women were conscious of the value of education. It is a fundamental dimension in their political activism since it equips them with the power and wisdom to defend the development of their black community.

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe's portrayal of the female protagonist, as educated, dynamic and unmarried marks his relinquishment from his earlier ignorant, passive an obedient women characters. This deviation in the author's ideology reflects two important facts. The first one is his conviction that modern African women can play an indispensable role in the emancipation of women from patriarchal and neo-colonial oppression. The Second one is his right confidence that these educated and enlightened African women have the necessary tools to

contribute, along with their male counterparts, to the development of modern African society.

2.3 Self-displacement and Personal Sacrifices

People around the world are in constant movement or displacement because of education, work or exploration. This displacement could be done deliberately or with compulsion. In the framework of this study, displacement means the decision people make to move within the closed borders of a given country or from one country to another. From a postcolonial perspective, Ashcroft and his colleagues (2007) see displacement as a dislocation that occurs as a result of colonialism. They postulate that,

> The term is used to describe the experience of those who have willingly moved from the imperial 'Home' to the colonial margin, but it affects all those who, as a result of colonialism, have been placed in a location that, because of colonial hegemonic practices, needs, in a sense, to be 'reinvented' in language, in narrative and in myth (p. 65).

Displacement is a quest the colonized people lead for the restoration of a cultural identity dispossessed and distorted by the colonizer. The colonisation of Africa implies a deliberate movement of the White man from his European continent for Africa. This migration of Europeans in colossal numbers and their endeavour to dominate the African people and resources can be seen as an attempt to improve the living conditions in Europe. Such migrations based upon economic interests are merely the exploitation of Black men by White men since there is an imbalance in power between the oppressed and the oppressors. In discussing the ways through which European colonialism underdeveloped and exploit the people of Africa, Walter Rodney (2011) states that

> It has been observed that one hour of work of a cotton peasant in Chad was equivalent to less than one centimetre of cotton cloth,

> and he needed to work 50 days to earn what needed to buy three metres of the cloth made from his own cotton in France (p. 221).

The superabundant economic exploitation of the African continent by European migrants brings impoverishment to the African people. This difficult socio-economic situation, created by colonialism, fails to meet the expectations of Africans. Consequently, it triggers many of them to leave their countries in a quest for a safe and better life in other places. Paradoxically, the number of African emigrants who leave their countries for Europe has multiplied during the post-independence period. Among the reasons for this emigration is for the Africans to have an opportunity for higher education which the colonialist deprives them of in their homeland. The new African elites see higher education as an avenue to tackle the economic, social and political problems of the newly independent African countries.

As far as the White man is concerned, education is an efficient tool to impose his culture and civilization on the colonized people. Additionally, his power and the considerable influence he has on the African people lead these latter to willingly embrace the Western culture and civilization. They are convinced that Western education is an unavoidable option to secure their social balance. For instance, in Achebe's *Arrow of God*, The Chief Priest, Ezeulu, is reluctant, at first, about the proposal the white missionaries make to receive one of his sons within their mission school. After realizing the significance of the White man's education, Ezeulu is telling his son Oduche why it is necessary to send him to the mission school.

> I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eyes there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. If there is something there you will bring home my share. The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me those who do not befriend the white man

> today will be saying *had we known* tomorrow (Achebe, 1964, p. 46).

The coming of the White man to Africa, surrounded by his culture and civilization, produces great impacts on the indigenous traditions. Under this influence, African people start converging towards the new culture and religion. Consequently, this induces the traditional African leaders to be sceptical about the future of their traditional culture and language. Because of their failure in resisting the White man's pressure and power, the African leaders start, cautiously, approaching the new Western culture for the sake of their own interests and those of their families.

In his novel *Ambiguous Adventure*, Cheikh Amidou Kane depicts the devastating effects of Western culture on the Diallobé's society (Muslim region in Senegal). Watching their society falling apart, the traditional leaders start looking for urgent ways to resist the roaring waves of Western civilization. For The Most Royal Lady, the female protagonist in the novel, the only way of resistance is the new school. She believes that if her people want to reconstruct and free themselves from the ruthless domination of the white man, they must send their children to the Western school

> To learn from them the art of conquering without being in the right … The foreign school is the new form of the war which those who come here are waging, and we must send our élite there, expecting that all the country will follow them (Cited in Dailly, 1983, p. 208).

Regardless of its many virtues, the foreign school is still perceived as a danger to traditional culture and language. Despite this, The Most Royal Lady, being a noblewoman, pushes the class of élites within the Diallobé's society to emigrate and join the Western school to get the necessary education and knowledge that enables them to rule the nation with wisdom. Back home, those élites set out to build new and independent local schools that remodel the world. The new ideology adopted

within the new schools is to moderate the two currents of thought i.e., modernity and tradition.

The supremacy of the White man's culture and education makes emigration to Western countries the dream of every African, man or woman. The first waves of Africans moving to Europe started during the colonial period and continue after independence. These African emigrants quit their home countries leaving their families behind with the principal motive to get a good academic degree. Their conviction is that when back home, the obtained degree would guarantee for them a prosperous future, and allow them to contribute, in one way or another, in solving the different problems (social, political and economic) in their prospective independent countries.

It is from this perspective that the two writers Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga talk about emigration in their selected works. In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga shows a talent in taking the autobiographical details of her own life and transforming them into a highly realistic novel. Therefore, the female character Nyasha can be seen as an explicit incarnation of the author's childhood from the time she leaves Rhodesia, with her parents, heading to England until she comes back home. Dangarembga's experience with emigration starts at a very early age and continues thereafter during her adulthood. This ongoing movement of the author, to and from Europe, makes emigration a central theme in her story, *Nervous Conditions*.

In Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, the first form of displacement occurs within the same country, Rhodesia. It is an interior emigration of people between different places for various reasons. Tambu's grandmother, Mbuya, the mother of Babamukuru, explains to her how they unwillingly came down to live in the new land of Umtali.

> Your family did not always live here, did not move to this place until after the time that I was married to your grandfather. We

> live up in Chipinge, where the soil is ripe and your grandfather was a rich man in the currency of those days,….Wizards (the white men) well versed in treachery and black magic came from the south and forced the people from the land (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 18).

Tambu's family was a victim of land dispossession. They were forced, after the arrival of the White man in Rhodesia, to leave their fertile land in Chipinge to settle upon the stony and barren soil of Umtali. Under colonialism, the living standards of the majority of African people change drastically. After living in complete peace and welfare, they are now facing the danger of impoverishment and disempowerment. For Tambu's grandmother, the situation was even worse. Not only she was a poor and abandoned woman, but she found herself feeding and taking care of six children after the killing of her husband in the mines.

The settlement of the White missionaries in Rhodesia, not far from the homestead, brought hope to Tambu's grandmother. She had a sharp foresight that enabled her to see a bright future, for her family and people, with these holy and powerful White men. Therefore, she was determined to give them one of her sons and "begged them to prepare him for life in their world" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 19). Tambu's grandmother's choice fell on Babamukuru who was only nine years old at that time. The White missionaries decided to take care of Babamukuru and provide him with a good education and training that would save him and his family from poverty.

In return for the formal education provided by the missionaries, Babamukuru would work for them on the farm. Work on the farm was very hard, but he has to endure and make sacrifices to support himself and his family. The small amount of money he earned enabled him to pay his school fees and support financially his poor mother and brothers. This young African boy had impressed the missionaries with his diligence, respect and loyalty. "They thought he was a good boy, cultivatable, in the way that land is, to yield harvests that sustain the

cultivator" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 19). In Babamukuru, they noticed the essential traits of a successful man who can serve their interests in the future. Therefore, they decided to further his education and training through a government scholarship to South Africa, which shares borderline with Rhodesia.

Babamukuru is one of those few Africans who, through immigration, acquire a decent education that makes them prosperous and respectful within their countries. Back from his training in South Africa, he was offered a teaching position in the mission school. Following his first successful displacement to South Africa, the missionaries granted Babamukuru a second scholarship to England for five good years. This time he was accompanied by his wife, Maiguru, who has been offered a scholarship as well. In the beginning, he displayed a kind of hesitation because he couldn't stand the parting of his old mother and dear children. But after a fruitful debate within the family, Babamukuru accepted the scholarship offer.

> Babamukuru did not want to leave the mission. He did not want to go far from home again because he had already left his mother once, to go to South Africa, and had not been back long enough to see that she was settled and comfortable in her old age. In addition to this, he now has a family of his own (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 14).

Babamukuru viewed his decline of the opportunity that was given to him to pursue his studies abroad as a form of suicide for himself and his extended family because the latter counted on him to help them improve their living conditions. Even the missionaries would be annoyed by his ingratitude and could give this opportunity to another promising African. Babamukuru found himself in a delicate situation. He was obliged to leave his old mother and displaced himself, with his family, to England to continue his higher education and training in the Science of Education. A five year of high training in England would not go without reward. So, when he came back home Babamukuru was promoted to the position of headmaster of the

mission school. With this new position, he could secure for himself and his extended family a better life far from the hard labour of the homestead.

Dangarembga points out an important fact about emigration under colonial rule. According to her, what really prompts African people to leave their countries is not a willingness or passion to travel to the Western world but, it is rather, to find a way out of poverty and ignorance through Western education. In Nigeria, for instance, the Yoruba group, by using songs, inculcate in their primary schools' pupils the passion to travel and get a Western education as it is the only way to a prestigious life. Additionally, some particular songs mean that emigration to Western countries is the dream of every African person. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) give two examples of such songs.

> *Oun meta lo mu ki ile-iwe wu mi ,*
> *igba n baduro bi alakowe*
> *igba n ba wo bata to ba mi lese mu ,*
> *ma de 'lu oyinbo ka we o*
>
> I love Western education for three reasons,
> One, the spiffy dressing of the White man;
> Two, the White man's shoes; and
> Three, the prospect of travelling to the White man's land to learn.
>
> *Ma di eni atata, madi eni aponle,*
> *ilu oyinbo wu mi lopolopo,*
> *mo si ma de be o*
>
> I love the White man's land with a passion,
> It is a land where one derives prestige and honour, and
> So it is my fervent wish to go there some day (p. 954).

For Babamukuru's people, England was the land of dream fulfilment. One cannot go there and come back home empty-handed. Therefore, they watched his return

impatiently. Being the eldest son in the Sigauke family, Babamukuru has the traditional duty to support his younger brothers and sisters. The five good years he spent in England, studying hard, would considerably help in saving his families from poverty.

In this respect, Dangarembga presents one of the responsibilities the Shona tradition imposes on the eldest son in the family lineage. Once he reaches a good social status, the eldest brother is supposed, mainly in case the father is absent, to provide his younger siblings with all kinds of support and ensure a good upbringing for them and, later on, for their children. While, in return, they should obey and respect him. Babamukuru had succeeded in assuming all his responsibilities, although his brothers and sisters now have their own families. The endless love and respect he owned among the members of his family can explain all the happiness and enthusiasm over his return.

> Babamukuru came home in a cavalcade of motor vehicles…Slowly the cavalcade progressed towards the yard, which by now was full of rejoicing relatives. My father jumped out of Babamukuru's car and, brandishing a staff like a victory spear…he cried do you see him 'Do you see him?' Our returning prince. Do you see him? Observe him well. He has returned. Our father and benefactor has returned appeased, having devoured English letters with a ferocious appetite! (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 35-36).

Dangarembga's description of Babamukuru's return from England shows to what extent indigenous Africans appreciate the colonizer's culture and civilization. For most of them, having the opportunity to interact with the White man's culture is a kind of blessing. Those African elites who displace themselves to the White man's country and take from his knowledge and wisdom are treated with high respect and appreciation by their people because of their achievements. Additionally, they are looked upon as icons of noble sacrifice and notable success by the younger African

generations. As far as the young girl Tambu is concerned, the high social status her uncle, Babamukuru, achieved through Western education constituted a real motivation for her to attain her educational ambitions within the darkness of colonized Africa.

Tambu, Dangarembga's female protagonist, was impressed and inspired by Babamukuru's quest for knowledge in the white man's country. Her uncle's fruitful emigration made her believe that moving out of someone's disadvantageous location can create real chances of success. The opportunity Babamukuru got to emigrate and enlighten himself in the White man's country was out of reach for his niece Tambu. Nevertheless, she had the chance, after the death of her brother Nhamo, for a local displacement, a dislocation within Rhodesia. She moved to the mission school to take the position of her brother. Babamukuru, being the headmaster of the school, offered Tambu a place within his family to get a good education and realize her childhood dreams. The difficult circumstances that he, himself, experienced during his long learning journey allowed him to cut off the doubt that the environment of the homestead was not favourable for Tambu's future development and success.

Tambu felt indebted to Babamukuru for his endless support. Her displacement to the mission school constituted a turning point in her life. The amount of knowledge and wisdom she was enthusiastic to get would enable her to be a respectful woman within her family and community. Additionally, it would help her fight poverty and gender discrimination imposed on them, as African women, by colonialism and patriarchy. Tambu was very conscious of this opportunity provided by her uncle. Therefore, she decided to make good use of it. The first priority for her was to realize her childhood dreams by pursuing a good education. Besides, following the advice of her aunt, Maiguru, Tambu was determined to work very hard at school, to please her uncle Babamukuru who spared no efforts to guarantee for her adequate conditions for a good and continuous education.

After she finally settled down at the mission, Babamukuru reminded Tambu about how she was lucky to have such an opportunity to attain the mission school. According to him, through this opportunity she would make a great leap towards a bright and successful future. At the same time, he called her attention, as a prospective educated woman, to her duties, responsibilities and personal challenges towards herself, her own parents and siblings.

> As it turned out, Babamukuru had summoned me to make sure that I knew how lucky I was to have been given this opportunity for mental and eventually, through it, material emancipation. He pointed out that the blessing I had received was not an individual blessing but one that extended to all members of my less fortunate family, who would be able to depend on me in the future as they were now depending on him (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 87-88).

For Babamukuru, The transplantation of Tambu, from the disadvantaged conditions of the homestead to the mission school would help in her mental and material emancipation. In other words, the good education Tambu receives under the support and supervision of her uncle equips her not only with awareness and knowledge of her rights and duties as a woman but also with economic independence. As a matter of fact, the emancipation Babamukuru was talking about, at least the material one was relatively true because it charges Tambu with the financial responsibility towards her destitute family which was once the duty of her uncle. But, what really matters to her was to invest this opportunity of displacement, as possible as she could, to be "like Babamukuru: straight as an arrow: as steely and true" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 88).

In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga explains how the ongoing quest for knowledge can yield stunning results. As far as Babamukuru is concerned, the good use of the opportunity he had been given to study abroad, in South Africa and England, allowed him to get good rewards from the missionaries. At first, they gave

him a teaching position in the mission school and later he was promoted to the position of a headmaster. For Tambu, the protagonist, the conditions were totally different. Her position as a girl child in a patriarchal family made her relentless endeavours to get an adequate education condemned to failure. Finally, her transplantation from her father's homestead to the mission school couldn't be possible without the sudden death of her brother. This displacement to join her uncle's family at the mission was conceived as a blessing for her; it was a new beginning in her life. At the mission school, she had no other duty than excel in her studies and made her uncle Babamukuru proud of her.

The decline of colonialism and the emergence of new-born African states called the Africans to take the leadership of their independent countries. This task was not easy for them since it requires a certain amount of intellectual capacity which the Africans lacked. The supremacy of the White man's education and culture in addition to his successful ways of governance had been taken as models by the Africans. Therefore, many of them showed strong desires to immigrate to the colonizers' native countries to pursue their studies. Kalu (2008) notes that the majority of these migrants actually returned home after completing their degrees abroad. He states that

> The practice of sending brilliant students to study overseas continued in many African countries after political independence. Happily, the students who went to study in Europe and North America in the 1960s and 1970s followed suit and returned to Africa in large numbers to participate in nation building (p. 139).

As far as Nigeria is concerned, Chinua Achebe explains why many Nigerians choose to immigrate to England during the post-independence period. According to him, the new social and political context created by the departure of the White man engendered many challenges for the new Nigerian leaders. Therefore, England, for

historical and cultural reasons, was seen as the pinnacle of hope for a better future for themselves and their people.

In *Anthills of the Savannah,* Achebe talks about Sam (His Excellency), an officer who became the president of the imaginary West African country of Kangan after a successful military coup against a civilian regime. His Excellency, because of his military background, appeared to lack the art of state governance. His fear of the newly acquired civil position prompted him to seek assistance from his friend Christopher Oriko, a male protagonist in the novel, by giving him the position of Commissioner of Information. Through this position, Christopher or simply Chris, as often called by the other characters, decided to benefit from the Western education and training of their boyhood friend Ikem Osodi, another male protagonist, who was studying in London. After his return, Ikem was appointed by Chris as the editor of The National Gazette. After a kind of reluctance, he finally accepted the offer. "He had completed his studies two or three years earlier and was just knocking about London…before his friends at home finally persuaded him to return and join them in nation-building" (Achebe, 1987, p. 83).

Ikem presents a good example of those few successful African elites who receive western education. The specific knowledge he gained allowed him, in addition to being the editor of the National Gazette, to gain the confidence and admiration of His Excellency, and as a result be the spokesperson of the presidential palace. The high status, accorded to Ikem by His Excellency reflects the importance and respect Nigerians give to the country's abroad migrants. They were perceived as the drivers of social and economic changes. The return of the educated African citizens living abroad has the potential to compensate for the "brains" shortage in postcolonial African countries. Thomas (2008) considers such flows of international migrants back home as "a "brain gain" necessary for fulfilling the development aspirations of African countries" (p. 655).

In fact, the movement of people to Western countries does not only concern men. There have been some women, too, who displaced themselves to the western

world to pursue their education and training. Those women also feature among the country's member of the elite. Beatrice, Achebe's main female protagonist, received her early education in an Anglican mission school where her father was a headmaster. Although this latter was among the elite of the compound, he was very harsh with the members of his family. This harshness went beyond his house to be well-known throughout the diocese. Still, at a young age, Beatrice observed the complicity of the White man in advocating patriarchy and oppression. This happened when her father was praised by the local chief "for the good training he was giving the children of the village through his whip" (Achebe, 1987, p. 78).

Beatrice's traumatic relations with her stern father made her determined to resist male chauvinism. She fully understood from the experiences of her illiterate and oppressed mother that the efficient tool to resist patriarchy is education. Therefore, after completing her education in her home country, she displaced herself, to the extent to leave her native land and family, to England to achieve a good Western education. As is the case for the majority of African migrants, Britain is the land of dreams for the Igbo people. Beatrice had sojourned in London for several years studying English at Queen Mary College. This long period of hard work and perseverance made her dreams finally come true. She graduated with a "first-class honours" (Achebe, 1987, p. 68) and became one of the very few African migrants, males and females, with such a fulfilment.

As an enlightened intellectual woman, Beatrice returned home to be awarded a high position in the Ministry of Finance. Through this position, Achebe assumes new empowering roles for African women in a male-dominated society. Many contemporary critics recognize Achebe's success, through his female character Beatrice, in altering the stereotypical model of the African woman held by the patriarch. The new model of women, from Achebe's perspective, is endowed with the power of change. Nadine Gordimer, for instance, points out the significance of Beatrice in African letters, "She is a true world-historical figure…and it is Mr Achebe's victory that she is also one of the most extraordinary,

attractive and moving women characters in any contemporary novel" (Cited in Erritouni, 2006, p. 67). Similarly, Chimalum Nwankwo recognizes that Beatrice represents a new category of intellectual African women burdened with a new role to assume.

> Achebe's attitude to women in *Anthills of the Savannah* is therefore the consequence of present African experience, validating the existence of certain kinds of women enjoying a setting totally different from that of their predecessors. If Beatrice is new, so indeed are her circumstances (Cited in Erritouni, 2006, p. 67).

The patriarchal system on which the African countries are built undermines the potentials of women and gives them a passive and secondary role in society. Additionally, this discriminatory system deprives young African girls of the right to access good quality education and training compared to their male counterparts. The two African authors Achebe and Dangarembga jointly assert through their female protagonists, Beatrice and Tambu respectively, that young African women, if given the right opportunity, can excel academically at the home county, as Tambu did at the mission school and later at the Young Ladies College of the Sacred Heart, and abroad, like the ambitious Beatrice who got a fist-class honour degree in English from London university.

Furthermore, Achebe and Dangarembga point out that the emergence of the new independent African countries encourages many Africans to set about an exploring journey within and beyond the local boundaries. Through this spatial displacement, new learning experiences and maturation are gained. The colonizer's metropolis was the major destination for the very fortunate among these migrants. In analysing the different goals and functions of the two-way emigration, inside and outside the African continent, Mortimer (1991) points out that the displacement of Africans,

> Represents an intellectual and emotional initiation to maturity; this voyager's goal is to acquire the knowledge and/or power that will allow him or her to re-join the community and to enjoy a heightened status in it (p. 171).

The spatial displacement can lead to a more informed, enlightened and knowledgeable person. As far as African women are concerned, this act of moving away from a place of lack and ignorance into a place of enlightenment can provide them with the necessary power and determination to face the peril of ignorance, poverty and servitude that threaten their lives and makes them uncomfortable. The spatial movement to escape from an unavoidable threat can be inferred from the famous Igbo saying in Achebe's narrative *Things Fall Apart* that "Whenever you see a toad jumping in broad daylight, then know that something is after its life" (Achebe, 1958, p. 203).

The African educated woman and her male counterpart consider the inside and outside displacement as an opportunity that enables them, if well invested, to be enlightened academically and culturally and be effective contributors to nation-building. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, emigration brings hope for the female protagonist Beatrice. The good education she received in London granted her a leading position within the newly independent African nation of Kangan. This given position can be considered as an explicit proclamation for the beginning of a new epoch, in postcolonial Africa, where women at last are allowed to play a significant role in the affairs of their countries.

Generally speaking, feminist literary tradition holds a firm perspective regarding the theme of displacement as the rhetorical device female characters generally resort to in order to set themselves free from social oppression and deprivation. But, one should bear in mind that the quest for intellectual and cultural enlightenment through displacement and emigration doesn't always meet the expectations of the female protagonists. For most African women this difficult quest yields nothing but pain and disillusionment.

2.4 Women's Disillusionment in Colonial Education

In colonial and postcolonial Africa the issue of education is the first preoccupation for the Africans, before even the issues of liberty and prosperity. It is considered an indispensable prerequisite to social privilege and economic progress. The White colonialists exploit this demand for education to their advantage. The style of Western education offered to the African elites, at home or abroad, was designed in a way to satisfy their political, social and economic ambitions while at the same time firmly ingraining in them the cultural and ideological values of the colonial power. Once the process of acculturation is successfully completed the African subject starts obeying the White man's laws and codes of conduct while drawing in his mind a picture of Europe as the cradle of culture and civilization.

Ashcroft and his colleagues (2007) argue that this vision about the centrality of Europe vis à vis the African continent is further reinforced through the colonial discourse which is directed to the colonized subject. According to them, this discourse can be defined as

> the system by which dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth by imposing, specific knowledges, disciplines and values upon dominated groups…Colonial discourse is greatly implicated within ideas of the centrality of Europe: and thus in assumptions that have become characteristic of modernity: assumptions about history, language, and 'technology' (p. 37).

Through the colonial discourse, the White colonizer provides a clean and ideal picture of Western civilization. This act induces indigenous Africans to admire Europe and European cities settled in Africa and think of them as places where everything is achievable. Therefore, African men and women leave their homes for the city or immigrate to the White man's country with the hope to realize their dreams of better living conditions. Unfortunately for these African emigrants, the journey they undertake in their quest for freedom and knowledge is not as easy as

they thought. The appearance and illusion of Western civilization deceive them. Once at their destinations, they find themselves surrounded by myriads of constraints and predicaments.

In African fiction, the movement of female protagonists is always the result of unbearable externalized constraints. The long journey young girls and women endure, to big cities and abroad, has very often a twofold aim: First, to distance themselves from the bleak living conditions under patriarchal oppression and discrimination. Second, they move out of their places to coin a new cultural identity and broaden their knowledge and wisdom to book a high political, social and economic status within their indigenous communities. In their pursuit to fulfil this second aim, African women fall victim of many prejudices. The new social context of colonial rule and post-independence Africa brings them nothing but disappointment. The racial and gender justice they dreamt of turns to be mere illusions and nightmares. The postcolonial experience was particularly been unfair for African women, as Anne McClintock (1992) maintains,

> No "post-colonial" state anywhere has granted women and men equal access to the rights and resources of the nation state. Not only have the needs of "post-colonial nations" been largely identified with male conflicts, male aspirations and male interests, but the very representation of "national" power rests on prior constructions of gender power (p. 92).

According to Anne McClintock (1992), the source of evil for African women is not only the oppressive colonial apparatus, which was dissolved by the coming of political independence but also and more importantly, the unfair social and economic relations between men and women within postcolonial African society. Despite their good education, women remain subordinate to their male counterparts. They experience many prejudices regarding their gender legitimized by patriarchy.

Dangarembga's heroines, Tambu and Nyasha, find themselves, in their pursuit for education, trapped within the extreme civilization of Western countries and the conservative traditions of the mission. The negative side-effects of the two different settings draw the two protagonists to the forefront to defend their case as two educated young African women looking for gender justice under the tyranny of patriarchal rule.

In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga focuses, in the first place, on the impacts of displacement on Tambu as she moves from the rural nature of the homestead to the luxurious house of her uncle, Babamukuru. This latter was the main source of all the psychological transformation she underwent. With the aim to secure a prestigious life in Rhodesia, Babamukuru immigrated to South Africa and then to England to pursue a good education. During his first journey, he was accompanied only by his wife, Maiguru. She travelled with him for learning purposes as well. But, for his second displacement, to the White man's country, the company was different. This time, since the sojourn was longer, five good years, Babamukuru decided to take, in addition to his wife, his two children, Chido and Nyasha. Concerning his stay and his family in England, Dangarembga does not provide much information. The same thing can be said for Achebe who made the experiences of his female protagonist, Beatrice, within the alien Western culture invisible to his readers.

Babamukuru's interaction with the White missionaries from a very early age makes him conscious of the cultural gap between his home country Africa and Europe. This knowledge made him sceptical about taking his children with him to England. He knows about the cultural differences between black people and white people, and the distorting effects these latter may have on his children's psychological balance and social life. Paradoxically, Babamukuru eventually decided to travel with them, ignoring all the serious threats of the alien culture, because for him Rhodesia is not the perfect place for the education and upbringing of his own children. He didn't want them to experience the difficult living

conditions he, himself, had once did as a child. The choice Babamukuru made about the displacement of his children went against the wish of his mother, Mbuya.

> My grandmother thought the children would be better off at home, where our ways were familiar and they would be at ease in the family environment. But Babamukuru, remembering how difficult life was on the homestead, did not want his children to experience the want and hardship that he had experienced as a young child. In addition, he preferred to have his children with him so he could supervise essential things such as their education and their development (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 14).

Generally speaking, in traditional African societies grandmothers have pivotal roles. They are the ideal guards of local customs and traditions and bear the burden of passing them to the new generation. Furthermore, they are looked upon as the caregivers and teachers for the whole family members, especially the young children. In Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions,* Tambu's grandmother is a good example. Tambu acknowledged that she was fortunate enough to spend an important part of her childhood with her grandmother. She learnt from her valuable lessons for life. Tambu personally admitted that she instilled in her a lasting love for the cultivation of land and consolidated it "as a desirable habit. She [the grandmother] gave me history lessons as well. History that could not be found in the textbooks" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 17).

Additionally, because of the accumulated knowledge and wisdom grandmothers possess in their life, parents very often refer to them for advice concerning the right upbringing of their children. This was not the case for Babamukuru. His decision to displace with his children to England reflects his determination to guarantee for them academic success which is, according to his experience, the gateway to a better social life. Because of this resoluteness, he paid no attention to his mother's warnings about the possible conflict between the western values and the traditional ones. Babamukuru's zealous choice is a good

indicator of his detachment from his traditional values and acceptance of the White man's culture. His choice also tells more about the outcome of the cultural conflict that awaits the members of his family, later on, when they have imbibed the Western culture.

The five good years Babamukuru and his wife, Maiguru, spent in England allowed them to obtain a Master's degree in education. Theoretically, this obtained degree would secure for both of them a good salary and a high social position. Conversely, despite the good education of Maiguru and her position as a schoolteacher, she remained dependent on her husband. This is evident when Tambu found out that Maiguru did not receive her own salary, "I felt sorry for Maiguru because she could not use the money she earned for her own purposes and had been prevented by marriage from doing the things she wanted to do" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 102). With all the sacrifices Maiguru and her daughter, Nyasha, made in England to obtain a good western education and be self-dependent women, they are still under the patriarchal oppression of Babamukuru. Their stay in the White man's country brings them nothing but subjugation and dismay.

The Western education which Maiguru acquired did not improve her social and economic status in the Rhodesian society. Her full salary was used by her husband, Babamukuru, to secure the foodstuffs and schooling fees of his extended family, thus reinforcing her passivity and marginalised status as she has no right to benefit from her own incomes. This traditional patriarchal practice of denying African women the right of possessing is deeply rooted in the Shona tradition. According to Michael Gelfand (1973), Shona families are organised and controlled by patriarchal and authoritative systems of rank, "husband and wife cannot own property jointly–what is theirs is his. Whatever a woman possesses belongs to him…A boy must be respected by his sisters even if he is younger than they are" (pp. 31, 44).

Maiguru's passivity and subordination were evident to the young Tambu as was her own patriarchal oppression at the homestead. She concluded that this

subordination is something that was common to all the women in Babamukuru's extended family. Tambu admits, "Personally I thought it was a great shame that Maiguru had been deprived of the opportunity to make the most of herself, even if she had accepted that deprivation. I was all for people being given opportunities" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 102). Tambu felt sympathy towards her aunt. As far as she was concerned, Maiguru should be given the opportunity to cultivate her academic potentials and social advantages, first and foremost, in favour of the wellbeing of her own self.

Tambu's mother, Mainini, had also her fair share of dismay caused by Babamukuru's sojourn in England. She had always suspected his Western education and upbringing by the White missionaries. The displacement of her son, Nhamo, to Babamukuru's mission school to receive a colonial education had negative consequences on his behaviour. The number of visits he paid his family on the homestead started to decrease, and when he did visit he refused to speak Shona with his uneducated mother. This latter confined to her daughter, Tambu "even more, she wanted to talk to him" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 53). Gradually, Mainini had begun to regard Western education, symbolized by Babamukuru, as an evil that divided her from her son.

According to Hill (1995), this division between Mainini and her son, Nhamo, goes through three sequential stages. It started with a physical separation as Nhamo was displaced to live with his uncle, Babamukuru, in the mission. Then linguistically, when he devalued his parents' and own native language, Shona, and opted for English as the only mean of communication between him and the other members of his family. Finally, Mainini and Nhamo were divided literally after the sudden death of the latter. Mainini was dismayed by the death of her son. She felt strong hostility towards Babamukuru and his colonial education. She bitterly cursed him and his wife, Maiguru, hissing "First you took his tongue so that he could not speak to me and now you have taken everything….You and your education have killed my son" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 54).

Following Gayatri Spivak's (1993) considerable contribution to the field of postcolonial studies, through her influential seminal essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Mainini can be referred to as a subaltern woman. She was a victim of the patriarchal and colonial oppression which denies women the right to speak. The fear she experienced after the death of Nhamo prompted Tambu's mother, Mainini, to speak out and object when she was told that Tambu will take Nhamo's place at the mission. She tells her husband, Jerimiah, "How could you stand there and tell me to send my child to a place of death…She will not go. Unless you want me to die too. The anxiety will kill me" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 56). Indeed, when Tambu does leave, Mainini expresses her suffering through a depression that reflects her sense of powerlessness. The indifference about Mainini's opinion perfectly reflects what Spivak (1993) explains to some of her essay's critics. She states that "even when the subaltern makes an effort to the death to speak, she is not able to be heard" (p. 292).

To Tambu's mother, Babamukuru symbolizes the colonial power. Even though he offered her children, Nhamo and Tambu, a good opportunity to get a good education at the mission, she considered his Western education and culture very harmful to her children's social integration. When Tambu completed her education at the mission school and was offered a scholarship at the exclusively white Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart, her mother's fears of the English language barrier escalated into complete estrangement from her daughter. She asks Tambu:

> Tell me my daughter, what will I, your mother say to you when you come home a stranger full of white ways and ideas? It will be English, English all the time….Truly that man (Babamukuru) is calling down a curse of bad luck on my head. You have survived the mission so now he must send you even further away….I have had enough of that man dividing me from my

> children. Dividing me from my children and ruling my life (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 184).

As far as Tambu was concerned, she had been given, by her uncle Babamukuru, a good chance to pursue her education at the mission school. She viewed this opportunity as a transition from the precarious life she had led in her father's homestead. Unfortunately, the displacement of Tambu to the mission, and later on to the Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart on a scholarship, was not as comfortable as she hoped. Once there, she encountered a series of disappointments. She was extremely disappointed by the patriarchal oppression which her uncle exercised over the female bodies within his family, Nyasha and Maiguru. Tambu also experienced racial discrimination from her very first day at the Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart. However, and despite all these predicaments, Tambu resolves to continue her education. Her real motivation was her scare of ending up like her mother living in the extreme poverty and deprivation of her father's homestead.

On the day Tambu arrived at the multiracial young ladies' college of the Sacred Heart, she was accompanied by her uncle, Babamukuru, her aunt, Maiguru and their daughter, Nyasha. This latter perceives through the behaviour of her cousin, Tambu, that this latter was affected by the affluence of this young ladies' college. Fully conscious about the destructive racial discrimination her cousin, as a black African student, may suffer from in his multiracial college, Nyasha warns her father Babamukuru by asking: "'are you sure this is the right place?' 'What do you mean?' growled my uncle. 'Of course this is the place!'…'Nyasha,' he snapped, 'what's the matter with you? Why can't you keep quiet like Tambudzai there?" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 193). This response suggests that Babamukuru is aware of the schooling circumstances of young ladies' college of the Sacred Heart and has tolerance towards colonial racism since it will guarantee for the young Tambu, as it did for him long time ago, a good education.

In her attempt to save Tambu from the evils of the western culture, which she herself is suffering from, Nyasha warns her cousin that the Sacred Heart scholarship could actually be a trap, an opportunity with "more evils than advantages to be reaped from such an opportunity. It would be a marvellous opportunity…to forget who you were, what you were and why you were that" (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 178-179). Once there, Tambu found out the verity of Nyasha's warnings. She discovers that colonial education at the prestigious young ladies' college is mixed with colonial racism. The bitterness of the racist practices, which Tambu experienced, reveals her nervous conditions in the real sense of the word. Her privileged education becomes a source of distress, terror and torment. As a black African student, in a school dominated by whites, Tambu was extremely disappointed by the uncomfortable schooling environment.

Because of her black skin, Tambu was crowded with other African students into the school's only 'African dormitory' which is meant for four rather than six students. This racial segregation humiliates and demoralizes Tambu to a large extent.

> 'All the first-formers live on this corridor,' she [the nun] explained as she led the way. 'And the Africans live in here,' she announced, triumphantly flinging the door to my new life wide open. The room was empty. I was, it seemed, the first black first-former to have arrived. It was not a small room but then neither was it large. It certainly was not large enough for the six beds that stood in it…so closely arranged that there was barely space to walk between them (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 155).

Despite the humiliation, racism and the difficult learning environment, Tambu has a firm faith in colonial education and knowledge. She believes that they are the only rescuer from the oppression of patriarchy and colonialism. This young African girl perceives the Sacred Heart as the place where every ambitious young woman wants

to be educated, a college to which all good and caring parents wish to send their daughters. To take full advantage of the good opportunity she has been offered by her uncle, Tambu was strongly determined to equip herself with patience and to follow the valuable advice she has been given by her grandmother. The advice is wisely summarized in "to endure and obey, for there is no other way" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 19).

As a matter of fact, Tambu's endurance of colonial racism was very successful, because she managed to overlook the continuous psychological harassment of white students at Sacred Heart. But, unexpectedly, she failed in resisting the overwhelming influence of the Western culture. Her contact with colonial education and culture gradually changed her perspective about her indigenous Shona culture and values. She claims "And I was quite proud of this fact, because the more I saw of worlds beyond homestead the more I was convinced that the further we left the old ways behind the closer we came to progress" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 147). It is interesting to note that Tambu's concept of progress involves her complete melting in the White man's culture. Under the powerful influence of colonial education at the Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart, Tambu renounces her role as an upholder of the traditional Shona culture to become an admirer of the Western culture.

Tambu's admiration of Western education and culture is purely materialistic. Because of her impoverishment and disempowerment, Tambu finds herself seduced by the economic and social rewards colonial education may offer. Those merits enforce and encourage her natural desires and inclinations for Western assimilation. This can be noticed when Tambu describes her impression of the Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart.

> A prestigious private school that manufactured guaranteed young ladies. At that convent, which was just outside town but on the other side, to the south, you wore pleated terylene skirts to school every day and on Sundays a tailor-made two-piece

> linen suit with gloves, yes, even with gloves! We all wanted to go. That was only natural. But only two places were on offer, two places for all the African Grade Seven girls in the country (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 178).

The image of the Sacred Heart as a school that manufactured guaranteed young ladies suggests the idea of the colonial school as a factory that tailored young African women's traditions to befit the English ways. Through this process, British imperialism imposes its culture and values on the African youths like Tambu and Nyasha by convincing them that their aspiration can only be achieved by assimilating to the English culture.

In *Nervous Conditions,* Dangarembga takes a close look at the dilemmas of deracination that colonial education can bring to African young girls. She also shows some of the prices that liberation through biculturalism demands. Additionally, Dangarembga reveals, through the female character of Maiguru, how patriarchal traditions dispossess educated African women of their economic and social rights.

2.5 Conclusion

European colonialism and patriarchal traditions in Africa undermine the potentials of young girls and women and give them a passive and secondary role in society. These two oppressive and discriminatory systems put unfair restrictions on young African women's access to colonial education and training compared to their male counterparts. This gender discrimination brings resistance from the part of women and determination to get good educational opportunities that lead to individual strength and ultimately to an unwavering voice.

The two postcolonial African authors, Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga, jointly assert through their female protagonists, Beatrice and Tambu respectively, that young African women, if given the chance to get a good education, can excel academically at home country and abroad and withstand

gender and racial discriminations. As far as Achebe's heroine is concerned, the emergence of the newly independent African state of Kangan encourages her to immigrate to London in order to get a Western education. Beatrice believes that Western education can benefit African women in many different ways. It guarantees for them a pivotal position within the social and political systems of society and makes them a real partner for men in nation-building and the restoration of political equilibrium in neo-colonial Africa. Achebe's adoption of a feminist perspective in his representation of women in *Anthills of the Savannah* shows a noticeable deviation from his previous writings and an emergence of a new orientation in the production of African men's literature.

For Tsitsi Dangarembga, her female protagonist, Tambu, believes that colonial education is an indispensable tool in her ongoing and fierce struggle against the double oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. Therefore, she seizes, with great zeal, the educational opportunity she has been offered by her uncle Babamukuru, after the death of her brother, Nhamo. Tambu sees her displacement from the miserable homestead to the luxurious mission school, where her uncle is the headmaster, as a considerable leap towards fulfilling her emancipation and freedom. The comfortable life she experiences at the mission, with her uncle's family, makes her perceive the many benefits colonial education can yield. Unexpectedly, the period of time Tambu spends at the mission allows her to notice, through the abnormal behaviour and psychological disorders of her cousin, Nyasha, the downfalls of Western education and culture on young African girls and women. Later on when Tambu enrols at the Sacred Heart she, herself, experiences such downfalls when she bitterly discovers that colonial education is mixed with racial discrimination.

In *Nervous Conditions,* Dangarembga gives special importance to colonial education and considers its impacts on African girls and women. According to her, colonial education can be regarded as a double-edge sword. Although it provides women with enough knowledge and strength to face the double oppression of

colonialism and patriarchy and lead a full and free life, it alienates them from their indigenous cultural and linguistic frameworks.

Chapter Three

Women's Socio-Cultural Conditions

CONTENT

What a misfortune to be a woman! And yet the misfortune, when one is a woman, is at bottom not to comprehend that it is one.

— Kierkegaard

3.1 Introduction

Africa, this second largest continent, is characterized by the diversity of its societies and cultures. Each society is governed by a specific code of conduct within the community, tribe or clan. However, despite this diversity, there is a common denominator of traditional African societies which is patriarchy. Most African women, either educated or illiterate, suffer subordination under the patriarchal system. For instance, within the Shona and Igbo communities, in Zimbabwe and Nigeria respectively, male hegemony prevents women from emancipating and becoming more than only hardworking and obedient wives within their families. Women who deviate from this cultural norm often undergo emotional and even physical violence.

To shed more light on the objectification of women within traditional African societies, it becomes relevant to study the two novels: *Nervous Conditions* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, by Tsitsi Dangarembga and Chinua Achebe, respectively, through the following points concerning the condition of women: the weight of tradition, patriarchy and female subordination, and women's predicaments that can be seen as a hindrance to their personal development and freedom.

3.2 Women and Tradition

Africa, this vast continent, at least three times the size of the United State, presents a diversity and plurality of people and traditions. The word 'tradition' is commonly understood as meaning "the inherited wisdom of the past and 'traditionalist' as referring to one who preserves this heritage" (Newell and Booth, 1978, pp. 6-7). Frequently, the preservation of traditional aspects like customs, rules, religious beliefs, and the like, can only be achieved through the act of transmission or handing down from one generation to the other through oral or practical channels.

It is of paramount importance here to talk about the traditional beliefs and practices in African communities before and after the coming of the European missionaries and the place of women therein. Before the advent of colonialism, Africa was not a religious vacuum. On the contrary, Africans held a deep faith in traditional beliefs, considered as icons that embodied the disciplinary mindset of the community. Religious beliefs inform everything in traditional African societies, including political art, marriage, health, diet, dress, economics, and death. To put it differently, Africans believed in traditional gods, chiefs, legitimate rulers and, most importantly, the worship of ancestors, or the living dead. The ancestors could be men or women. They are believed to have the power to protect and forgive the living, especially their kinsmen. For this reason, people usually take care of their tombs or provide gifts and sacrifices to gain their delight and blessings. In this respect, we can quote the viewpoint of Mbiti (1970) on the traditional religious beliefs in African societies.

> African religions…however, incorporate national heroes, leaders, rulers and other famous men and women into their body of beliefs and mythology. Some of these figures are elevated to high national positions and may even be regarded as divinities responsible for natural objects or phenomena. These heroes and heroines form an integral part of the religious milieu of their society (pp. 5-6).

As for the relationship between Christianity and ancestor cult, the majority of the members of Christian churches in Africa strongly reject ancestor veneration because they hold the belief that ancestors are demonic spirits which need to be bound and exorcised. This is not the case for many highly educated and westernized Christian African theologians who show a passionate desire to be linked with their ancestors and their own inner struggle. Botswana theologian and poet Gabriel Setiloane (1978) speaks for many African Christians;

> Ah . . . yes . . .! It is true.
> They are very present with us…
> The dead are not dead; they are ever near us;
> Approving and disapproving all our actions,
> They chide us when we go wrong,
> Bless us and sustain us for good deeds done,
> For kindness shown, and strangers made to feel at home.
> They increase our store, and punish our pride (p. 34).

Traditional religious beliefs were sacred in most parts of Africa, and people who lived in a given community had to observe the general rules and regulations established by the group. According to Omosade Awolalu (1976), the African man is created in a being-in-relation, in relation to God and his fellow men. In a similar vein, Westermann (1949) says that

> African society is characterized by the prevalence of the idea of the community. The whole existence from birth to death is organically embodied in a series of associations, and life appears to have its full value only in those close ties (p. 65).

The African man is not left to the whims of his passions and lusts. His relations to his fellow men are regulated. He can enjoy his rights while complying with his duties and obligations. The guiding principles and norms character the coherence of society. Mbiti (1970) reiterates by stating that

> Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am." This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man (p. 141).

In Africa, social norms are usually referred to great ancestors or deity. Any breach of the recognized laws or traditions inscribed by the group is regarded as a sin and it was severely punished. Therefore, African people have to take the straightway and be in accordance with the community they live in. Sins include any immoral behavior, ritual mistakes, any offences against God or man, breach of covenant, breaking of taboos and doing anything regarded as abominable and polluting.

Africans have a high sense of morality and this sense of morality leads to established customs, rules and laws that keep society alive and in peace. The fear of wrong deeds coupled with a possible divine punishment seems to make people avoid vices, as much as possible, and induces them to a fuller righteous behaviour towards traditional society's religious criteria that are mainly grounded in the faith of deities and ancestors. After the coming of European missionaries Africans start converting, in big numbers, to Christianity which makes them believe in the existence of the Supreme God (Allah) who is the creator of the heavens and earth and all therein. It is surprisingly noted that some African Christians believe in the power of their ancestors and still pray to them for assistance and went on to support that for the Christian faith to have any real effect in African life, it must accept and address the spirit world. As the theologian S. E. Serote (1973) insists, "Christian Africa must have a Christian ancestry. In developing a Christian theology that speaks to the African understanding of ancestors, these theologians are confident that their insights will enrich worldwide Christianity" (p. 150).

The sacredness of the Christian religion in Africa is unquestionable. The supreme God is believed to have the power to shape and define any individual's destiny according to his/her deeds. The high sense Africans have about morality and

sins makes them consider certain actions such as murder, theft, and adultery to be real offences against deities and ancestors. Therefore, the fear of possible punishment induces people to a fuller righteous behaviour towards society's religious norms. In this respect, Westermann (1937) points out that

> The many taboos which a man has to observe are not to be regarded as things mechanical which do not touch the heart, but that the avoidance is a sacred law respected by the community. In breaking it, you offend a divine power (pp. 96-97).

In this statement, Westermann provides a clear understanding of the concept of sin and the removal of evil among the African people. According to him, Africans have a strong sense of morality and sin. They hold the belief that moral values are based upon the recognition of the divine will and that all kind of sins in the community must be expelled for its members to enjoy a beneficial and peaceful life.

Westermann's point is noteworthy as it fits Dangarembga's visions about the disrespect Africans had for divinities and ancestors. Dangarembga has succeeded in highlighting this fact in her work.

In *Nervous Conditions*, Tsitsi Dangarembga points out the fact that for the Shona people the destiny of a man is handled by the supreme god. Therefore, any endeavour to change the misfortune that can befall him because of wrong deeds will be in vain. For instance, when the Sigauke family's council meets at the house of the elder brother, Babamukuru, to talk about Jeremiah, Tambu's father, and about the different problems the whole family is suffering from, Babamukuru tells them that the origin of their misfortunes stems from their lenience with religious teaching. Babamukuru's speech was directed to Jeremiah who disrespects the principles of Christianity when he got married.

> I [Babamukuru] remember that our mother, our mother always insisted that Jeremiah must have a church wedding. Yes, Jeremiah, even now, so many years after our mother passed

> away, you are still living in sin. You have not been married in church before God. This is a serious matter (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 147).

Jeremiah is a lazy husband. He cannot survive without his wife's long, tiring labour and sacrifices, and her bearing of the heavy burden of womanhood. He is self-indulgent who likes to drink. Jeremiah is not Christian. The sin he has committed is to marry Mainini, Tambu's mother, in a traditional sense not in the church before God when they first began living together. Therefore, Babamukuru decided to clean this sin by celebrating the wedding of Jeremiah and Mainini anew and in a Christian sense so that God will stop punishing the whole family, "so, I have been saving a little…bit of money for a wedding for you and Mainini" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 147). Jeremiah agrees passionately with Babamukuru's wedding decision. He sees the coming wedding feast as an occasion to enjoy himself and a marvellous time to play the part of the groom. Whereas Mainini's case is entirely different, she seems to agree with Babamukuru's proposed wedding even though she does not see the point.

The event of Jeremiah and Mainini's wedding has a serious impact on their daughter, Tambu, who suffers immensely with the whole concept. She bitterly admits that Babamukuru puts her and her both parents, in a difficult situation. She narrates:

> Naturally, I was angry with him for having devised this plot which made such a joke of my parents, my home and myself. And just as naturally I could not be angry with him since surely it was sinful to be angry with Babamukuru. Babamukuru who was my benefactor, my father for all practical purposes and who was also good, deserving of all love, respect and obedience (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 149).

Tambu believes that the Christian wedding will denigrate her parents and question her whole existence. She admits that this wedding will have "made a mockery of the

people I belonged to and placed doubt on my legitimate existence in this world" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 163). If Tambu's parents are living in sin because their traditional marriage is not legitimate according to the Christian religion, then Tambu and her brothers and sisters are also illegitimate and their whole existence is sinful.

Babamukuru's violation of the Shona marriage traditions by imposing inappropriate Western religious ideas causes Tambu to feel deep anger and resentment towards him. She, the grateful and poor female relative, ultimately decides to confront her benefactors, Babamukuru, by refusing to participate in the shameful wedding of her parents. Although Tambu frees herself from the internal fear of him, she is unable to voice her objection to the wedding. Instead, her resentful silence causes her severe physical pain, "Whenever I thought about it...I suffered a horrible crawling over my skin, my chest contracted to a breathless tension and even my bowels threatened to let me know their opinion" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 149). Thus Tambu expresses her anger and resentment physically and in silence because in most African cultures and traditions women are socialised into being silent and obedient. Obedience is indicative of being a good woman. Through Tambu's experience, Dangarembga tries to draw the attention of the reader to the bitter pain inflicted on African women's minds and bodies by colonial and postcolonial patriarchies.

In contrast to Tambu, her mother, Mainini, exemplifies the good and obedient African woman. After the deliberate humiliation she receives from Babamukuru, who accuses her of living in sin with her husband, she remains silent and meek. Mainini is the most oppressed and helpless female character in Dangarembga's novel. Being "female and poor and uneducated and black" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 86), and thus without any right or support, she "has given up all hope and has come to embrace an almost deterministic conception of the women's role" (Palmer, 2008, p. 180). She does not question her duties and, as Childs and his colleagues (2006) explain, Mainini "upholds the traditional family structures, even though they are rooted in a patriarchal system of gender

oppression" (p. 260). Mainini seems to accept her destiny as a dependent wife, who doesn't know how to defend and get her rights in a patriarchal Shona society. When her sister, Lucia, does her best to convince her to leave the homestead together, Mainini can only display carelessness and resignation.

> Since when does it matter what I want?…Do you think I wanted to be impregnated by that old dog?…Do you really think I wanted to travel all this way across this country of our forefathers only to live in dirt and poverty? Do you really think I wanted the child for whom I made the journey to die only five years after it left the womb? Or my son to be taken from me?…It is all the same. What I have endured for nineteen years I can endure for another nineteen, and nineteen more if need be (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 155).

Although Dangarembga depicts the suffering of women from colonial and patriarchal oppressions, she, at the same time, provides her female characters with ways to resist such oppression. For instance, the female protagonist, Tambu, at a very early age, develops a mental awareness of female subjugation. She gives her surrounding women different options to enhance their social and economic position and, subsequently, make their voices heard. Her early confrontation with Babamukuru, because of her parents' shameful wedding, symbolises a real challenge of patriarchal injustice and repression. In addition, the female character Lucia, Tambu's aunt, portrays the idealistic free and supporting woman. She gives her sister, Mainini, hope and strength to stand up against patriarchal oppression and hegemony.

The accumulation of uncontrollable events in the life of Mainini; the wedding that is forced upon her, and being reluctantly separated from her two children Nhamo and Tambu, leads her to vent about Babamukuru's patriarchal domination. Mainini's rebellion started when she finds out that Tambu is moving from the mission to a convent for white girls. "I've had enough of that man dividing

me from my children...and ruling my life. He says this and we jump… If I am a witch I would enfeeble his mind…and see how his education and his money helped him" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 184). Matzke (2007) explains that the exclusion of Mainini from taking part in the matters of her children makes her enter a cycle of anxiety and depression. To voice her suffering, she becomes entirely passive; refusing food, getting out of bed, and even showering and changing her clothes. As a result, this passivity causes her serious health problems that extend to her baby boy, Dambudzo, who develops diarrhea.

Observing the critical situation that threatens the life of Mainini, Lucia intervenes to prevent the inevitable death of her sister by evoking maternal feelings. After unceasing insistence, she succeeds to convince Mainini to leave the bed, which she sticks to for several weeks, and walk with her and the baby to the river. Once there, Lucia puts the baby boy, Dambudzo, on a stone in the middle of the river and turns to Mainini:

> 'I am putting him on this rock and leaving him there, right in the middle, in the middle of the river. If he slips into the water because you do nothing to save him then you will truly go mad, because this time you will be guilty.' [...] 'Lucia,' my mother said, 'Lucia, why are you doing this? Why? Why do you bother? Why don't you just let me die?' And removing her dress she waded out to the rock to wash herself and her son (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 185).

By deliberately exposing Dambudzo to the danger of drowning Lucia succeeds to access her sister's subconscious mind and elicit protective maternal feelings. In addition, this situation shows Mainini, despite her mental illness, her responsibility towards the safety of her baby boy and how her own starvation can seriously affect her child's health and put him in the danger of death. This realization of somebody's dependency on oneself is highlighted by Ogunyemi (1985) who argues that

> The black madwoman in novels written by black women knows in her subconscious that she must survive because she has people without other resources depending on her; in a positive about-face she usually recovers through a superhuman effort, or somehow, aids others (p. 74).

With the assistance of her sister, Mainini comes to understand that her illness is stress-related. She recuperates from her nervous condition as soon as she and Lucia are joined by other women of the village. While doing their daily routines in the river, Mainini chats and laughs gaily with them as if nothing has happened to her. Tambu describes her mother's immediate reintegration into society as the best way to self-healing. Lucia stays for two more days in the homestead. She sleeps with her sister in the kitchen and cooks nutritious food for her to regain physical strength.

Dangarembga uses Mainini's actions of refusing food and remaining in bed to explore and suggest possible ways to survive and transcend the experiences of colonialism and patriarchy. She also shows, after Mainini's recovery from her nervous breakdown and the role played by women's communion in that, the importance of female companionship. According to Ogunyemi (1985), Mainini's nervous breakdown is considered as a temporary aberration that precedes spiritual growth, healing and social integration. On the other hand, Dangarembga designs the character Lucia as the opposite of Mainini in terms of personality and outlook in life. Berndt (2005) argues that Lucia represents that kind of Zimbabwean women who have the courage to oppose men and create opportunities that become possible for women to change the unstable Shona society. Through the two characters Mainini and Lucia, Dangarembga shows us that it is all a matter of choice for a woman to choose whether to be abused or to be free.

Just like her sister Mainini, Lucia receives her share of misfortunes and abuses from the male members of Jeremiah's family. The period of time she spent in the homestead, to support her sister, causes Jeremiah to develop a sexual inclination towards his sister-in-law, Lucia. To quell this inclination and help

Jeremiah solve this social problem, Takesure, a distant cousin of his, proposes the use of mystic means. "'Maybe some medicine,' suggested Takesure 'to fix Mukoma Jeremiah. Ehe! To fix him. So that he cannot be influenced by that woman'" (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 145-46). According to Takesure, nobody on earth can help Jeremiah lower his roving eye on Lucia, except a divine force. As a matter of fact, Takesure was also a womanizer. He sexually abuses Lucia and forced her to be one of his many concubines.

In fact, Lucia enjoys her sexual freedom with both Jeremiah as well as his distant cousin, Takesure. Her unexpected pregnancy without a husband causes Babamukuru, as the head of the extended Sigauke family, to hold a patriarchal meeting to discuss Lucia's situation and find out who the father of the child is. This exclusively male meeting was suddenly interrupted after the unauthorized intervention of Lucia who turns it into a humorous scene.

> As she just strode in there, her right eye glittering as it caught the yellow paraffin flame, glittering dangerously at Takesure, who wisely shrank back into his corner of the sofa. 'Fool!' snorted Lucia [...]. And she whirled to face Babamukuru [...] 'Look at him, Babamukuru! Look at him trying to hide because now I am here.' [...] 'If you have an issue with me,' Lucia advised him, 'stand up and let us sort it out plainly.' In two strides she was beside him and, securing an ear between each finger and thumb, she dragged him to his feet. 'Let me go, let me go,' he moaned. I always maintain that I saw smiles slide over the patriarchy's faces, but it might have been my imagination because I was laughing myself. We were all laughing outside (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 143-44).

Dangarembga portrays Lucia as determined and brave while exposing both Jeremiah and Takesure as coward and deceptive. Lucia breaks through the walls of silence to rebel against the domination of men. In this respect, Booker (1998) argues

that Lucia represents the emancipation of a simple, uneducated Shona woman. From his part, Palmer (2008) concludes that "Lucia is one of the most attractive characters in the novel, and it can be easily seen that she is central to the author's overall feminist design" (p. 188). Like her sister, Lucia also rebels with her body. She interrupts the patriarchal meeting held by Babamukuru to discuss her situation and, by enjoying her sexuality, infringes the traditional female roles by giving birth to a baby as a single mother.

The trio Tambu, Mainini and Lucia are not the only female family members who experience nervous conditions under patriarchal hegemony. There is also Jeremiah's sister, Tete Gladys, who is dismayed by serious social problems within her branch of family. Her two daughters have fallen pregnant out of marriage. On top of that, her eldest son's wife spends several days in hospital after being beaten so badly by him. The family's social problems do not stop at this level. It further develops and extends to reach the most educated member and head of the family, Babamukuru. His only daughter, Nyasha, influenced by western culture, refuses to conform to the patriarchal rules he sets for his small family and thus uses her body to rebel. According to Moore-Gilbert (2009), the body, in postcolonial women's life-writing, represents the root of oppression and has been a typical site of resistance. Nyasha's rebellion includes the complete rejection of the food her father provides. Even when he puts pressure on her to eat, she forces herself to vomit. Aegerter (1996) explains that Nyasha's ongoing self-starvation can be interpreted as a way to tear away the layers of identities that were forced upon her by colonialism and patriarchy.

As far as Jeremiah is concerned, although the social problems that trouble the whole Sigauke family differ from one individual to another, they have the same cause which is the breaking of some moral or ritual conduct against God or the spirits of ancestors. Therefore, these misfortunes should have the same means of resolution, which is to appease the spirits of ancestors' deities or God through sacrifices and good conduct. Jeremiah presents these ideas in front of the members

of his family during the extended council which takes place under the supervision of Babamukuru in this latter's house.

> The problems are everywhere in the family…These are serious misfortunes. They do not come alone. They are coming somewhere. It's obvious. They are being sent. And they must be made to go back where they come from, right back! It's a matter for a good medium…to do the ceremony properly with everything - beer, a sacrificial ox, everything. We must call the clan and get rid of this evil- (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 146).

Through Jeremiah's superstitious ideas, Dangarembga shows the extent to which the Shona community is influenced by the local traditions. The above-mentioned passage suggests that the Shona people believe that misfortunes and evils could be the work of some community members, especially workers of magic, sorcery or witchcraft against their fellow men and women. The vicious practices of such members fill people's hearts and minds with fear since they are regarded as the very incarnation of all evils. Moreover, divinities and the spirits of the ancestors are thought to be the daily guardians and police of the community, therefore, people present them with all kinds of rituals and sacrifices to get their benediction and protection.

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe uses Beatrice, the female heroine, to show how modern African women dismantle traditional practices that prevail the Igbo community. Such dismantling is most evident in the naming ceremony of the child of Elewa, Ikem's lover, which takes place in Beatrice's home. In this naming ceremony, which occurs at the end of the novel, Beatrice becomes the leader of a group of friends replacing the traditional position of father or male family head. This group was balanced in terms of social class and gender. It comprised, in addition to Beatrice, Abdul Medani a military officer, Emmanuel Obete a university student and a former student leader, Braimoh

a taxi driver, Adamma a student nurse, and Elewa, Aina and Agatha who are common people.

> Beatrice had decided on a sudden inspiration to hold a naming ceremony in her flat for Elewa's baby-girl. She did not intend a traditional ceremony… Beatrice had asked the same handful of friends who had kept together around her like stragglers from a massacred army (Achebe, 1987, pp. 201-202).

The ceremony starts when Elewa whispers into Beatrice's ear the probable reason for her mother's absence. Such an unexpected absence, of a member who represents along Elewa's uncle the more traditional generation, provides room for Beatrice to perform the naming herself. She "called the little assembly to order and proceeded to improvise a ritual" (Achebe, 1987, p. 206). Beatrice continues the ritual by announcing the name of the child and evoking the memory of her close friend Ikem after calling the audience's attention to one of the traditional practices reserved for men in their community.

> "In our traditional society…the father named the child. But the man who should have done it today is absent…What does a man knows about a child anyway that he should presume to give it a name…So I think our tradition is faulty there. It is really safest to ask the mother what her child is or means or should be called. So Elewa should really be holding Ama and telling us what she is" (Achebe, 1987, p. 206).

Beatrice reminds the group of young people that African women have the full rights and are free to choose a name for their new-born babies, but unhappily they are deprived of this right. The absence of Ikem, the baby girl's father, places Beatrice in a powerful position as the head of the naming ceremony. This position allows her to alter patriarchal traditions to create a new and embracive environment which gives men and women equal power within the community. Beatrice gives the baby girl the traditional male name "Amaechina" which means *May-the-path-never-close*.

This specific name shows that Elewa's baby girl, born after the death of Ikem, is the real hope in the novel. The different generations and classes of people brought together at the naming ceremony, by the end of the novel, indicate that hope for a free and prosperous Kangan begins with the solidarity and unity between its members. Achebe, in an interview, states that

> The implication of the path is really that it is only a boy who can keep the family homestead alive ... Girls don't count because they go out, they marry elsewhere…This is why if you find a family that is having difficulty having a male issue, but finally succeeds, they are likely to call him Amaechina: their hope of immortality hangs on this one person…This is all a narrow view of survival, which the naming ceremony in Anthills is challenging and calling into question. The fact that the old man accepts it without too much difficulty is a very encouraging sign (Cited in Aning et al., 2018, p. 40).

The uncle of Elewa and her mother, who represent the African traditions in the novel, have different stances regarding the naming ceremony headed by Beatrice. Elewa's uncle, the only living male traditionally eligible to name the girl child, displays satisfaction with the act of Beatrice breaking away from this custom and announces the naming of the child by herself, "If anybody thinks that I will start a fight because somebody has done the work I should do that person does not know me" (Achebe, 1987, p. 210). While Elewa's uncle agrees with this alteration of old ways, her mother, someone who would benefit as a woman from this change, remains bewildered by their detachment from custom and demands a refund for the gifts she bought for her brother.

> "Elewa's poor mother was left high and dry carrying the anger of outraged custom…for having no one to focus it on. In the end she turned and heaped it on the opportunistic old man…'you

> will return my bottle of Snaps and the fowl,' she said to him" (Achebe, 1987, p. 209).

The group of people brought together because of Beatrice is heterogeneous in terms of traditional beliefs. On the one hand, Elewa's mother represents that kind of women who still believe in the supremacy of the patriarch. On the other hand, the young people, represented by Beatrice, signify the alteration of those old traditional ways. They continue with the naming ceremony despite the strong objection of Elewa's mother. It is evident here that change of the old customs is a slow and continual process which needs patient and literate people, like Beatrice, to adopt it. The naming ceremony of the baby girl demonstrates the necessity of reworking tradition in order to meet the aspirations of the future coming generations, as noticed in the speech of Elewa's uncle he addresses to the younger people.

> Do you know why I am laughing like this? I am laughing because in you young people our world has met its match. Yes! You have put the world where it should sit. My wife here was breaking her head looking for kolanuts, for alligator pepper, for honey and for bitter-leaf…And while she is cracking her head you people gather in this whiteman house and give the girl a boy's name…That is how to handle this world (Achebe, 1987, p. 210).

Through the limited preoccupations of his wife, Elewa's uncle notably indicates the damaging effects of colonial and patriarchal oppression on African women's thinking. Beatrice and the group of young people, who embody hope for the future of all Kangan's members, break the rules of race and gender by gathering in the white man house and giving the baby girl a boy's name even though that role is traditionally fulfilled by a man. Here, the white man house can represent the postcolonial Kangan devastated by colonialism and patriarchy. By holding the naming ceremony of the child within a previously colonized territory Beatrice

asserts that African women are real partners in the building of the postcolonial African society.

Significantly, the breaking of the old customs by Beatrice paves the way for the re-establishment of the African women's rights. Beatrice as the head of the naming ceremony serves as a source of inspiration and motivation to the young people around her. She skilfully drives the more traditional generations which form part of the Kangan community to accept women as free and equal to men as far as the shaping of the future of the whole nation is concerned. When Elewa's uncle asks who has named the baby girl, Beatrice responds "All of us here" (Achebe, 1987, p. 209). This unanimity is a good indication of the inclination of other members, in the naming ceremony, to rework the traditional ways, as seen when "Abdul, a relative stranger to the kolanut ritual, was carried away beyond the accustomed limits of choral support right into exuberant hand-clapping. ' I have never entered a house like this before. May this not be my last time'" (Achebe, 1987, p. 212). Despite the different backgrounds of Abdul, who is a military officer, he was welcomed by Beatrice and the other members. This sense of accepting the other, despite his or her ethnicity, race or gender, will allow the new generation to celebrate the early customs in a modern and inclusive way.

In his last work, *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe understands the requirement for women in modern African society. He seems to have seen that hope for a better future lies in making women's issues a priority for any social change. Achebe's conceived idea of a free African woman incarnated in his female heroine, Beatrice, is also supported by Hélène Cixous (1976) who provides the image of the new women who is no longer chained in the confines of their homes. She talks of the new role of women in bringing a change that can be achieved only through liberating the traditional women from the clutches of patriarchy in these terms.

> It is time to liberate the New Woman from the Old by coming to know her-by loving her for getting by, for getting beyond the Old without delay, by going out ahead of what the New Woman

> will be, as an arrow quits the bow with a movement that gathers and separates the vibrations musically, in order to be more than herself (p. 878).

Although Dangarembga's and Achebe's discourses mesh together around the prevailing patriarchal tradition within African societies during and after colonialism, they diverge when it comes to the impact of those traditions on African women's life. In Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, women are denied the privileged of decision-making and power. They ought to be obedient to their men and act in conformity with traditions. The rigidness of the patriarchal society offers them no option but to give up hope for gender equality and women's emancipation. By contrast, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe's women disassemble old traditions in order to create hope. They are unsatisfied with the peripheral role given to them by society. Thus, they see power as the only mean for their emancipation from men's thraldom.

3.3 Patriarchy and Female Subordination

In most African communities, including the Igbo and Shona in Nigeria and Zimbabwe respectively, the issue of women is of paramount importance. In the Igbo and Shona communities, for instance, women are deprived of their legal rights and opportunities because of patriarchy. Patriarchy supposes the natural superiority of males over females. Consequently, men are given the right to hold all the power and authority within the family and society.

According to Sheila Rowbothem (1992) feminism, as a movement, emerges as a reaction to these patriarchal practices of women subordination. It is mainly concerned with women's rights and resistance against oppressive traditions based on gender, class or racial discrimination. Feminism is about giving women the power to realize their full rights and make their voices heard. As Greene and Kahn (1985) argue,

> Literary criticism, like history and the social sciences, has traditionally asked questions that exclude women's accomplishments. Feminist scholarship undertakes the dual task of deconstructing predominantly male cultural paradigms and reconstructing a female perspective and experience in an effort to change the tradition that has silenced and marginalized them (p. 1).

From this perspective, this section examines the various forms of subordination women experience at a daily level and their resistance against the unfair patriarchal rules and practices in Chinua Achebe's and Tsitsi Dangarembga's works. At the time when traditional beliefs undermine women and give them inferior positions, it bestows on their male counterparts countless privileges which strengthen the position they hold in society. Discrimination against African women may take several forms. It includes, son preference, the burden of household work on women and young girls, lack of educational opportunities for girls, lack of freedom for girls, and male control over women and girls, to name but a few. Among these different issues, education is a good illustration of patriarchy in feminists' writings.

Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* and Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah,* among many others, are loaded with patriarchal stances that plainly show gender discrimination in children's education. In Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, for instance, Tambu, the young female protagonist, is eager to go to school but she is not encouraged by her mother to pursue her dream. Her basic obstacle, beyond the problem of money, is her sex. On the other hand, her brother, Nhamo, benefits from all family resources to go to school. In fact, the young Tambu is a victim of patriarchy within her family. The feeling of injustice and discrimination, which Tambu experiences, triggers within her waves of hatred towards the members of her family.

> The needs and sensibilities of women in my family were not considered a priority, or even legitimate…In those days I felt the

> injustice of my situation…this is how I came to dislike my brother, and not only my brother: my father, my mother – in fact everybody (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 12).

Tambu is denied the right to education because she is a girl. This discriminatory treatment has an acute impact on her mood and behaviour. She develops a deep feeling of anger and bitterness towards all people around her including her poor and oppressed mother, Mainini. Tambu's negative behaviour towards her mother seems cruel and unjustified since she is not the decision-maker in the household. She, herself, suffers the subjugation of her lazy husband, Jeremiah, and his entire male relatives. Maybe the only thing Tambu blames her mother for, because of her discrimination, is of being too possessive. Hence, Tambu develops a sense of antipathy towards her mother. The analysis of Simone De Beauvoir (1956) of the relationship between mothers and their daughters sheds light on this issue.

> Most young girls' dramas concern their family relationships; they seek to break their ties with mothers: now they show hostility towards her, they retain a keen need for her protection…They often make up stories, imagining that their parents are not really their parents, that they are adopted children (p. 300).

Similarly, Achebe evokes the possibility of relationships degradation between mother and daughter in *Anthills of the Savannah*. Like Dangarembga's heroine in *Nervous Conditions*, Achebe's female protagonist, Beatrice, has bad experiences with her subjugated mother. Because this latter was a victim of the tyranny of her husband, Beatrice develops a feeling of hatred and anger toward her father, the oppressor. She could not bear the sight of her mother being in such a degraded state. Overnight, the relationship of Beatrice with her mother changes radically. She states that her feeling of sympathy towards her oppressed mother begins to fade away when

> One day as my mother came out wiping her eyes I rushed to her and hugged her legs but instead of pressing me to herself as I had expected, she pushed me away so violently that I hit my head against the wooden mortar. After that, I didn't feel any more like telling my father to die (Achebe, 1987, p. 79).

After this terrible incident, Beatrice comes to sense, despite her very young age, that her mother belongs to that category of women who can bear all the subjugation and torture inflicted upon them by their authoritarian husbands. What really displeased Beatrice more and raises within her a sense of antipathy towards her mother is when she realizes, much later in her life, that "my mother bore me a huge grudge because I was a girl- her fifth in a row though one had died- and that when I was born she had so desperately prayed for a boy to give my father" (Achebe, 1987, p. 79). The real motive for African women praying for male children is just to win admiration and respect from their husbands and to keep their marital status intact.

For instance, in his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe (1958) shows that a woman's status in traditional Igbo society is related to how many children she bears and how many of them are male. Okonkwo's first wife, Nwoye's mother, enjoys great respect and admiration from her husband because, unlike his two other wives, she gives birth to male children. Nwoye's mother "had three sons, all strong and healthy. When she had borne her third son in succession, Okonkwo had slaughtered a goat for her, as was the custom" (p. 79). As Kök and colleagues (2017) explain, the mothers of the male children have a high status in African traditional communities compared to those women whose destiny gives them female ones.

> Women who give birth to female children sleep on the mattress which is a worthless object, because they have given birth to something worthless. Whereas women who give birth to male children sleep on comfortable and high beds. Because they have

> given birth to something valuable which glorifies the honour of men and thus increases men's and households' power (p. 205).

The manner Nwoye's mother is treated within Okonkwo's compound is totally different from what Ekwefi, Okonkwo's second wife, experiences. She was rebuked and even brutally beaten, on several occasions, by her husband. This unfair treatment causes Ekwefi unbearable heartache and bitterness. Once, while Okonkwo walks aimlessly in his compound, suddenly a simple matter triggers his suppressed anger and he starts yelling at Ekwefi: "Who killed this banana tree?" He asked. A hush fell over the compound immediately…Without further argument Okonkwo gave her a sound beating and left her and her only daughter weeping" (Achebe, 1958, p. 38). Ekwefi's dilemma and stigmatism stem from her, so-called, failure in giving birth to male children. By reflecting on her bitter living conditions, she resents the good fortune of her husband's first wife: her ability to produce healthy, strong male children. In her feminist analysis of Chinua Achebe's masterpiece, *Things Fall Apart*, Linda Strong-Leek (2001) observes that

> Women are viewed mainly as child bearers and help mates for their husbands. Due to the phallocentric notion that women must produce many hardy, male progenies to be valued within their cultural milieu, Ekwefi is considered a cursed woman because after ten live births, only one child - a daughter- survives (p. 30).

By the time Ezinma, Ekwefi's daughter, was born her mother surrounded her with passionate love and affection. Prior to her, Ekwefi gives birth to ten children. To her misfortune, all die at a very early age. Ezinma was her tenth child and last hope to prove her ability to beget healthy children. Therefore, she was very anxious about losing her. Ekwefi and her husband, Okonkwo, do all their best and pray for her to live. To that end, Ekwefi devotes her time and energy "to nurse her child to health and she put all her being into it" (Achebe, 1958, p. 79). After being debilitated by harsh circumstances in her life, Ekwefi finds solace in her relationship with her only daughter, Ezinma. Through the female character, Ekwefi, Achebe shows that,

within African communities, whatever the sex of the child could be it is, as far as women are concerned, "a woman's crowning glory" (Achebe, 1958, p. 77).

The two authors Tsitsi Dangarembga and Chinua Achebe show, in their novels *Nervous Conditions* and *Anthills of the Savannah* respectively, that in African communities, the female child could be a source of agony and subjugation for the mother. In these patriarchal communities, the male child is given high importance. He is regarded as the preserver of the family's lineage. Consequently, women who give birth to a female child get no respect from their husbands who give themselves the right to humiliate and beat them whenever the opportunity arises. This unfair treatment against women should be stopped. Genetically speaking, it is the woman who should blame the man for the female child, because it is he who determines the sex of the baby.

In addition to the husband, a daughter could be, as well, a source of agony for her mother as is the case with Tambu and Beatrice. The patriarchal authority that governs their families prevents these two young girls from getting their legitimate rights in education and custody. Their failure in confronting this authority and getting their rights causes Tambu and Beatrice to double the agony of their mothers by taking out all their displeasure and anger on them. This double oppression of mothers is due to the fact that they are the weakest link in the family's chain. Aracana (1979) explains that the natural mother-daughter relationship could be re-established if women abandon all forms of patriarchy.

> The oppression of women has created a breach among us, especially between mothers and daughters. Women cannot respect their mothers in a society which degrades them; women cannot respect themselves. Women need to resist and free themselves from oppression caused by patriarchy in order to earn respect from society, and, more importantly, become the perfect mother to their daughters (p. 1).

In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga reveals that Tambu's contempt transcends her mother, Mainini, to include her brother, Nhamo. This latter, unlike his sister, has the opportunity to go to school. Being the eldest male child in Tambu's family, he has been chosen by his uncle, Babamukuru, to get a western education at the mission school, in which he is the headmaster. Tambu finds this gender-based discrimination suffocating and intolerable, and as a result, her love and respect for her eldest brother are substituted by hatred. Her contempt for her brother continues during his entire life and even after he passes away. After Nhamo's death, Tambu shows no emotional grieving. As the second eldest child in Jeremiah's family, she recognizes that her brother's death will provide her with the opportunity to go to the mission school in his place. This is what Tambu personally announces at the beginning of the story. "I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologizing for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1).

This confession made by the young girl, Tambu, suggests that this latter is seriously affected by gender-based discrimination. Her feeling of contempt for her older brother, Nhamo, seems to last even after his death. Tambu is a victim of her own sex, or the *Other sex*, as it is called by some scholars. While trying to give an answer to the question, what is a woman? De Beauvoir (1956) posits woman as the Other to man, and as defined in relation to and by man.

> She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other…woman has always been man's dependent…Even when her rights are legally recognized in the abstract, long-standing custom prevents their full expression in the mores (pp. 16; 19).

In patriarchal societies, male children are brought up in a way to see themselves as privileged compared to their female counterparts. In Tambu's case, her brother

regards himself as superior to his sisters. Since he enrols at the mission school, with the assistance of his uncle Babamukuru, he imposes his male authority upon them. Nhamo has a number of unreasonable ideas that make his sisters feel at ease when he was away from home. For instance, whenever he comes to the family homestead for a vacation after each end of a school term, without the accompaniment of his uncle, he makes it a rule to make his younger sisters, Tambu and Netsai, carry his luggage from the bus station, which he can do it naturally. His sisters have no option but to accept the errand because they cannot do otherwise. Tambu states: "Knowing that he did not need help, that he only wanted to demonstrate to us and himself that he had the power, the authority to make us do things for him, I hated fetching my brother's luggage" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 10).

Since Nhamo left the homestead and his native village, to live in the mission school with Babamukuru, his behaviour towards his parents and young sisters has changed dramatically. Nhamo starts looking down upon his illiterate parents, which is perceptible in his use of the English language when talking to his mother instead of his native Shona language. The claim he makes about forgetting how to speak his native Shona distresses his mother, Mainini, because "she thought someone on the mission was bewitching her son" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 53). Additionally, Nhamo, because of his feeling of supremacy, refuses to help his family in the homestead daily works which most of it is done by his two young sisters. He becomes antisocial with his parents and sisters. The time Nhamo spends at the mission school leaves him lazy, and his manner toward the entire family is one of condescension.

> All this poverty began to offend him, or at the very least to embarrass him after he went to the mission…when he did come home for his vacations, it was as if he had not: he was not very sociable. Helping in the fields or with the livestock or firewood, any of the tasks he used to do willingly before he went to the mission, became a bad joke (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 7).

The sudden change in Nhamo's behaviour, towards the members of his family especially the female ones, is mainly the result of his wish to show his sisters that he is superior to them. Nhamo uses as a medium, to concretize his superiority, the rejection of the entire tasks his parents expect him to do in the house and the fields. He also resorts to physical violence when he once took Netsai, the youngest girl in the family "out of earshot and gave her a sound whipping about the legs with a slender peach branch" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 10), simply because she dares to question his authority over them by refusing to go and fetch his luggage from the bus station.

In many African tribes, the father is the first authority in the family. All the other members, male and female, have to respect him and obey his orders. The father is endowed with moral and physical strength to protect his wife and children from predators and instil in them a sense of respect for each other. Nhamo's negative behaviour towards his parents and hegemony over his younger sisters evidence his father's lack of authority in his own family. The failure of Nhamo's father, Jeremiah, to rule his family is mainly due to his failure in assuming the privileges society has conferred upon him as a man.

Like Nhamo, Okonkwo, the protagonist in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, has no respect or admiration for his father, Unoka, because this latter "was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow" (Achebe, 1958, p. 4). The laziness and carelessness of Unoka make room for his son Okonkwo to have authority and power within the entire household. He rules his three wives and little children with an iron fist. Unlike his unsuccessful father, Okonkwo at a very young age "was already one of the greatest men of his time," (Achebe, 1958, p. 8).

In contrast to Nhamo's unfortunate father, Jeremiah, his eldest brother Babamukuru is the patriarch of the extended Sigauke family. Because of his high social and economic status, he is the epitome of authority and power for his nephew, Nhamo. So, whenever Babamukuru visits the homestead, Nhamo's

laziness and reluctance to help his parents, at home and in the fields, is unexpectedly substituted with liveliness and hard work. Nhamo wants to keep a high profile in front of his uncle. Describing the changes in her brother's behaviour, Tambu states that,

> The only times that he would expend any energy to help around the homestead were the times when Babamukuru sent word that he was coming to visit. On such days Nhamo would rise at dawn with the rest of us, working so hard that the dirt ingrained itself into the skin of his hands and the sweat ran down his bare back (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 7).

The case of Nhamo illustrates the privilege accorded to the male members of the family compared to their female counterparts. Dangarembga shows, through Nhamo's refusal to assist his mother and sisters in home and fields work, the unfairness in the division of labour between the males and females. She is among the many feminist writers who stand against the cultural norms to free women from the subjugation of men.

The kind of empowerment society bestows on Nhamo at the expense of his sisters and mother raises within him a psychological complex regarding the fields' and home's work. He considers this kind of works, with all its hardship, dust, dirt and sweat, as specific to the second sex, women. The fact that Nhamo identifies himself more with his successful uncle, Babamukuru, makes him believe in a bright future for himself far from his unfortunate father and the hard living conditions of the homestead. Tambu was very surprised by her brother's aspiration for a successful career. She reports that before he went to the mission school with Babamukuru,

> Nhamo knew a lot of things in those days…He knew that when he grew up he was going to study for more degrees like Babamukuru and become a headmaster like Babamukuru. He knew that it would be up to him to make sure that his younger

> sisters were educated, or look after us if we were not (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 15).

The sheer amount of Western education Babamukuru acquires both at home and abroad provides him with complete power and authority over the whole Sigauke family. This authority which Babamukuru incarnates is exactly the type of authority Nhamo wants to impose, when he will grow up, upon his younger sisters. This shows, once again, the patriarchal regimes that govern most African tribes including the Shona and Igbo. The tendency of Nhamo to follow his uncle's steps in dominating his younger sisters and determining what they should and shouldn't do coincides with what Bahlieda (2015) considers as the *patriarchy's inheritance*. According to him women, as victims of patriarchy, have no options but to resist such oppression.

> The torch of patriarchy has been handed down from generation to generation, from father to son, from dynasty to dynasty as an accepted and unalterable values lineage of male social power and authority that was achieved with physical power and authority. While there is substantial evidence that those who were subject to it intensely disliked, resisted, and rejected it (p. 28).

Through Nhamo and his paternal uncle Babamukuru, Dangarembga shows that a male child can assume the role of the family's head. This scenario is only possible when the authority of the father is weak or completely absent. In such cases, if the male child has, as a model, a more authoritative and inspiring person, then he will identify himself with that person and impose his power and authority on the weakest members of his family.

As far as the Nigerian Igbo clan is concerned, it can be considered as a good example of a pure patriarchal community. Within this clan, women are subjugated to a great extent by their men. In Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah,* Elewa, Ikem's girlfriend and mother of his daughter, is the more

oppressed female character in the novel. This sales-girl, who is barely educated, portrays the predicament of women as exploited sexual objects. Although she is his girlfriend, Ikem didn't accept Elewa to spend the whole night in his house. He dares, on several occasions, to send the girl to her home at midnight by Taxi. This shows that his love for her is temporary, one which ends just after he satisfies his lust as he admits: "I simply detest the very notion of waking up and finding beside you somebody naked and unappetizing" (Achebe, 1987, p. 34). Ikem's negative behaviour towards Elewa makes her realizes that for Ikem she is nothing but a mere sexual object. She says to Ikem in popular English:

> I beg you no make me vex…Imagine! Hmm! But woman done chop sand for dis world-o…Imagine! But na we de causam; na we own fault. If I no kuku bring my stupid nyarsh come dump for your bedroom you for de kick me about like I be football? I no blame you at all! (Achebe, 1987, p. 31).

Ikem's negative behaviour towards his girlfriend, Elewa, and towards women in general, gradually changes with the development of the story's events. For instance, he bitterly unveils the harsh living conditions of women giving the example of the wife of his neighbour, Mr So Therefore, the notorious Posts and Telegraphs man. This latter abuses and beats his beautiful wife continuously without pity or mercy to the degree that all the neighbours could hear her yelling and screaming. Ikem, feeling pity for his neighbour's wife, states that Mr So Therefore "crawled through the third door. Perhaps he will beat his beautiful wife tonight; he hasn't done it now in months…he always chooses that hour when sleep is at its most seductive" (Achebe, 1987, p. 32).

Being a witness to the brutality of Mr So Therefore, Ikem comes to apprehend that women are "the biggest single group of oppressed people in the world and, if we are to believe the Book of Genesis, the very oldest" (Achebe, 1987, p. 90). In a dialogue with Beatrice, Ikem recognizes that women should be given active participation in modern African societies as against the passive roles the

traditional institutions offered. He concedes this rethink on women through a love letter he reads out to Beatrice.

> The original oppression of women was based on crude denigration. She caused Man to fall. So she became a scapegoat. No, not a scapegoat which might be blameless but a culprit richly deserving of whatever suffering Man chose thereafter to heap on her…Well, that kind of candid chauvinism might be OK for the rugged state of the Old Testament. The New Testament required a more enlightened, more refined, more loving even, strategy –ostensibly, that is (Achebe, 1987, p. 89).

According to Francisco Weffort, the recognition of the social and political rights of women in postcolonial African societies necessitates "The awakening of critical consciousness," which actually "leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because these discontents are real components of an oppressive situation" (Cited in Freire, 1970, p. 36). As far as Achebe is concerned, the liberation of modern African women from oppressive patriarchal institutions should start by deconstructing the prevalent views that undermine women and portray them as good-for-nothing creatures. Through his female protagonist, Beatrice, Achebe believes that African women have to equip themselves with adequate knowledge and experiences for them to move from the margin of society to the epicentre of affairs.

Like women, men can be, as well, victims of patriarchy. This could happen when the father gives up his duties and male privileges within his own family to another man. In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga portrays this fact through Tambu's father, Jeremiah and his cousin, Takesure. Jeremiah has no decision within his own family, especially when it comes to the future of his children. He fails to take his courage in both hands and impose his authority on them. Because of his low economic status, he rules his wife and children according to the vision of his elder and wealthy brother, Babamukuru. For instance, after the sudden death of

Nhamo, it was Babamukuru who makes the crucial decision about Tambu taking his place at the mission school. This situation within Jeremiah's family does not go unnoticed by his daughter Tambu who discovers that her uncle, Babamukuru, interferes in all the matters that concern her father's family without any measure of contradiction from this latter.

> It had been my uncle's idea that Nhamo should go to school at the mission. Nhamo, if given the chance, my uncle said, would distinguish himself academically…After only the mildest of polite hesitations…he [Jeremiah] agreed to let my brother go (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 4).

Like Jeremiah, his distant cousin Takesure is a lazy and foolish person who lacks authority over his own matters. His poverty doesn't prevent him from having two wives for whom he struggles but fails to pay the pride price. Takesure's urgent need for money gives his wealthy cousin, Babamukuru, authority over him. Takesure becomes a puppet in the hands of Babamukuru who decides to send him, after the sudden death of Nhamo, to the homestead to help Jeremiah with home and fields work. Babamukuru makes it clear to Takesure, from the very beginning, that the only authority within the homestead is him. "Takesure, you know that in all matters concerning Jeremiah and our home here you were to approach me as the head of the house" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 136). Despite the hard work and miserable living conditions of the homestead, Takesure accepts the labour without the least objection.

The two writers Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga portray, through their female protagonists, Beatrice and Tambu respectively, how the patriarchal nature of traditional African communities benefits men while it misrepresents women and treats them, despite their greater capacities, other than what they are. In this respect, Caroline New (2001) makes it clear that "It is hurtful to reduce women to their reproductive organs, or to interact with them while ignoring their subjectivity" (p. 740). This, if anything, shows that contemporary African men and

women writers have challenged patriarchal oppression which constricts the development of women and damages girls' capacity to flourish. As far as Dangarembga is concerned, it is only through solidarity that African women can find comfort in each other and offer support against men's oppression. As Alice Echols (1989) describes,

> Only women can give to each other a new sense of self. That identity we have to develop with preference to ourselves, and not in relation to men…Our energies must flow toward our sisters, not backward toward our oppressors…It is the primacy of women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other, which is at the heart of women's liberation, and the basis for the cultural revolution (p. 216).

In addition to women's subjugation, Dangarembga points out that some men, as well, could be extra victims of patriarchal oppression. Due to the influence of patriarchy, men suffer many disadvantages. As opposed to women, patriarchy deprives men of power and turns them into emotionless bodies devoid of empathy and the ability to take care of themselves and others. This victimization of men is mainly the consequence of poverty and ignorance. These two devastating factors, when joined together, result in the weakening of men's character, hence these affected men give up assuming their privileged roles among their own people and within their families.

In her structural definition of oppression, Caroline New (2001) recognises that there is a kind of similarity between the oppression of women and that of men. According to her, oppression is purely relational in nature, i.e. the existence of an imbalanced, social or economic, relationship between the different social groups, or even individuals within the same group, results in the mistreatment of the disadvantaged group by the privileged one.

> A group X is oppressed if, in certain respects, its members are systematically mistreated in comparison to non-Xs in a given

> social context, and if this mistreatment is justified or excused in terms of some alleged or real characteristic of the group (p. 731).

Patriarchal oppression in traditional African societies is as detrimental for women's empowerment as it is to men's power as well. The man who fails to use his male privilege is regarded as worthless and, consequently, he is denied "respect worthiness" (New, 2001, p. 739) among his own people, and ultimately agency over his own life. The following section presents the predicaments that African women experience in their public and private life.

3.4 Women's Predicaments

The majority of traditional African societies, if not all, are patriarchal in nature. The male members, within these societies, are given social privileges at the expense of their female counterparts. Women are viewed as lower-class citizens. They undergo a series of predicaments that disempower them and hinder their social promotion. Patriarchy compels women to believe that their inferior status is natural and irredeemable. Additionally, patriarchal philosophy holds that men are naturally superior to women. This ideology justifies women's subordination. On this score, Uchem (2001) posits that

> Women's subordination refers to cultural claims and customs, which maintain that men are primary and pre-eminent, and that women are secondary, subordinate and under men. It is a belief, which excludes women from public leadership of family, church and society (p. 23).

In the two selected novels, *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Nervous Conditions*, Achebe and Dangarembga discuss the various hardships their female characters experience in their public and private environments. Through these literary works the two writers aim to empower African women and set them free from men's subjugation. To meet this end, they create female characters who are actively

engaged in the production of oppositional ideologies to counter the prevailing patriarchal oppression.

Women's condition is almost the same everywhere in the world as they are the victims of patriarchy. Women's predicaments start at a very young age, and as time goes on, it gets more and more complications. These predicaments result mainly from the mistreatment of women by men. As children, women experience social oppression. They are taught to accept their subordination and be obedient within the oppressive environment. Consequently, female children start feeling envy of the males and consider their own sex as a hindrance to their own development and integration into their society. De Beauvoir (1956) explains that in a patriarchal family, the girl child grows up to "finds herself situated in the world differently from the boy; and a constellation of factors can transform this difference, in her eyes, into inferiority" (p. 277).

In *Nervous Conditions*, Tsitsi Dangarembga's female protagonist, Tambu, suffers a lot during her childhood. She encounters so many tribulations which stem from the disrespectful relationships she has with her parents, and mainly with her older brother, Nhamo. Tambu's relationship with her brother depicts the patriarchal culture that dominates the Shona society she lives in. Such culture views men as superior beings while women are confined to a secondary position. As a child, Tambu was denied the right to go to school. According to traditions, this right was given to Nhamo, the oldest male child in the family. Nhamo doesn't care about his sister's dream to get educated. He rather bullies her and treats her with disrespect. This harsh treatment could be felt through this short dialogue between Tambu and her brother.

> 'But you [Tambu] can't study.'
> 'Who says? I should know. I go to school. You go nowhere.'
> 'But I want to go to school.'
> 'Wanting won't help.'
> 'Why not?'

'…Because you are a girl.' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 21).

It is unsurprising that, because of this harsh treatment, Tambu wishes nothing for her brother, Nhamo, but to die "an unobtrusive death" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 21). Tambu's antipathy for her brother shows the complex relationship between the two siblings. At an age of thirteen years old, she realises that her brother's life could be a real obstacle to her personal development and freedom. Nhamo's death opened the door wide for Tambu to pursue her education, at the mission school, which would have otherwise been impossible. This is the reason why Dangarembga insists on the death of her heroine's brother in *Nervous Conditions*, which is central to the book.

As a young girl of thirteen years old, Tambu bears the burden of sexism. She is a victim of objectification which is mainly characterized by biased treatment through excessive work and, sometimes, brutalization. In addition to the physical exploitation of young girls in hard labour, inside and outside the house, they are sexually exploited, as well. In Achebe's novel, *Anthills of the Savannah,* the female character Adamma, who is not as young and vulnerable as Dangarembga's heroine, Tambu, falls prey to men's sexual harassment. On her way home from school, this young and attractive female student was harassed by a drunken police officer.

> The girl's desperate shriek rose high over the dense sprawling noises of the road party. The police sergeant was dragging her in the direction of a small cluster of round huts not far from the road…He was pulling her by the wrists, his gun slung from the shoulder. A few of the passengers, mostly women, were pleading and protesting timorously. But most of the men found it very funny indeed (Achebe, 1987, p. 199).

Sexual exploitation is the form of women oppression most male and female writers reprimand in their literary works. It is a way for them to fight against male domination. Achebe insightfully shows that sexuality is the main cause of women's oppression and victimization and their inferior position in the male-dominated society. To counter this sexist oppression, women, as a group, should achieve

solidarity and provide support to each other. The female passengers, through pleading and yelling, give real support to the vulnerable girl, Adamma. This women's reaction helps in attracting the attention of Chris, Beatrice's boyfriend, who runs to her rescue. Chris's positive behaviour towards the young female student suggests that although men represent a threat for women they "are needed allies" (Pfeiffer, 1985, p. 227).

The great sympathy the female passengers have for Adamma refutes the prevailing sexist ideology which suggests that women's "relationships with one another diminish rather than enrich our experience. We are taught that women are 'natural' enemies, and that solidarity will never exist between us because we cannot, should not, and do not bond with one another" (Hooks, 1986, p. 127). According to Hooks (1986), bonding between women is essential to strengthening their ties in order to stand against the subjugation and exploitation of men as a group. Contrary to the sympathy of the female passengers, most of the male bystanders show apathy and were very pleased with Adamma's sexual harassment. This men's attitude confirms, once again, the collective responsibility of men in sustaining the oppressive conditions of women. To overcome these conditions women's solidarity appears to be a prerequisite. In this regard, Dangarembga and Achebe are in perfect symphony in their respective stories, *Nervous Conditions* and *Anthills of the Savannah*.

Besides, in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* the household environment was very oppressive to the heroine, Tambu. The constraints of patriarchy which reign in her father's family hinder her personal development in her prime of age. Though a little girl, Tambu represents a great asset to her parents. In addition to her servitude in the heavy domestic chores, she takes the position of her brother, Nhamo, in the fields' work. This latter, and since he joins his uncle Babamukuru to live in the mission school, resents working the land because for him this kind of heavy work is assigned to women. Although Tambu is keen on going to school like her brother, she finds herself, in addition to her younger sister, Netsai, facing the peril of partaking in the fields' work. Through describing the hard living conditions

of Tambu and Netsai, Dangarembga gives a picture of gender-based discrimination in the Shona community.

> We used to itch viciously at the end of each day during the maize harvest and straight to the river from the fields to wash the itching away. It was not surprising that Nhamo did not like the harvest. None of us found it a pleasant task. It was just one of those things that had to be done (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 6).

For Tambu and her sister, Netsai, working in the field is as unpleasant task as it is for their brother, Nhamo. Contrary to this latter who refuses to help because of his feeling of superiority over his sisters, the two young girls, Tambu and Netsai, daren't reject the work in the fields and around the house because for both of them, they are compulsory tasks. Whenever they think of making the slightest murmur of rebellion, Tambu explains, they imagine "those ferocious movements of our mother's arm sending a switch whistling down on our legs and this thought made us very diligent," (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 7-8). Again, Dangarembga highlights the subordination of young girls this time through work. She also depicts the ordeals that impede young women's personal development.

In the selected novels, Achebe and Dangarembga take into account the ordeals women undergo in their respective societies. They start at a very early age in various forms. In *Anthills of the savannah,* Achebe shows that Beatrice, even as a newborn baby girl, is deprived of her most basic right to get a suitable name i.e., a girl's name. Beatrice is the fifth girl in a row. When she was born her father, desperately hoping for a male child, named her Nwanyibuife, a traditional Igbo name meaning "A female is also something" (Achebe, 1987, p. 79). Beatrice grows up to dislike this name intensely because to her knowledge nobody else has it. Additionally, the name shows very little or no regard for her Igbo traditional society has for female children in particular and women in general. Dangarembga, in *Nervous Conditions,* shows that young girls could be victims of their own sex. Her heroine, Tambu, is deprived of her most basic right to go to school, like her brother,

Nhamo, does. Tambu's parents substitute her seat at school with overwork around the house and in the field. Dangarembga believes that young girls' self-development is, more often than not, played down or even forgotten.

The kinds of predicament women experience, as they get on in years, take different forms. In their adulthood women realise that oppression changes in kind and duration. Once they are fully grown, girls cannot escape the psychological pressure their parents put on them regarding the issue of marriage. In traditional African society, the mature girl has no freedom to decide when and with whom she should be married. The final decision is in the hand of her parents. Unluckily for her, her parents do not usually take into account the partner of her own choice. Generally speaking, the selection of the groom is made according to the dowry value he brings to the girl's family. The more you pay, the luckiest you will be. This is why female children, like their male counterparts, can be beneficial for their parents too, mainly when they get married, for the good fortune they bring to their families.

The two authors, Achebe and Dangarembga, give the topic of marriage great importance in their respective novels, *Anthills of the Savanah* and *Nervous Conditions*. The patriarchal structure of their respective communities, Igbo and Shona, is not in favour of the females as far as marriage is concerned. The main concern within these traditional communities is the objectification of women in a way they become men's dependant. Caught in such a situation, they are at a loss in their pursuit of emancipation.

In Dangarembga's novel, *Nervous Conditions*, the rampant poverty that plagues Tambu's family leaves no room for her to make her own decisions. Tambu is forced to leave school in order for her parent to save Nhamo, Tambu's brother, studies. Nhamo's needs come first, compared to his sister's ones. This latter's parents give less importance to their daughter's future as long as she will end up in her husband's house. When Tambu starts coming of age, her mother, Mainini, reminds her of the situation which awaits her as a female individual, which of

course is related to her marriage. Tambu's mother is well aware of what it mean to be a housewife in a patriarchal family. Consequently, she provides her daughter with psychological support that could help her overcome the constraints and predicaments she may experience in her future life.

> 'This business of womanhood is a heavy burden,' she said. 'How could it not be? Aren't we the ones who bear children?…when there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them. And these things are not easy; you have to start learning them early, from a very early age. The earlier the better so that it is easy later on. Easy! As if it is ever easy. And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other…What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burdens with strength.' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16).

From his part, Tambu's father reminds her that her quest to go back to school is useless because he can no longer support her financially. He holds the belief that any fees he may spend on his daughter's schooling would be wasted money. Instead of holding to books he advices her to be more involved in fields' work and domestic chores because according to him these are the kind of things she needs more in her marital life. "Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 15). Although Tambu performs better than her brother, Nhamo, at school her father seems to ignore her cognitive potentials. He believes that the essence of life for women is solely to please their men at home and support them on the farm.

In addition to the factor of gender, women could also be victims of the feminine features of their bodies. In traditional African communities, the appearance of puberty signs on a girl's body indicates that the time has come for her to get married. For instance, when Babamukuru and his small family visited the homestead Tambu's mother, Mainini notices the appearance of the breasts of

Babamukuru's daughter, Nyasha. Although this latter is just fourteen years old and comes from a different social background, Mainini draws the attention of her parents to this physical change by showing that the time has come for them to find her a husband.

> 'The breasts are already quite large,' she declared, pinching one and causing Maiguru to wince with embarrassment. 'When do we expect our mukwambo (son-in-law)', my mother teased her niece…I tell you Babamukuru, whatever you say, you will have a fine son-in-law one of these days' (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 130-131).

For Babamukuru, Mainini's words are nothing but nonsense. The idea of his daughter, Nyasha, being married is far from realization. This is due, according to him, to the kind of behaviour she develops against men's supremacy in particular and traditional norms in general. Nyasha's long sojourn in England, at a very young age, alienates her from her extended family and Shona culture. When she returns to her home country, Rhodesia, with her parents and only brother, Chido, she fails to come in touch with her native culture. She cannot really change who she has grown into, having been to England. The kind of education Nyasha gets abroad benefited her in many different ways. Most importantly, it makes her aware of the oppression and discrimination colonialism and patriarchy inflict on African women. Consequently, the egalitarian ideology Nyasha tries to adopt within her family, following her Western education, brings her serious troubles with her patriarchal father, Babamukuru.

The relationship between Nyasha and her father, Babamukuru, is ambivalent. The tension between father and daughter often precipitates into violent confrontations, like when Nyasha went to a party on Christmas day with Tambu and her younger brother, Chido, their schoolmates had organised to celebrate their successful school year results. Although this is an excuse for going out, Babamukuru cannot condone the naughtiness of his daughter, Nyasha, who dare to

stay outdoors late at night talking to the white boy, Andy, when her brother and cousin, Tambu, are already at home. When Nyasha comes in, she has intense arguments with her father, Babamukuru, in which she rebels against his authority. This latter, in order to enforce his authority, resorts to physical violence. Nyasha feels at a loss. She is unable to swallow the injustice of her father calling her a whore. Consequently, in an unexpected move, she reciprocates the same form of violence.

> 'I told you not to hit me,' said Nyasha, punching him in the eye…Babamukuru alternately punching Nyasha's head and banging it against the floor, screaming or trying to scream only squeaking, because his throat had seized up with fury, that he would kill with bare hands; Nyasha, screaming and wriggling and doing what damage she could (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 115).

Nyasha is a victim of patriarchal violence. When she returns late from the ball her father, Babamukuru, grabs the opportunity to remind her that she is merely a woman, she doesn't have the privilege to question his authority as a man and head of the family as well. The fact of Babamukuru condemning his daughter to whoredom reflects the violence he conceals towards her as a female family member. Nyasha is a victim of her femaleness. She knows that, on the basis of her sex, she is not accepted as an equal member of her family. Contrary to her treatment, her brother, Chido, is free to do whatever he wants without the least admonition from his parents. He does not face any predicaments for actions similar to those Nyasha commits. For instance, he was involved in a secret romantic relationship with a white girl with his mother's knowledge. Consequently, Nyasha grows up detesting the patriarchy that rules the structures of both her own family and the extended Sigauke family as well.

> [Nyasha] is exiled not only because her years abroad have taught her to think within English frameworks but because she was born female. She has ostensibly come home, but she can

> never be at home as long as her society continues its ancient tradition of assuming male superiority and female submissiveness. Her linguistic exile is inextricably bound up with her female exile (Gorle, 1997, p. 188).

Nyasha is not only a victim of patriarchal traditions but also a victim of hybridity. As a young girl of Shona descent, who grows mainly in a Western culture, Nyasha refers to herself and her brother, Chido, as "hybrids" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 78). According to Gorle (1997) Nyasha seems caught between two different cultures, her own Shona culture and the Western culture so that she refuses to identify with both of them. Consequently, she bitterly complains to her mother, Maiguru, that she no longer knows where she herself belongs, "'Look what they've done to us,' she said softly. 'I'm not one of them but I'm not one of you'" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 201). Nyasha carries her hybrid identity like a burden. Her psychological disturbance is mainly due, as Montoya (2008) explains, to her attempt to live within a "third space" (p. 647) by rejecting the alien European culture and revolting against the sexist principles that govern her African traditional community.

The confrontation between Nyasha and her father, Babamukuru, across gender lines distorts the ideal image that Tambu, Nyasha's cousin, holds of her uncle as a well-educated and generous man within his extended family. The naughty behaviour of Babamukuru towards his daughter causes Tambu to sympathise with Nyasha's plight. Tambu views the brutalisation of Nyasha, by her intellectual father, as similar, in different ways, to her experience as a very young girl who suffers gender discrimination within her father's homestead. This fact makes Tambu concludes that violence towards women is universal; it may transcend social and geographical boundaries. She further notices that women's oppression may have different forms in different social settings.

> The victimization, I saw, was universal. It didn't depend on poverty, on lack of education or on tradition. It didn't depend on any of the things I have thought it depended on. Men took it

> everywhere with them....But what I didn't like was the way all the conflicts came back to this question of femaleness. Femaleness as opposed to maleness (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 115-116).

Through her novel, *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga gives a clear illustration of gender inequality within traditional African communities. The nervous conditions the two female protagonists, Tambu and Nyasha, experience within their patriarchal families prompt them to stand up for themselves against the oppression of men. Dangarembga points out that poverty, the lack of education, or the weights of tradition are not the real reasons for the oppression of African women. According to her, African women are oppressed merely because they are female. This femaleness, she argues, is behind the lower social status given to them by their male counterparts who seek, by all means, to keep women under domination.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter sheds light on the cultural and social conditions of African women within a patriarchal society through the analysis of the two selected African novels. The theme of patriarchal traditions within African societies during and after colonialism is common in Dangarembga's and Achebe's discourses. However, they diverge when it comes to the impact of those traditions on African women's life. In Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, women experience patriarchal oppression. They ought to be obedient to their men and act in conformity with traditions. They feel hopeless about gender equality and emancipation. By contrast, in *Anthills of the Savannah,* Achebe's modern African women disassemble old traditions in order to create hope. They are unsatisfied with the peripheral role given to them by society. Thus, they see education as the only mean for their emancipation from the enslavement of men.

Through their female protagonists, Tambu and Beatrice respectively, Tsitsi Dangarembga and Chinua Achebe portray how traditional African communities benefit men while misrepresenting women despite their greater capacities. This

shows that contemporary African men and women writers have challenged patriarchal oppression which constricts the development of women and damages girls' capacity to flourish. Furthermore, the psychological support provided by Lucia to her sister, Mainini, and by Beatrice to Elewa, Ikem's girlfriend, after their emotional breakdown, shows that Dangarembga and Achebe agree on the importance of solidarity in the life of women. It is only through their solidarity that African women can find comfort in each other and offer support against men's oppression.

Chapter Four

Economic and Political Conditions of Women

CONTENT

You can tell the condition of a nation
by looking at the status
of its women
Jawaharlal Nehru

4.1 Introduction

In postcolonial Africa, women, whether educated or illiterate, play an active role in society. They always strive to improve the economic and political conditions of their nations. Patriarchy, as a traditional system consolidated by colonialism, generally considers women as subordinate to men. From a feminist point of view, African women are often seen as the second or the weak sex. This form of injustice hinders their personal development and professional fulfilment. Consequently, the important contribution of African women to the well-being of the female gender and the stability of society is overlooked by their male counterparts. The question that can be asked here is how these women can alter this men's vision in traditional African societies and impose themselves as real partners in the process of development. This final chapter deals with the struggle of African women against the sordid economic and political conditions imposed on them by the systems of patriarchy and colonialism through close scrutiny of the two selected novels, *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Nervous Conditions*.

4.2 Poverty and Colonialism

In the majority of African countries poverty and hunger rates are very high. These hard living conditions which plague the African continent have historical reasons. They are strongly linked with colonialism. The civilization project that the White men claim to implement in Africa is just a pretext to impose power on the Africans and exploit their natural resources. Consequently, the outcomes of colonialism have

been negative for African countries mainly on the economic and political levels. As far as the economy is concerned, the continent has dried up its natural resources due to the shipment of large amounts of raw materials toward the white men's metropolis. Colonial governments focus solely on the export component of the colonies. They develop infrastructure like railways to improve the transport of raw materials to European markets. Less importance is given to the improvement and enrichment of the colonies' market. Commenting on this fact, Bimberg and Resnick (1975) state that

> In order to encourage the movement of commodities for export, the government built and operated railways to connect the interior and the coastal markets. This resulted in most of the roads and rail systems in colonial Africa to be oriented towards the coast. Little or no development of railways occurred between colonies or within colonies (p. 5).

As alluded to in the above quotation, the infrastructures that are developed by the colonial governments are designed mainly to exploit the natural resources of the colonies. Colonialism affects Africans in other ways as well. It prohibits the transfer of technology and industrial development to Africa. For instance the field of agriculture, despite the industrial revolution the European countries experienced during the nineteenth century, the colonialists use traditional methods in the exploitation of the land. These archaic methods have as consequences the slowdown of agricultural development and the restriction of production to a limited variety and quantity of consumer goods.

The imposition of colonialism on the African continent could not be limited in economic interest only. It also occurs for political reasons as well. Colonialism in Africa has a great influence on its political system. Generally speaking, the present political system of the continent is a pure reproduction of the colonial system. Colonialism aims at replacing indigenous democratic institutions with loyalist administrations which serve the interests of the colonial powers even after the

achievement of independence. The colonialists' interest in Africa is not the flourishment of its democratic system or the establishment of effective systems of governance for the postcolonial era, instead, their interest is mainly the appointment of neo-presidents of African descent. These presidents while enjoying presidentialism, they function as a guarantee of the postcolonialist's interests. In this respect, Wyk (2007) maintains that

> Contemporary African political leadership is neo-patrimonial featuring presidentialism, clientelism, the use of state resources, and the centralisation of power. In presidentialism, the leader's power is unlimited, unopposed and unchecked. Here, formal institutions exist, but are merely symbolic rather than democratic…Presidentialism establishes imperial presidencies and produces strong presidents centralising all power in the office of the president (p. 12).

Hence, postcolonial African leaders inherit from their colonisers nothing but corruption and undemocratic rule. They fail to take into account the aspirations of their own people for independent and democratic African states. What is even worse is that their ongoing fear of losing authority, despite the unceasing support they get from the former European coloniser, makes their system of administration more brutal and cruel.

The European colonisation of the African continent is purely grounded in economic advantages through the appointment of political administrations that guarantee the interests of the coloniser. Before the arrival of the white men, Africa was advancing and progressing on the economic and political levels. This is why the African (Gold Coast) nationalist J. E. Casely-Hayford notes that "before, even, the British came into relations with our people; we were a developed people, having our own institutions, having our own ideas of government" (Cited in Rodney, 1973, p. 46). The burst of colonialism, by the end of the twentieth century, with all its devastating effects severely retarded the natural progress of the African continent. If

this continent's colonialism had never been touched by colonialism, its development would be significantly different and many of the economic, social and political problems that plague it today would not exist. This chapter will focus on the relationship between colonialism and the impoverishment of the African continent and its impact on women's conditions.

Tsitsi Dangarembga and Chinua Achebe's works are deeply embedded in the postcolonial context. They give a particular concern about poverty, which is at both social and family levels. Within these contexts, women are the most affected by poverty compared to their male counterparts. The two authors, Dangarembga and Achebe use the conditions of extreme poverty and misery to show the many burdens African women bear in a patriarchal society. The problems of poverty and patriarchy in the African continent are the legacies of colonialism. Under colonial rule, patriarchy places tremendous barriers in the path of the struggles for the freedom, well-being and personal development of women. African men are completely affected by the colonial concepts of total authority and obedience. In turn, they exercise them on the female members of their families. This fact is confirmed by Borg Parnis (2021) who states that

> Women were not always perceived as subaltern in African society since prior to the colonial impact…However not only was women's status declined under colonial rule, but women were also reduced to mere objects. Thus, colonialism brought gender differentiation as women no longer had economic autonomy and political power (p. 83).

The objectification of African women resulted mainly from the disruption of the continent's social and economic balance by colonialism. Before the arrival of the white men, the African continent was free from women's objectification. As Zambakari (2019) argues, within pre-colonial Africa "gender relations were actually flexible and women could perform male functions, achieve powerful positions, and inherit property" (p. 52). Ironically, in addition to women, the African black men

suffer objectification, as well, under colonial rule. They are humiliated and treated as inferior individuals by their oppressive white rulers. To compensate for this humiliation and reaffirm their sense of superiority and masculinity, African men impose obedience and authority on women in their families. Therefore, African women find themselves doubly exploited both by the colonial system and by their male counterparts.

Beyond colonialism and patriarchy, as two systems of exploitation of women and impediments to their development, the issue of poverty has worsened their miserable conditions. Poverty leads African men to become more demanding towards the female members of their families. In addition to their hard housework, women and girls have been exploited, by men, for economic ends. Economically speaking, many African men rely on farming activities to feed their families. Working in the fields often requires a skilful workforce and technology to boost crops production. The considerable lack in these helping factors, throughout the continent, leads many male farmers to bridge this shortage through the exploitation of their wives and young daughters. This reality hampered African women's advancement in life by lowering the level of literacy among them and complicating their economic conditions due to their unpaid work in the fields. For instance, the living conditions of women in colonial Ghana were very tough. As Grier (1992) explains, Ghanaian women were forced to work for their male relatives in cocoa plantations in the morning and continue their tasks as housekeepers thereafter.

> Cash earned from cocoa production did not have to be shared with any of these family laborers, though their maintenance had to be provided for. Yet these women and children performed the bulk of the labor in farming enterprises that considerably enriched many owners. In addition to their new activities on cocoa farms, women and girls continued to perform their usual household tasks of fetching water and firewood, growing and processing food, cooking, caring for children, and maintaining village roads and streets (p. 321).

Tsitsi Dangarembga and Chinua Achebe start their respective novels, *Nervous Conditions* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, with the endemic poverty that befalls the Shona and Igbo people. In *Nervous Conditions,* Dangarembga's heroine, Tambu, at a very young age, notices that poverty is everywhere within her father's family. Dangarembga chooses the enrolment of Nhamo, Tambu's brother, at the mission school as a reason to show how heavily his family is affected by poverty. As female family members, Tambu and her mother, Mainini, seem to endure the weight of poverty and womanhood, while the masculinity of Nhamo makes him revolt against the hard living conditions of the homestead and feel superior to the rest of his family, particularly the female members. Describing the arrogant behaviour of her brother after he starts school at the mission and be in direct contact with the western culture, Tambu states that

> All this poverty began to offend him, or at the very least to embarrass him after he went to the mission, in a way that it had not done before. Before he went to the mission, we had been able to agree that although our squalor was brutal, it was uncompromisingly ours; that the burden of dispelling it was, as a result, ours too (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 7).

Nhamo's behaviour represents the strong patriarchy of Shona culture, in which men are viewed as superior to women. Within this traditional African culture, because of poverty, everything weighs heavy on women's shoulders. Women and poverty have a mutual interplay. The strong correlation between them leads the American sociologist Diana Pearce (1978) to coin the concept of 'feminization of poverty'. According to Robertson (1998), the important roots of the feminization of poverty in Africa include:

> Lack of access by women to education, well-paid jobs, land, and capital; an unequal gender division of labor; and a pervasive male dominance that promotes all of the above, spread and

> reinforced by colonialism, international monopoly capitalism, and structural adjustment programs (p. 199).

The unequal division of work between males and females is what characterises Jeremiah's family. Tambu, as a young girl, is overloaded with hard work. In addition to her domestic work, Tambu gives considerable help to her mother in the cultivation of the field. In many African societies women are expected to farm to feed themselves and their children. Without farming their families would starve. The cultivation of land is usually hard and fatiguing. For this reason, it is considered specific to female family members. Robertson (1998) describes this gender discrimination in work by stating that "women still bear much of the responsibility for feeding the family and they usually cannot afford to hire labor to help them. They often rely on their daughters" (p. 198).

The masculinity of Nhamo, Tambu's brother, exempts him from field's work at the expense of his mother and sisters. Additionally, the colonial education that he gets at the mission school negatively affects his personal identity. These two factors, masculinity and education together, make him feel a sense of superiority and power over the female members of his family. Nhamo's inclination for power doesn't annoy Tambu in any way. She finds in the domestic and field works a way to forget her brother's obsession and provocations. Although Tambu's days are very often, if not always, overloaded with work, she never complains. The hard work she does at home and in the field has turned out to be like leisure to her because she cannot do otherwise. It seems awkward, but it explains her despair: "The housework was agreeable when it did not have to be done" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 39). The housework is for Tambu an outlook to social pressure.

Similarly, in his work, *Anthills of the Savannah*, Chinua Achebe points out the hard economic conditions the people of Abazon, a region in the postcolonial state of Kangan, experience because of the lack of rain falling. Consequently, the drought and hunger that strike Abazon lead the elders of the region to visit His Excellency, the president of Kangan, as a goodwill delegation to ask him for help.

The narrative begins with a clash between Chris Oriko, the Commissioner for Information, and the president, General Sam, His Excellency, who refuses, for political motives, to pay a visit to the drought-stricken Abazon region.

> "You're wasting everybody's time, Mr. Commissioner for Information. I will not go to Abazon. Finish! Kabisa!
> Any other business?"
> "As Your Excellency wishes. But…"
> "But me no buts, Mr. Oriko! The matter is closed, I said. How many times, for God's sake, am I expected to repeat it?"
> (Achebe, 187, p. 1).

The problem of the region of Abazon originated from the refusal of its people to participate in a referendum giving His Excellency a life presidency. Consequently, in addition to the punishment of the sun, which ravages Abazon with its blazing heat, His Excellency, as the head of state, decides to punish the whole region in his own way. His decision was embodied in the harangue of his men who were sent to tell the people of Abazon the consequences of what they have done in disappointing the president.

> Because you said no to the Big Chief he is very angry and has ordered all the water bore-holes they are digging in your area to be closed so that you will know what it means to offend the sun. You will suffer so much that in your next reincarnation you will need no one to tell you to say yes whether the matter is clear to you or not (Achebe, 1987, p. 116).

In retaliation for the disobedience of the people of Abazon, His Excellency orders the closure of all the water bore-holes that are being constructed in the region and refuses to re-open them despite the many appeals of Chris and the delegation of elders who declare their total loyalty to him. One way in which His Excellency, General Sam, controls the social and political life of Kangan is by surrounding himself with obscurity. His fear of losing power and control leads him to distrust

the members of his government and exclude them from the state-building process. Additionally, He bans demonstrations, even from market women complaining about the increase in imported food items' prices, because they are according to him "sheer signs of indiscipline" (Achebe, 1987, p. 15). In fact, the banning of demonstrations means, as Amoke (2018) explains, "not accommodating his subjects' views, not recognizing such people as stakeholders in the Kangan project" (p. 44).

In her novel, *Nervous Conditions,* Dangarembga depicts the life of women in rural areas. The majority of these women rely solely on farming to support themselves and their children. In contrast to Dangarembga, Achebe's novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, gives special attention to urban women as a different social group. While farming is specific to rural areas, for urban women trading and working as housemaids are the only available options they have for tackling the burden of poverty. Market women in the state of Kangan find it difficult to gain their daily sustenance by buying and selling products. Because of their poor living conditions, they are despised by their male counterparts and categorised along with peasants. For instance, the audience in the shareholders' annual general meeting laughs at Ikem when he tells them that Elewa's mother is a market woman.

> My prospective mother-in-law is a market woman." Laughter! "A cash madam," offered someone. "No, not a cash madam. A simple market woman…This is not a joke now. I am really serious. My prospective mother-in-law sells tie-die cloth in Gelegele market. She is not a cash madam as I have said; she can carry all her worldly wares in one head-load (Achebe, 1987, p. 144).

The hard economic conditions the postcolonial state of Kangan witnessed under the leadership of General Sam, His Excellency, are mainly due to the malicious policy adopted by the latter. According to Amoke (2018), His Excellency is "eager to plunge the nation into more debt because he seeks endorsement by the global

empire/umpire" (p. 43). The global capitalist empire uses the weapon of loans to manipulate the economy of the postcolonial states in its favour. This situation engenders an economic imbalance that accelerates the impoverishment of the African people and ensures that the postcolonial nation remains a beggar nation that has no control over its resources. According to Lazarus (2011), the capitalist empire came with policies that aim at

> disciplining postcolonial states, domesticating them and rendering them subservient to the needs of the global market. They also became a means of ensuring that postcolonial states would retain their peripheral status, neither attempting to delink themselves from the world-system nor ever imagining themselves capable of participating in it from any position of parity, let alone power (p. 9).

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, since poverty pervades the postcolonial state of Kangan, women are expected to do all kinds of work. Unlike Ikem's prospective mother-in-law, Agatha chooses domestic work as a way to earn her living. She is Beatrice's servant. Agatha belongs to that group of unprivileged Igbo women. Her position as an illiterate girl starkly juxtaposes the position of Beatrice as an educated and independent woman. This social gap doesn't prevent Beatrice to sympathise with her poor servant despite the rude behaviour this latter displays, occasionally, towards her. She is conscious of the hard living conditions of her girl. Beatrice gives a good example of solidarity between African women. She once admits that after an argument with her servant, Agatha, she

> found herself feeling for the first time for this poor, twisted, desiccated, sanctimonious girl something she had never before thought of extending to her — pity. Yes, she thought, her Agatha deserved to be pitied… being a servant could not be fun. Beatrice knew that. She had never belittled the problem or

> consciously looked down on anyone because she was a servant, so help her God (Achebe, 1987, p. 168).

Achebe gives no narrative voice to his female character, Agatha, in *Anthills of the Savannah*. She remains silent throughout this novel. This is a clear indication of the life of deprivation and servitude poor African women live in postcolonial patriarchal societies. Furthermore, the muting of Beatrice's housemaid, Agatha, implies that African women must endure their sexist oppression in complete silence. They are discouraged by their male counterparts to speak out against their oppressors and miserable life. The silencing of women favours marginalisation and the negation of their rights and individual identity. According to Uwakweh (1995), "Silencing comprises all imposed restrictions on women's social being, thinking and expressions that are religiously or culturally sanctioned. As a patriarchal weapon of control, it is used by the dominant male structure on the subordinate or 'muted' female structure" (p. 75).

Similarly, Dangarembga's novel, *Nervous Conditions*, depicts the hard economic conditions of colonial Rhodesia. Tambu, the female protagonist, portrays the family of her father, Jeremiah, as being under the poverty line. Tambu's uncle, Babamukuru, hints at this poor economic condition at the first family gathering following his return from England. "'looking at the family as it stands today,' continued Babamukuru, 'I see that the main problem is with Jeremiah. Tete here is all right- her husband is able to take care of her and her children…The real worry is your branch Jeremiah'" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 45).

Because of Jeremiah's idleness, his family is considered the most unfortunate in the extended Sigauke family. Its members, especially women, suffer extreme subjugation and poverty. Financially speaking, Jeremiah's family represents a real burden for his brother, Babamukuru. This is exemplified through Jeremiah's letter to him when he was in England asking for financial help. "'I remember,' Babamukuru went on, 'that the year after my family and I arrived in England, you wrote to us, Jeremiah…saying that there was no money for school

fees. We sent you what we could…'" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 45). Jeremiah is a typical case of failure to his extended family. He is always under the mercy of his brother because he is unable to work and face his own problems. Poverty remains an unwelcome guest within his family. It prompts him to borrow money from other people and, as a result, accumulate his debts. Unlike her brother, Tambu, as a young girl, feels pity for her poor father. She decides to help him by cultivating her grandmother's garden to pay for her school fees. "'I will earn the fees,' I reassured him, laying out my plan for him as I had laid it out in my own mind. 'If you will give me some seeds, I will clear my own field and grow my own maize. Not much. Just enough for the fees'" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 17).

Jeremiah's poor living conditions complicate his life. The day his brother, Babamukuru, and his family return from England he cannot afford the reception ceremony, nor do his neighbours since poverty was everywhere in his village, Umtali. Babamukuru is aware of the acute economic problems of his brother, Jeremiah, so he decides to provide for the merriments of his return.

> The crisis was resolved in the usual manner. I [Jeremiah] fetched cornmeal from my aunt's, having first tried the neighbours and found none, though when I explained to them why the cornmeal was needed they gave me peanuts instead. The sweet potatoes did not ripen in time, but the day before the trip news reached us by telephone message via the Council Houses that Babamukuru had sent money for a goat (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 33).

The people of Umtali have a sense of collaboration and mutual help. Despite their poor living conditions, they are sensitive to other people's misfortune. They provide Jeremiah with a little bit of the food they are saving for the celebration of Babamukuru and his family's return from England. The fact that Babamukuru pays, by himself, for the celebration's meat shows that for the majority of Jeremiah's people, meat is luxurious food.

The return of Babamukuru and his family from England constitutes a good opportunity for the men of the village to celebrate and eat decent foods. While for women it is a real nightmare. Tambu, as a girl of ten years old, finds herself playing the role of a servant. At mealtime, she turns around the guests and relatives, present at the ceremony, carrying a bowl of water and a towel to help them wash their hands. To her misfortune as a girl, Tambu is obliged to serve her brother, Nhamo, who is present among the guests taking advantage of the occasion. This situation is very compelling to the young Tambu as it gives a real picture of the oppression of women in traditional African communities. To Tambu, as for other female relatives, the occasion is nothing but exhaustion. It is like a meal without food. The male guests and relatives have the best of it while the females are confined to the kitchen cooking and serving food, except the aunts who enjoy a patriarchal status merely because they belong to the family lineage of Babamukuru.

> The meal began with much clapping of hands, praising of the gods for their providence and of us for our hard work. In the kitchen we dished out what was left in the pots for ourselves and the children. My aunt Mavis…had been unrestrained in dishing out the meat for the house so that there was not enough left in the pot to make a meal for those of us who were not dining there (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 41).

Generally speaking, Occasions are good opportunities for poor people to eat much and delicious food. But visibly, this is not the case for Jeremiah's female relatives. Although they work hard during the reception ceremony held for Babamukuru's return from England and are praised for that, they are discriminated against or almost forgotten when it comes to their part of the food. They eat less food than their male counterparts. Dangarembga depicts the conditions of African women during mealtime. They are treated as unpaid slaves who should wait for their males to fill their bellies before they eat.

In *Nervous Conditions* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, Dangarembga and Achebe show that poverty in Africa is not linked with colonialism. Rather, it is still a sad reality after independence that women bear the burden of it more than anybody else. In both novels, most rural and urban women are poor farmers or traders. Due to the laziness or the passing away of their husbands, they have no options but to work hard to feed themselves and their children. According to Karl (1995), women have "the primary responsibility for their families' health and for provision of food, water and fuel and their work is not only unpaid, but largely unrecognized as well. Their major responsibilities for the households' well-being do not always mean decision making power within the family" (p. 3). African women still have a crucial role in keeping their communities alive, despite their patriarchal oppression and subjugation, by growing the food, trading the goods and performing all kind of household tasks.

Poverty and the scarcity of money go hand in hand. In *Nervous Condition*, Dangarembga shows that the quest for money has a great impact on women's conditions. Tambu, the female protagonist, fails to meet her educational ambitions because her father has not enough money for her schooling. She is compelled to stay at home to look after the homestead and farm with her helpless mother, Mainini, whereas her brother, Nhamo, has a good opportunity to get a high-quality education at the mission school. The hard living conditions of Tambu's mother, Mainini, encourage her to pursue her education. Mainini comes from a poor rural family, she has to do hard physical labour on the land and at home during her whole life. She resigns herself for the well-being of her husband and children. Mainini helps her daughter Tambu to have better luck in life by continuing her education. She tries to persuade her husband, Jeremiah, to let Tambu grows maize in order to sell it and get enough money for her school fees.

Tambu's brother, Nhamo, is a real impediment to her education. So, her golden opportunity to receive a western education and secure her own future arises after his untimely death. Tambu shows no emotional grieving for her brother's death. According to Uwakweh (1995), Nhamo's "death becomes instead her

[Tambu] opportunity to regain lost grounds in her educational career" (p. 80). Being the oldest surviving child, in her father's family, with no other brothers, Tambu is invited to take Nhamo's position at the mission school where her uncle, Babamukuru, is the headmaster. As a student, she feels that she is better than her brother, and therefore she deserves a chance to improve her education. At the mission, Tambu takes advantage of the better life Babamukuru and his wife, Maiguru, make available for her. The new luxurious life causes her to despise the homestead, the field and even her parents, Jeremiah and Mainini.

> 'Babamukuru says I am so bright I must be taken away to a good school and be given a good chance in life. So I shall go and live with Babamukuru at the mission. I shall no longer be Jeremiah's son,'…'I shall wear shoes and socks, and shorts with no holes in them, all brand new, bought for me by Babamukuru. He has the money…' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 48).

The lack of money compromises the education of Dangarembga's heroine, Tambu, in her early years, as her parents didn't yield enough of it from farming, which is her family's main survival activity. So, the education of Tambu is interrupted because of the lack of money. Tambu is aware of gender discrimination within her family. She remarks that despite their poor living conditions her mother works hard to collect the required money to maintain her son, Nhamo, at school, at the expense of her daughter. This act of discrimination triggers a feeling of hatred between the two siblings, as Uwakweh (1995) explains "the major source of conflict between the two siblings is Tambu's loss of opportunity to start early schooling because her brother, the male child, is given priority consideration" (p. 80).

Tambu is left helpless. She remarks that, in her family, the needs and sensibilities of the women were not considered a priority, nor were they even considered legitimate. Because she is a girl, her parents give little importance to her schooling. According to her father, Jeremiah, she cannot be compared to her brother, Nhamo, who is considered superior in all aspects. Nhamo's education is

viewed by his parents as a mean for securing the family's financial future. Hence, it is Nhamo who is allowed to attend the school. Due to poverty, women are given little chance to be educated at school. Tambu narrates how the lack of money is used as an excuse by her father to make an end to her education.

> Our crops were poor in the year that I began school. Although we harvested enough maize to keep us from starving, there was nothing left over to sell. This meant there was no money in the house. No money meant no school fees. No school fees meant no school. Nor was there any hope of procuring money since Babamukuru had left the mission to go to England to study more about education (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 13).

Abandoned by her parents, Tambu decides to rely on nobody but herself to pursue her education. She tries to resist the patriarchal authority in her family embodied by her father and brother. As a young girl of thirteen years old, she grows her own maize and sells it in an attempt to earn enough money for her school fees because it is considered unnecessary for her family to waste money to fund her education. These efforts made by Tambu are admirable. Gender discrimination within her father's family constitutes a source of empowerment for her. She shows considerable determination to receive a western education and secure her own future because she knows very well what it means to be an illiterate woman in a patriarchal society. Some of the negative effects of illiteracy on African women are given by Baharvand and Zarrinjooee (2012) who state that

> Racism, poverty, and African traditional cultural practices increase the illiteracy of women in African countries. Consequently, women are encouraged by males to be submissive laborers at home. The resultant illiteracy deprives women of participating in social activities. Thus, they will be ignorant of their rights and fail to organize their efforts to enjoy social rights (Baharvand and Zarrinjooee, 2012, pp. 30-31).

As far as African women are concerned, poverty and illiteracy are firmly intertwined. Poverty can be seen as the major contributing factor to illiteracy among women in developing countries. It increases their ignorance and submissiveness. Literacy appears to be a road and a means for them to alter the patriarchal oppression they are victims of. Kachiwanda (2010) explains that in a world "where cultural values, traditional customs and beliefs continue to oppress and relegate women to positions and conditions of inferiority, disempowerment and hopelessness, women need literacy…to recognise and question for example, the sources of their oppression" (p. 32).

Generally speaking, Tsitsi Dangarembga and Chinua Achebe show particular concern about poverty in their novels, *Nervous Conditions* and *Anthills of the Savannah* respectively. Colonization and the postcolonial regimes have weakened the economic growth of Nigeria and Rhodesia in particular and Africa in general. The spread of poverty has very bad consequences for African people, especially women. The two authors show that in postcolonial Africa poverty has strengthened the patriarchal system and triggered off the subjugation of women. This is all the more true, for in the pre-colonial era, women had more room to participate in men's activities and more opportunities to develop their intellectual capacities. They could have their own lands and manage their own businesses. With colonialism, women were caught in a stranglehold. Economic hardships hit all African families, and men are now obliged to resort to women for help. Consequently, young girls were denied their right to get a decent education and exploited as additional workforces, along with their mothers, in domestic work and on the fields.

4.3 Illiteracy and Women's Achievements

Prior to Western colonialism in Africa, women, although lack education and training, were at the forefront of social and economic development. They were entitled, by way of tradition, to own land and actively participate, because of their wisdom, in the affairs of their homes and communities. It is colonialism that

brought social changes by declining the status of African women and reducing them to mere sexual objects. Thus, colonialism, and for their own interests, encourages patriarchy as a system of women's oppression and subjugation. Moreover, it brought gender differentiation as women no longer had economic autonomy and political power. As Zambakari (2019) argues, under the colonial rule "women's legal rights were subordinated to their male counterparts leaving them in a precarious position" (p. 46). A good description of the position of women in colonial Rhodesia is given by Mainini, Tambu's mother. Reminding Tambu of the real status of women, Mainini says:

> Aren't we the ones who bear children? [...] When there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them. And these things are not easy; you have to start learning them early, from a very early age. The earlier the better so that it is easy later on. Easy! [...] and these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burdens with strength (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16).

Colonization aggravated the living conditions of African women. For instance, in rural areas the confiscation of the native people's land by the White European coloniser leads many African men to take long trips looking for new lands and works. Therefore, the women were obliged, in addition to their domestic labours, to substitute their male counterparts in cultivating the land and selling the crops. As for urban women, with the presence of their men, they are deprived of the basic human rights and subjugated to domesticity. Consequently, there was little chance for rural and urban women alike to receive a decent education at school. This fact accounts for the overwhelming number of illiterate women in postcolonial Africa, which the two writers, Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga, depict in their selected works through their female characters who are mostly illiterate women.

More often than not, illiteracy in African societies is associated with domesticity, for countless women who are considered as wives, mothers or housekeepers are identified as illiterate. This can be explained by the fact that in such patriarchal societies, maternal roles do not require high levels of education. They can be learnt through traditional methods, i.e., orally from the mother's mouth to the daughter's ear. Thus, this patriarchal ideology increases the level of illiteracy among African women which has a negative impact on their social status. The two concepts, illiteracy and domesticity, are major themes in Achebe's and Dangarembga's selected novels. The two writers show through their female characters how literacy helps African women achieve high social and economic status within their patriarchal societies and how, on the other hand, illiteracy and ignorance hamper their personal activities and development, and confine them to domestic spaces.

In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga's female protagonist, Tambu, talks about the oppression and subjugation of African women in her community and how the lack of education acts as a handicap for their personal development and emancipation. She ultimately focuses on the hard living conditions of women in her extended Sigauke's family. Right from the beginning of her story, Tambu announces the oppression and subjugation of a number of her female relatives. Being trapped in a patriarchal Shona community, these women have to face the dilemma of gender inequality, fight to be heard and received a decent Western education.

> For though the events of my brother's passing and the events of my story cannot be separated, my story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia's; about my mother's and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nyasha's rebellion – Nyasha, far-minded and isolated, my uncle's daughter, whose rebellion may not in the end have been successful (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1).

The death of Tambu's brother, Nhamo, can be perceived as a significant factor that encourages Tambu to go against the patriarchy in her father's family. But according to her, the death of Nhamo is not the central point of her story. Rather, Tambu wants to draw the attention of the readers, right from the beginning of the narrative, to the suffering her mother, her two aunts, Lucia and Maiguru, and her cousin, Nyasha, have experienced under patriarchal and colonial oppression. As far as Maiguru and her daughter, Nyasha, are concerned, their situation is more complex compared to the rest of the other female characters. Although they are literate women with Western education and high living standards, they are victims of patriarchy and the alien Western culture as well. In fact, in *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga gives a detailed account of two different types of African women: the literate and the illiterate. She shows that either type of woman can be a victim of patriarchy.

Dangarembga's most illiterate female characters find it almost difficult for them to achieve their personal development under patriarchy and colonialism. Tambu's mother, Mainini, endures the weight of patriarchy from an early age. At the age of fifteen years old, she was married to Jeremiah, Tambu's father, a lazy and poor husband who fails to give the entire bride price of Mainini to his in-laws. This constitutes a real loss for them since they live below the poverty line. Worse still the illiteracy of Mainini causes her to pay for the laziness of her husband. The little revenue she gets from farming and selling the crops is used to nurture her husband and children. Eventually, she finishes like all the ordinary women of her age, she goes backwards every day. These patriarchal practices of women's exploitation perpetuate their illiteracy. According to Sharma and Sharma (1995), the illiteracy of women leads to their inevitable subjugation and exclusion from leadership positions within their families and communities.

> In the proper use of education lies the salvation of sex. As long as she is ignorant, so long will she remain dejected, oppressed and incapable of sharing men's pursuits and ideals. But educate her, help her to organise her efforts and she will respond to the

> changed environment. It is education and useful organisations that can give true freedom and enlightenment (p. 22).

When Ngugi wa Thiongo was interviewed in 1982 about his novels *Devil on the Cross* and *Detained*, he described women as the most exploited and oppressed section of the entire working class. "exploited as workers; at home; and also by the backward elements in the culture" (Boyce-Davies and Adams, 1986, p. 11). Most feminist critics, writers and theorists agree that the lack of education is one of the major reasons behind the subjugation of women. This fact is confirmed by Kate Millett (1994) when she links women's subordination with the lack of knowledge. "If knowledge is power, power is also knowledge, and a large factor in their subordinate position is the fairly systematic ignorance patriarchy imposes upon women" (Cited in Shamim, 2017, p. 50).

Literacy and education of African women increase their social and economic participation in their families and communities matters. Better educated African women often have high self-esteem and less dependence on their families' male partners. These advantages that education offers to girls and women are rejected by their male partners because it weakens their control over their family members. Therefore, to benefit from women's subordination and submissive attitude, African men use various means and present several obstacles to hinder the education of women and girls. This is what Stromquist (1990) confirms when she states that

> Regarding women's literacy, moreover, it is clear that political will decreases as literacy is seen as a potential challenge to patriarchy. Hence, an implicit alliance is formed by men of all classes to make it difficult for low-income women to attain literacy skills (p. 105).

In most African cultures, women are socialized into being silent and submissive. Mainin's subjugation denies her a voice in the affairs of her family. All the decisions are taken by her husband's elder brother, Babamukuru. In this respect,

Baharvand and Zarrinjooee (2012) explain that women's decency is measured according to their level of submissiveness to their men "Actually, the women are trained to be silent. The women will be considered virtuous and decent as long as they are obedient workers whose concern is nothing but the satisfaction of their husbands' desires" (p. 31). Mainini is the paragon of an ideal wife in her extended family. She teaches her daughter, Tambu, how to accept women's back luck. She warns her not to be too vulnerable and to face patriarchal oppression with determination and strength. "This business of womanhood is a heavy burden…what will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burden with strength" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16). These words impart the extent to which African women are oppressed. They are victims of double colonization: patriarchal traditional norms and colonial rule.

In *Nervous Conditions*, the only adult female character that struggles against poverty and patriarchy is Lucia, Mainini's sister. Lucia, although illiterate, is more daring towards men. When Babamukuru holds a patriarchal family meeting after Nhamo's death to discuss serious matters that concern the extended Sigauke family, Lucia marches into the room where the meeting is held without being invited. She destroys the myth of male dominance. Her courage is noteworthy; it is mainly due to her singleness, she is not responsible to any man. Lucia interrupted the exclusively male meeting because the subject matter under review concerns her. She wants to tell the truth that neither Takesure nor Jeremiah are good or honest men. None of the men who attended the family meeting interrupt her speech, even the head of the extended family, Babamukuru.

> They wanted to talk to her. They wanted her to sit down and be calm and discuss the matter rationally, but Lucia had had enough and came out to join us. The patriarchy put its heads together and conferred in low voices because now they knew we were listening (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 145).

In contrast to the elder women of her generation who surrender to the cultural norms, Lucia chooses to fight against the patriarchy that prevails in her Shona community. Her poverty and illiteracy don't prevent her from imposing herself as an independent woman. She vows not to be bonded to any man. She knows that illiteracy is a plague for women since it prevents them from achieving personal development and gender equality, which is why she starts to change her situation. She begins by getting a little job as a cook at the mission school with the help of Babamukuru who is "very pleased with himself" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 158) for providing such a good help as the head of the family. The mission school environment motivates Lucia to take a tremendous decision, despite being a single mother, and start her evening education. Her determination and intelligence help her, by the end of the novel, in passing the final exams and continuing her normal education. Uwakweh (1995) explains that "Lucia transcends the obstacles in her path, her illiteracy and stigma as a 'loose woman,' to become an educated woman" (p. 82).

Lucia is actively shaping her life and improving her situation in a male-dominated Shona society, in contrast to the other women of her generation, Tambu's mother and Maiguru, Babamukuru's wife. This latter despite her education remains a dutiful and submissive wife that has silently accepted her inferior role. In giving the reasons for Maiguru's silence, Njozi, (2005) states that "She [Maiguru] obeyed and served Babamukuru with slavish devotion because she believed to do so would maximize her comfort and minimize her pain…She willingly sacrificed her freedom in exchange for security" (p. 5) . In describing the character of Lucia, Treiber (2002) states that

> The strongest female character in the novel…is Lucia, who upsets the gender dynamics on the homestead by asserting herself against and in spite of the limitations placed on her by cultural expectations: she is sexually promiscuous, speaks her mind in front of the male elders, exposes Babamukuru's

> chauvinism, refuses to be a subservient wife, becomes a single working mother in town going to school part-time (p. 90).

Dangarembga portrays Lucia as a good example of a free illiterate simple Shona woman. Her courage and sense of independence give her a strong impulse to struggle against the patriarchal and colonial hegemony than the educated Maiguru, Babamukuru's wife. According to Treiber (2002), Lucia is the more attractive female character in *Nervous Conditions*. Her femaleness doesn't prevent her from getting a Western education, as Maiguru did, and challenging the patriarchal cultural norms imposed on African women.

Within Dangarembga's novel, *Nervous Conditions,* Lucia's poverty and illiteracy place her in the position of a subaltern. This position is characterised, according to Gayatri Spivak (1993), by the inability of the subaltern women to speak and denounce the two mechanisms of patriarchy and colonialism that overpower them and hinder their emancipation. Spivak's view about the inability of the subalterns to overcome oppression on their own is questioned by Dangarembga who portrays her female character, Lucia, as a subaltern who frees herself from male domination and achieves subjectivity through the rejection of marriage. Ultimately, it is the marital status of Lucia, being a single woman, which enables her to speak out in an attempt to achieve her emancipation.

Similarly, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe insists on the relevance of women's literacy in a postcolonial patriarchal society. The character of Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* can be likened to Dangarembga's female character Lucia. Like Lucia, Beatrice is an independent, educated and unmarried Igbo woman who resists patriarchal discrimination and oppression within her father's family and community. Her Western education and social status, as an independent woman, enable her to have a foothold in the political matters of the Kangan state. She also creates an opportunity for the voices of illiterate women to synchronise in order to stand for their rights and ensure a better future. In her analysis of Achebe's female characters Fonchingong (2006) states that, "The portrayal of Beatrice represents a

woman shouldering the responsibility of changing the course of female emancipation" (p. 145).

Beatrice's support for the women around her can be seen when she cares for Elewa, after the death of Ikem, her boyfriend and the father of her baby girl, and when she learns to accept her poor and uneducated servant, Agatha. By the end of the novel Beatrice feels pity for Agatha and after having rebuked her goes over and apologizes, something not in her habit as earlier she used to ignore Agatha under such circumstances.

> It was Agatha's habit to cry for hours whenever Beatrice said as much as boo to her…But today, after she had deposited the used plates in the sink, Beatrice turned to where Agatha sat with her face buried in her hands on the kitchen-table and placed her hand on her heaving shoulder. She immediately raised her head and stared at her mistress in unbelief (Achebe, 1987, p. 169).

The two women, Elewa and Agatha, are victims of illiteracy and ignorance. Their common experiences of misery and patriarchal oppression seem to distance them more from each other instead of bringing them closer together. It is, therefore, the responsibility of Beatrice, as an educated and wise woman, to teach each one of them the effectiveness of the women's bond. By doing so, she creates an opportunity for Agatha, who had formerly been cruel to Elewa, to understand the power of sisterhood.

> When she [Beatrice] dropped the telephone Elewa and Agatha had been having a quiet discussion of their own on the matter.
>
> "Madam, make you no worry at all," said Agatha. "Whether they look from here to Jericho, they no go find am. By God's power,"
>
> "Amin," replied Elewa. "Na so we talk" (Achebe, 1987, pp. 171-172).

As minor female characters, Elewa and Agatha lack the education and knowledge which Beatrice has. When this latter comment on Elewa, during the naming ceremony, as being a shy girl, Elewa react bitterly by saying: "'I no shy at all,' she replied, her eyes smiling and holding back tears at the same time like bright sunshine through a thin drizzle. 'I no shy but I no sabi book'" (Achebe, 1987, p. 206). Elewa's feeling of inferiority over her uneducated background is subdued by the fact that she has seen and known plenty of things beyond the bookish knowledge that the privileged ones possess. In contrast to Elewa, Agatha, Beatrice's maid, doesn't consider herself inferior to others despite her lack of education. She has a special character and hardly pays concern to anyone. She dislikes taking orders even from Beatrice. Once this latter was expecting someone to pay her a visit at home. So, when he arrived Beatrice ordered Agatha, who was in the kitchen, not to disturb them. As a reaction, Agatha gives Beatrice a saucy and suggestive look which "led Beatrice to lock the kitchen door altogether. Then she went to answer the doorbell" (Achebe, 1987, p. 102).

Achebe's interest in women's education shows the extent to which illiteracy is considered detrimental for women in general. It facilitates their submission and drowns any hope for freedom in them. According to Baharvand and Zarrinjooee (2012), illiterate "women are encouraged by males to be submissive labourers at home. The resultant illiteracy deprives women of participating in social activities" (p. 30). What is even worse about women's illiteracy is that it parts and draws them away from the essence and importance of female solidarity. This can be seen when Beatrice receives Elewa in her home to grieve with her over the death of her boyfriend, Ikem, while Agatha, as a housemaid, doesn't show the least empathy albeit by providing a decent breakfast, "Elewa was at the table dipping dry bread in a mug of Ovaltine while Agatha watched her leaning on the doorway between the kitchen and the dining annexe" (Achebe, 1987, p. 167).

In Achebe's novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, the lack of education drives the two minor female characters, Agatha and Elewa, apart despite having a common denominator of patriarchal oppression and subjugation because of their gender.

Achebe holds a strong belief that only educated and knowledgeable women have the ability and wisdom to create a meaningful change in the economic, social and political status of African women in a traditional patriarchal society. It is in Beatrice that Achebe's visualization of a literate African woman is fully realized. When discussing the roles of educated women in Achebe's narratives, Begum (2007) states that

> The task of altering the present inferior female image rightfully belongs to every woman. Achebe presents to his reader an educated, sophisticated and responsible woman in his novel and emphasizes the urgent need for strong female voices in African societies for restructuring the nation and its progress (p. 101).

Generally speaking, Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga are congruent in the way they consider women illiteracy. They have shown that the more illiterate women are, the more likely they are oppressed and discriminated. Gender discrimination is considered, by both writers, as an impediment that hinders women's development, for it denies them access to decent education that helps in their personal and collective advancement. The two authors insist on the importance of education as an instrument for African women's emancipation and freedom in the colonial and postcolonial eras. Literacy is as important for African women as it was for the former African slaves who were shipped to the American continent. These slaves experience hard living conditions because of the prejudice of their colour and ignorance. As a result, countless of them resort to literacy to free themselves from White men's oppression and exploitation, and to achieve their personal fulfilment as individuals. Butchart (2010) points out to this fact when he argues that

> Slavery's great failure lay in its inability to crush the black longing to read and write. The dream of literacy would not die despite two and a half centuries of bondage and enforced illiteracy…Literacy opened the possibility of encountering ideas

> opposed to human bondage and carried the potential of written communication between black conspirators (p. 2).

Many scholars insist on the importance of education for women as it has a close relationship with their freedom from men's oppression. Thus, according to this principle, there is an urgent need for the dissemination of literacy and knowledge among African women as a prerequisite for their emancipation from a totally segregated continent.

4.4 The Modern African Woman

Feminism is defined according to Mikell (1995) as "approaches to addressing the unequal status of women relative to men, with the goal of mediating gender differences and providing women access to the repertoire of valued roles and statuses within society" (p. 420). This definition corresponds to the Western principles of the feminist movement whose aim has been to establish equity between men and women. Western feminism is not in line with African women's aspirations. Therefore, African feminism emerges as a reaction to the false image Western academics and activists have about the realities and circumstances of African women. This has been reflected most cogently in the reaction of the African writer Buchi Emecheta to a question from a Western audience about why she refuses to call herself a feminist. Emecheta answers by saying that

> Now if you choose to call me a feminist, that is your business; I don't subscribe to the feminist idea that all men are brutal and repressive and we must reject them. Some of these men are my brothers and fathers and sons. Am I to reject them too? (Cited in Mikell, 1995, p. 406).

In her analysis of feminism in African literature, Mikell (2005) points out that

> African feminism differs from Western feminism because it has developed in a different context. Today, African women are seeking to redefine their roles in ways that allow them a new,

> culturally attuned activism. This is not a totally novel challenge, since there is evidence of gender hierarchy, female subordination, and women's struggles to reshape their statuses and roles within traditional African cultures in earlier historical periods (p. 622).

African feminist writers come up with a discourse that reflects African women's experiences within their own cultural context. Not only do they contextualize their work, but are also socially committed to redefining their roles to deal with multiple women's oppressions. This explains the novelty in their portrayal of African women in their fiction as human rather than sexual beings. The two feminist[14] writers, Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga provide good illustrations, through their female protagonists, of the modern African woman who struggles to foster their participation in the political affairs of their nations and consequently enhance their socioeconomic position. Due to the contemporary economic crises and political failure in many African states, the new African women take the challenge and remove some of their fears to seek political positions. This is what Mikell (1995) points to when he states that African

> Women appear aware that the present climate of political experimentation and 'democratization,' whether resulting from Western pressures or internal shifts within cultural/religious communities, offers them unique political opportunities to alter their sociopolitical position (p. 409).

Achebe and Dangarembga take African women's experiences in the patriarchal Igbo and Shona communities at the forefront of their works. Their writings reflect the different kinds of problems women encounter in their lives and the way they struggle to change their miserable living conditions. For the two female

[14] Chinua Achebe is considered by some scholars as "a feminist" (Emenyonu, 2004, p. xvi), and this is because of his last novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, in which he addresses the womanhood question more than the anarchy of the dictatorship regime in the fictitious state of Kangan.

protagonists, Beatrice and Tambu, education is very important. It is the only way available for them to get out of poverty and achieve personal development and freedom. For instance, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, the good quality Education Beatrice, the female protagonist, gets in the West rises her to the position of secretary which was rare for women to hold such a position in her Igbo community. The two writers, Achebe and Dangarembga, seem to postulate that within a patriarchal traditional community women's freedom is not something given. Instead, it is gained through education, perseverance and endurance. These factors of women's emancipation constitute the principal personal traits of Achebe's and Dangarembga's female protagonists, Beatrice and Tambu.

During their childhood, Beatrice and Tambu were victims of patriarchal oppression and gender discrimination within their fathers' families. However, their determination to get a decent Western education allows them to overcome the constraints that impede their personal development and freedom. These two female protagonists are set as good models for women's resistance and prosperity in traditional African communities. For instance, Achebe's feminist discourse suggests that women, in postcolonial Africa, are politically qualified to construct a world of equity and social justice regardless of gender-based discrimination. According to Mikell (1995) "there seems little doubt that the emerging African feminism will generate positive changes in African political structures and contribute to greater gender equality before the law on the African continent" (p. 420). African women's resistance and political achievement will be used as a perspective for the study of the challenges that still faces women in the modern world.

In *Nervous Conditions*, the protestation of Dangarembga's female protagonist Nyasha against her father's oppression is not successful. Nyasha uses food as a site of her rebellion. Her denial of the food provided by her father is a way of resisting the patriarchal oppression that prevails in her family. In summarising the significance of food, Wixson (2002) states that

> The various meanings of food, as escape or entrapment, as resistance or oppression, pervade…Nervous Conditions. As the locus of the overlapping and intersecting ideologies of colonialism and patriarchy, food is the vehicle through which the women of the novel pursue their agency (p. 230).

In contrast to the failure of Nyasha, the main female protagonist, Tambu, and her aunt, Lucia, were very successful in challenging the patriarchal oppression and gender-based discrimination within their extended Sigauke family. For Dangarembga, the two women, Tambu and Lucia, provide a good portrayal of the new African women who stand as role models for the other subjugated female characters in the story. The character of Lucia is very inspiring for her sister Mainini. Being unmarried and having no children, Lucia senses that she is in a better position than her sister to struggle against male dominance. Her reply to Babamukuru's demand for woman's obedience to man is a good illustration of her awareness of these material differences. "maybe when you marry a woman, she is obliged to obey you. But some of us aren't married, so we don't know how to do it. That is why I have been able to tell you frankly what is in my heart" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 171). Lucia's reply reflects plainly her disagreement with the subordination of women.

At the beginning of the story, Lucia is presented as a sex victim. She experiences sexual exploitation by Tambu's father, Jeremiah, and his distant relative, Takesure. Despite giving birth to a child as a single woman, she does not seem to be handicapped by this sad experience. Moreover, she succeeds in challenging Babamukuru, the patriarchal head of the Sigauke family, by attending the exclusive patriarchal council he holds to discuss serious family matters. Lucia symbolizes ordinary women's resistance against male domination and oppression. What is more, Lucia is an ambitious woman, whose dignity makes her depend on nobody but her own. She succeeds in manipulating Babamukuru for her own benefit by convincing him to find her a job as a cook at the mission school. In this way, Lucia secures for herself an adequate income that strengthens her freedom and

keeps her at arm's length from the tyranny of men like Jeremiah and Takesure. Lucia escapes human dominance and material limitation with the help of her pragmatism, as reinforced by Uwakweh (1995) who suggests that Lucia's

> Escape from male control and her attainment of independence and financial security lies in her pragmatism. She identifies the line of weakness in the patriarchy and utilizes it to achieve her goals. While complimenting Babamukuru's power and benevolence, she manipulates him to get a job at the mission school (p. 82).

With the money Lucia earns, from her work at the mission school, she takes care of herself and her baby in addition to her sister, Mainini. She also pays for her school fees as she enrols at the mission school with the assistance of Babamukuru. Through Western education, Lucia aims to fight her illiteracy and appears as a role model for the subjugated women in her family. Lucia's attitude towards assisting other oppressed women, especially her sister, Mainini, who is entrapped in an unhappy marriage coupled with abject poverty, mirrors her strong faith in female bonding as a path to emancipation. Perhaps the episode that best illustrates faith of Lucia in women's solidarity is when she questions Babamukuru, even at the risk of losing her job, on his right to punish Tambu and to impose a Christian wedding on her sister, Mainini.

> 'Did you ask her what was on her mind?', she demanded. 'Did you ask my sister whether she wished her daughter was present? Even the wedding. Did you ask my sister if she wanted that wedding? I do not see that the child did you so much wrong by preferring not to be there.' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 171).

Likewise, Tambu, Dangarembga's heroine, inherits from her aunt, Lucia, the genes of resistance to male dominance. The two female characters, Tambu and Lucia, share the same story. As Tambu declares, at the beginning of the narrative, they

succeed to escape from the abject poverty and patriarchal oppression that reign the homestead, "my story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia's" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1). Being the narrator, Tambu tells her own story. A story grounded in female subjugation and discrimination. Dangarembga ranks Tambu as a new African woman. She is depicted as an intelligent and stubborn girl who resists gender-based discrimination. Her escape and heroism mostly lie in her determination to get a decent Western education that helps her avoid the plague of patriarchal oppression which affects most indigenous African women. To tell the world about her own experience and that of the women around her, she looks back on her childhood in colonial Rhodesia and recalls the past events through investigation. "I shall…begin by recalling the facts…the events that put me in a position to write this account" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1).

Since the story, *Nervous Conditions,* is narrated from a first-person point of view, it is argued that Tambu, the narrator, is basically the fictional image of Dangarembga. Thus, she uses the character of Tambu, a very young Rhodesian girl, as a device to depict her own experience as an African woman in a society where patriarchy and colonialism assign superior roles to men and subordinate roles to women. Because of the lack of literature by and about African women, Dangarembga relies on her childhood experience as good evidence to depict the suffering and deprivation of African women. When Dangarembga is asked, in an interview with Wilkinson (1992), why in her novel, *Nervous Conditions*, she writes about her own childhood, she responds by saying:

> If at the age of twenty-six somebody has a story to tell it's likely to be about growing up! Also I'm always conscious at the back of my mind that there is very little that a woman in Zimbabwe can pick up – in Zimbabwe today – and say yes, I know, that's me…Because I know I felt that gap so dreadfully (p. 197).

Tambu's remembrance of her past events as an oppressed young girl, who suffers gender discrimination within her father's family, is a good indication of African

women's emancipation from the oppression of patriarchy and colonialism. Dangarembga fuels her story, *Nervous Conditions,* with a new generation of educated and rebellious women. These women, depicted through the female characters Tambu, Nyasha, Lucia and Maiguru, were so eager to protest against the sordid economic and social conditions imposed on them by patriarchy and colonialism.

By all accounts, Dangarembga and Achebe are bound by their concern and inclination towards the conditions of African women. In Achebe's narrative, *Anthills of the Savannah,* Beatrice, the female protagonist, struggles against male chauvinism in her father's house. She has a strong determination to get a decent western education that allows her to make a career for herself in a patriarchal traditional society. Her vision about the new role of women in postcolonial Africa contrasts with that of her close friend Ikem Osodi who, despite his commitment to speak out against oppression, neglects the role of women in his political writing. Beatrice understands that Ikem's behaviour towards women doesn't reflect a personal weakness but is a symptom of an old cultural tradition within African societies.

> And I understand the meaning of his despair too. For here's a man, who has written a full-length novel and play on the Women's War of 1929 which stopped the British administration cold in its tracks, being accused of giving no clear political role to women. But the way I see it is that giving women today the same role which traditional society gave them of intervening only when everything else has failed is not enough, you know, like the women in the Sembene film who pick up the spears abandoned by their defeated menfolk. It is not enough that women should be the court of last resort because the last resort is a damn sight too far and too late! (Achebe, 1987, pp. 83-84).

Achebe's new women reject the patriarchal system that makes them the court of last resort. Within this system, their voices were never heard and they are excluded from taking part in public affairs despite their intellectual and political competencies. According to Achebe, the political failure of postcolonial Nigeria (Africa) is the result of gender discrimination. In other words, the ability of the educated women to effective contributions to politics and public spheres is undermined. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe ascribes the different troubles of the state of Kangan (Nigeria) to "the failure of our rulers to establish vital links with the poor and the dispossessed of the country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation's being" (Achebe, 1987, p. 130). For instance, the government of His Excellency comprises male members only. The women, even the educated ones among them, like Beatrice, are completely excluded from taking part in it. They remain at the margin. The two scholars, Boyce-Davis and Adams (1986) find that "While Achebe's works are obvious classics within the African literary tradition, a re-examination of his work from a feminist position reveals woman as peripheral to the larger exploration of man's experience" (p. 247).

Beatrice, the female protagonist, is aware of the fact that African women are walled off from the political apparatus of their countries. According to her, in time of social and political crises, African women are only looked to once all options have been exhausted and when the possibility for them to intervene and fix what men have spoiled is almost impossible. Beatrice argues that in postcolonial Africa women's opinions and contributions in the private and public spheres must be considered. Any public policy or system of governance that excludes women or undermines their potential is condemned to collapse and failure. According to her, Kangan's sexist political system and inapt male leadership have to be overturned in order to establish a novel society that encourages unity and gender equality. Achebe's central female character, Beatrice, sees that the business of salvation of the whole Kangan nation from the inapt patriarchal system is hers. Accordingly, she states that

> For weeks and months after I had definitely taken on the challenge of bringing together as many broken pieces of this tragic history as I could lay my hands on I still could not find a way to begin. Anything I tried to put down sounded wrong - either too abrupt, too indelicate or too obvious - to my middle ear (Achebe, 1987, p. 75).

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe's new Nigerian women, symbolized by Beatrice, work diligently to eradicate the colonial and patriarchal climate of oppression and discrimination and restore the traditional African values that encourage unity and gender equality. Through Beatrice, Achebe validates "the existence of certain kinds of women enjoying a setting totally different from that of their predecessors. If Beatrice is new, so indeed are her circumstance" (Nwankwo, 1991, p. 65). The new women in *Anthills of the Savannah* take on the challenge to understand their bitter history in order to make a better future. According to Kalu (1994), feminist consciousness places women at the centre of history by recognising theme as "active participants in all aspects of economic, political, social and cultural existence" (p. 82). This attempt is what Beatrice sees as "pulling up one of those spears thrust into the ground by the men in their hour of defeat and left there in the circle of their last dance" (Achebe, 1987, p. 76).

Generally speaking, patriarchy is a system fashioned out, under colonial rule, in a way to keep women in a subordinate position. The unwillingness of the postcolonial patriarchal regimes to give an equal chance for African women to actively participate in the social, economic and political matters of their nations is one of the reasons behind the shrunken public sphere and the failed leadership of most postcolonial African countries. In congruence with this line of thought, Beatrice, Achebe's central female protagonist, reasons that for her to blow up a new life in the political role of women in African politics, she has to address it from a chauvinistic perspective. This can be clearly seen in her argument with her friend Ikem, the editor of The National Gazette, about his political ideas about Kangan's women.

> I pointed this out to him jokingly as a sure sign of his chauvinism…In the last couple of years we have argued a lot about what I have called the chink in his armoury of brilliant and original ideas. I tell him he has no clear role for women in his political thinking; and he doesn't seem to be able to understand it (Achebe, 1987, p. 83).

For Beatrice, the new African women should take political participation as a chauvinistic activity through which their subservient or degrading or decorative roles in violent and corrupt male-driven societies could be overturned. Through Beatrice Achebe presents the modern educated contemporary women as a solution for the social, economic and political problems he sees in modern Africa. As a matter of fact, the character of Beatrice reflects, as Begum (2007) explains, "the greatness of Achebe in creating a 'New Nigerian' woman character with an accurate vision of what went wrong in Nigeria. She is also the portrait of a woman of strength who can make a meaningful contribution to the building of a new nation" (p. 101).

The whole actions in the last chapter of Achebe's novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, are real evidence for the rise of Achebe's new African women. The traditional ceremony carries out by Beatrice for the naming of Elewa's Daughter, Amaechina, a traditional boy's name meaning 'May the Path Never Close,' is the culmination of this fact, "Beatrice had decided on a sudden inspiration to hold a naming ceremony in her flat for Elewa's baby-girl. She did not intend a traditional ceremony. Indeed except in the name only she did not intend ceremony of any kind" (Achebe, 1987, p. 201). Through the naming ceremony held in the apartment of Beatrice, this latter challenges the traditional patriarchal norms that prevail in the Kangan's community by giving a boy's name (Amaechina) to Ikem and Elewa's baby-girl, and by taking the responsibility to conduct a naming traditionally belonging to men in the culture.

Since all these courageous acts occur by the end of the novel, Achebe seems to give modern African women a 'last resort' role. They are allowed to take over men's roles only when these latter are not available. The traditionally masculine name Beatrice gives to Elewa's baby girl at the end of the narrative has social implications for women. It shows that women are the carriers of history and the bearers of life after the death of the three male protagonists, Chris, Ikem and His Excellency, Sam, and consequently the fall apart of the state. Because they are the only ones left so they must take on traditionally masculine roles to carry on the state that is left after the conflict. Additionally, the boy's name given to Elewa's baby symbolises a kind of hope, Beatrice disseminates in the women around her, for a better future based on equality and peace.

> Beatrice has decided on a sudden inspiration to hold a naming ceremony in her flat for Elewa's baby-girl. She did not intend a traditional ceremony…There was an Old Testament prophet who named his son *The-remnant-shall-return*. They must have lived in times like this. We have a different metaphor, though; we have our own version of hope that springs eternal. We shall call this child AMAECHINA: *May-the-path-never-close*. Ama for short (Achebe, 1987, pp. 201-206).

In elucidating the subtext of the naming ceremony, Udumukwu (2007) argues that "By presiding over the naming ceremony Beatrice breaks protocol. This is because she performs a role that is traditionally preserved for a male who is also an elder" (p. 323). The women-centred ending of *Anthills of the Savannah* reflects Achebe's belief in the active role the new African women can play in the settlement of the social, economic and political problems of most postcolonial African societies. Achebe presumes that any process of social or political change that excludes women and undermines their potential is sentenced to failure. Thus, in *Anthills of the Savannah* Achebe seeks to restore the precolonial status of women in African society. Prior to the coming of the colonialist, African women have a fundamental role in the process of development of their communities alongside their male

counterparts. For instance, in precolonial Igbo society (Nigeria) women enjoy democratic and egalitarian social arrangements. J.B.C. Okorie is right to insist that "[t]he main credo of Igbo culture is the emphasis placed on individual achievement and initiatives, prestige and egalitarian leadership. All participate in community affairs, in decision-making, and development efforts" (Cited in Uchem, 2002, p. 88).

The South African woman writer Nadine Gordimer points out the significance of Beatrice in African letters. "She is a true world-historical figure in Georg Lukacs's sense, and it is Mr Achebe's victory that she is also one of the most extraordinary, attractive and moving women characters in any contemporary novel" (Cited in Erritouni, 2006, p. 67). In addition to Beatrice's role as the leader of the naming ceremony involving the baby Amaechina, she serves an additional function in *Anthills of the Savannah*. Achebe calls her a 'prophetess' and a 'goddess.' One of the prophecies Beatrice articulates is her belated warning to the already percipient men, Iken and Chris, about their imminent assassination by their former friend, His Excellency. By drawing on a mythical Igbo tradition of female devotion and worship, Achebe presents Beatrice as an embodiment of the goddess Idemili described in the myth told by Ikem.

> In the beginning Power rampaged through our world, naked. So the Almighty looking at his creation through the round undying eye of the Sun, saw and pondered and finally decided to send his daughter, Idemili, to bear witness to the moral nature of authority by wrapping around Power's rude waist a loincloth of peace and modesty (Achebe, 1987, p. 93).

The incarnation of the goddess Idimili through the female character of Beatrice is an indication for an urgent need for the new African women to hold power in order for them to get societal recognition and build a just society. Beatrice's power as the goddess Idimili is revealed when she visits the Presidential Retreat on Lake Abichi as a guest invited to a dinner organised by His Excellency, the president. Among the

guest is Miss Lou Cranford, an American Journalist, who visits Kangan to "see if all the bad news they hear about us in America is true" (Achebe, 1987, p. 68). Beatrice was annoyed by the way Lou dictates to His Excellency how to run his country and the way he submits and shamelessly boasts to her about African polygamy. Thus, Beatrice assumes the role of avenging goddess and determines to wrest the president from her and remind him of his disgraceful behaviour and the way he should use his power. "If I went to America today, to Washington DC, would I, could I, walk into a White House private dinner and take the American President hostage? And his Defence Chief and his Director of CIA?" (Achebe, 1987, p. 74).

Modern African women consider that their historical discrimination and oppression resulted from the abuse of power by their male counterparts. Thus, Achebe emphasizes that women should not passively expect men to consider them as a significant human beings who should be given the right to enjoy full social and political rights. For him, the task of resisting male chauvinism and altering the inferior female status rightfully belongs to every woman. The portrayal of Beatrice, as educated and independent, represents the ability of the modern woman to shoulder the responsibility of charting the course of female emancipation. This expected role of the new African women, in the new social and political dynamics, is what Ikem was unable to define.

> I can't tell you what the new role for women would be. I don't know. I should never have presumed to know. You have to tell us. We never asked you before. And perhaps you've never been asked; you may not have thought about it; you may not have the answer handy. But in the case everybody had better know who is now holding up the action (Achebe, 1987, p. 90).

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe put a heavy responsibility on the new women to draw men's attention to their indispensable role in modern Africa. Beatrice's Western education and knowledge give her the power to perform this responsibility. She is wise enough to understand that men and women should work collaboratively

for a better and promising future for Africa and the Africans. Knowledge can yield for women the power to impose themselves as real partners for their male counterparts. Hence, power is associated with knowledge as Foucault (1995) argues, "power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (p. 27). Through Beatrice, Achebe highlights the significance of women's power in mitigating men's authority.

When instructing her friend Ikem in the role African women should play in modern society and politics, and reminding His Excellency, the president, of his disgraceful behaviour towards his own culture and his abuse of power, Beatrice uses a manipulative, persuasive and smooth power. This kind of power which is a female specific and more political in nature differs from the obtrusive and crude patriarchal power. When drawing an analogy between male and female power, Chinweizu (1990) concludes that

> Generally then, whereas male power tends to be crude, confrontational and direct, female power tends to be subtle, manipulative and indirect. From a male-cantered point of view of what power is, it is easy to be misled into thinking that a female form of power does not exist at all…just because it is not hard, aggressive or boastful like the highly visible male form (p. 23).

Beatrice symbolises Achebe's affirmation and faith in the strength and integrity of the modern African woman. She is the epitome of women standing against the subjugation and oppression of colonial and patriarchal systems. Furthermore, Achebe portrays the modern woman as having a strong female persona. They hold out against all forms of male temptation and decline to be demoted. Beatrice refuses to cheapen herself even with her boyfriend, Chris. When this latter hears about her being invited to a private dinner by His Excellency he

advises her to keep all options open. Chris seems to consider Beatrice as a sexual object. He accepts the idea of his girlfriend sleeping with His Excellency for his own personal interest. Beatrice's reply to Chris's request shows her unwillingness to permit anyone to exploit her body. "All options? I knew of one at least I would not keep open" (Achebe, 1987, p. 67).

The sexual objectification of women is what Kate Millett (1994) raises when she states that "Where the body is treated as property, not merely to incarcerate, but to hurt and humiliate to violate and manipulate and cause deliberate pain, there is the greatest tyranny patriarchal or governmental," (Cited in Shamim, 2017, p. 54). Beatrice represents a role model for women's revolution against the notion of male superiority that considers the females as mere objects. The disgraceful manner through which His Excellency invites Beatrice to the private dinner, he abruptly invites her without telling her where exactly the party is scheduled, arises her anger and she displays her annoyance through the breach of the protocol.

> My first act of rebellion which was to bring a wan smile to my face five minutes later for its sheer futility was to refuse my escort's offer to sit in the owner's corner of the black Mercedes standing in my driveway. As he rushed ahead of me and opened and held the door I simply said sorry, walked over to the other side and let myself in. the chauffer turned sharply around on his seat perhaps to get a good look at today's eccentric cargo. When I said good evening to him on top of all that, he seemed dazed to begin with and then his bafflement gave way to a wide happy grin which pleased me very much for it confirmed that I had successfully compounded my rebellion- first to spurn a seat of honour and then to greet a mere driver first. That was when I smiled at myself and my puny, empty revolts, the rebellion of a mouse in a cage (Achebe, 1987, p. 66).

Such acts of rebellion and annoyance displayed by Beatrice in Achebe's last novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, indicate the end of an era of women's subjugation and oppression by their male counterparts and the emergence of a modern African society that accepts the equality of the sexes. The new African women, in *Anthills of the Savannah,* have an integral and fundamental role in building up the African society and stand as a hope for the future of the Africans "as the world crashes around Man's ears, Woman in her supremacy will descend and sweep the shards together" (Achebe, 1987, p. 89). Through education and wisdom modern African women not only enhance their own living conditions but even tried to lift-up the lives of the less privileged ones. The strong sense of sisterhood they have makes them to feel empathy and care for other women.

The naming ceremony that Beatrice held, by the end of the story, gathers men and women of all classes and from diverse religions and regions of the state of Kangan. The message Beatrice aims to send through this gathering is that the future of African countries should not be in the hands of a handful of dictator male leaders. It must rather involve the voices of all the country's people, regardless of class or gender. This is what Chris, Beatrice's friend, fully grasps by the end of the novel before he breathes his last breath and dies. "What he was trying to say was *The last green* …Chris was sending us a message to beware. This world belongs to the people of the world not to any little caucus, no matter how talented" (Achebe, 1987, pp. 214-215). Chris's final message summarizes the resolution that Beatrice is proposing for a better future for Africa and the Africans.

The modern African women depicted in *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Nervous Conditions* do not accept the economic, social and political conditions imposed on them by their male counterparts and colonialism. Therefore, the only way that seems efficient for them to counter this patriarchal and colonial oppression is to get an adequate education and knowledge. As far as women are concerned, education is a source of empowerment. It gives them the ability to be functional in society. The real power of African women surfaces in times of crisis, when their intervention to amend the failures of men is necessary. It is their ability to quickly

react and settle the social and political conflicts that make them 'new women' and true feminists. The new African women know the true meaning of the bonds of sisterhood. They strongly encourage the other women to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills for survival and to be the best at whatever they do and to prove different from the African stereotype by seeking equality, recognition and a comfortable existence on a par with men.

4.5 Conclusion

This last chapter discusses the hard living condition of women in colonial and postcolonial Africa. In the two novels, *Nervous Conditions* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, The female protagonists have been under the dual oppression of patriarchy and colonialism. This oppression causes them much suffering by keeping them poor and illiterate. However, through their endeavours and commitment to get a decent Western education, they transcend the patriarchal barriers that impede their personal progression and emancipation and restore the rightful status of women in African society. Those women with Western education are mostly depicted as modern African women who advocate social and economic changes and better political consideration.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In the course of the foregoing analysis of fictional representations of women in the two selected novels, *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Nervous Conditions*, of the postcolonial and colonial periods respectively a wide range of issues about women's lives has been discussed. As far as Dangarembga's novel, *Nervous Conditions,* is concerned, it presents a narrative exposing women's conditions during the British colonial era of the state of Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe) while in *Anthills of the Savannah* Achebe tends to focus on the contemporary realities affecting African women's lives in the postcolonial fictional state of Kangan (which can be read as Nigeria). Although fictional representation does not always reflect reality because of each author's experience and imaginative faculty, the depiction of the female characters in the two chosen novels reflects the features of colonised and previously colonised African societies.

Despite the difference in gender and socio-political background between the two authors, Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga, there are considerable similarities in their depiction of African women's conditions in the selected novels. In the two narratives, most female protagonists are deprived of their right for a decent education and subjected to domestic chores and extensive field work. These conditions make them occupy secondary or subservient roles within their communities. Subsequently, they remain under the authority and direction of men all along their lives. As feminist authors, Achebe and Dangarembga emphasise the importance of African women's struggle against the traditional patriarchal norms to achieve their freedom and get public recognition. Feminist narratives is important for the emancipation of women. She argues that feminists have fought imaginatively to bridge the gender gap and to cast doubt on the reasons for the social, cultural and political marginalization of women.

Nervous Conditions is seen, by many critics, as a semi-autobiographical novel. It is considered as the result of Dangarembga's experience as a student in England. Additionally, it tells about the problems she has encountered as a female individual in her Shona society and the racial discrimination she has undergone in

England as a Black woman. *Anthills of the Savannah* is Achebe's final novel. It was published two decades after his previous novel *A Man of the People*. Achebe's recovery of his voice, after twenty years of literary silence, is due, according to some scholars, to his feeling of responsibility towards the postcolonial problems and the urgent need to participate in resolving them. Additionally, Achebe notices the gap that exists in his past novels regarding the place of women in modern Nigeria, so he decided through his last novel to bridge that gap.

The novel *Anthills of the Savannah* reflects the concerns of Achebe, as a Nigerian citizen, in the troubles that ravage his country. Achebe observes that the leaders of Nigeria, who are mainly megalomaniac male soldiers, are selfish and corrupt, who place their own interests before those of their people. In this novel, the falling apart of the fictional state of Kangan, which thinly veils Nigeria, was avoided through the intervention of wise and educated African women. It is widely admitted among scholars that *Anthills of the Savannah* does not offer a solution to the political and social woes of modern Nigeria, but it rather provides an imagination of a possible form of solution.

The two authors, Dangarembga and Achebe, although the latter is a male African writer, show determination to criticise patriarchal structures and male chauvinism which continue to subjugate and exploit the female gender. Thus, the issue of domestic violence and gender discrimination is recurrent in the two selected novels, *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Nervous Conditions*. This testifies to Achebe's and Dangarembga's acknowledgement of the ongoing presence of abuses committed against women in postcolonial Africa. The common feature in the depiction of African women in the two novels is the resilience with which the writers endow their female protagonists in order to portray their resistance to colonial and patriarchal oppression.

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, the issue of the education of women has been given great importance. The author, Achebe, insists on education as a means for African women's empowerment. The kind of education his female protagonist,

Beatrice, gets in the West provides her with leadership qualities which allow her to achieve social recognition within her patriarchal community. Through the intelligence, diligence and commitment to the confrontation of patriarchy and male chauvinism with which Achebe equips this female protagonist, he portrays the new social and political role of women in postcolonial Africa. Additionally, Achebe seeks to highlight the significance of education in the emancipation of African women from patriarchal oppression and gender discrimination. Moreover, Beatrice's high social position, as the Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, indicates Achebe's recognition of the many possibilities available to educated black women in the new postcolonial African society.

The analysis of the representations of women in the selected works is an opportunity to evaluate the effects of patriarchy and colonialism on the social, economic and political condition of African women. It also contributes to a better understanding of their endeavour to get a decent education through which they achieve personal development and struggle against gender discrimination in society. In fact formal education is the point of convergence between the two writers. Achebe's protagonist, Beatrice and Tambu, Dangarembga's heroine, foresee the many benefits education can provide for a female individual in a patriarchal society. Beatrice was very successful in her pursuit to get a good Western education, while Tambu was a victim of sexism. Because of patriarchy, which prevails in her father's family, she was denied the right to education by the right of tradition. In such families, men are prized far more than women who are bonded to men and denied basic human rights, such as the right to a good education. This act of discrimination goes against UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education, especially the first article, which stands against "depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level."

Besides, the analysis of the representations of women in the works of the two postcolonial novelists, Achebe and Dangarembga, focuses on the differences in the portrayal of single and married African women. The two novelists reveal that the living conditions of married women are generally more crucially affected by

patriarchal laws than those of single women. The traditional patriarchal norms restrict the freedom of married women. These latter lives should be completely defined by their husbands. They are deprived of voice and seldom participate in the decision-making process within their families. These norms thus restrict women to the narrow spheres of family and housework.

The description of the predicaments of Nyasha's mother, Maiguru, in *Nervous Conditions*, for instance, differs from the depiction of Beatrice's, Achebe's female protagonist, personal life in *Anthills of the Savannah*. Due to the patriarchal social structure of her family, Maiguru, Babamukuru's wife, is trapped in her inferior social status as a married woman despite her educational level which is equal to her husband's. Unlike Maiguru, Beatrice enjoys her life as a single and educated African woman. She rejects the idea of marriage, despite the many proposals made by her boyfriend, Chris, on the base that marriage hinders women's personal development and brings them under the yoke of patriarchy. Through his female protagonist's rebellion against the social norms, Achebe shows that African women have shifted from the status of male-dependant to become responsible for their own lives affairs. The character of Beatrice portrays the modern African women who are now shown to play leadership roles in social and political activities and are depicted as acting independently of the assistance of male characters.

Another issue tackled by Achebe and Dangarembga, in their selected works, is the pervasive question of colonialism and its negative impacts on women's conditions. In fact, the issue of colonialism and its effects cannot be separated from Postcolonial Studies and African literature. Colonialism has completely altered the social and political stability in Africa. Prior to the colonial impact, African women were seen as equal to men. They enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as their male counterparts. However, under colonial rule, the status of women declines drastically. They have been reduced from their position as effective members of the family and community to mere objects who suffer the double oppression of patriarchy and colonialism.

These women's conditions resulted from the attempt made by the black African males to compensate for the oppression and racial discrimination they experience under their white European masters by imposing them on the female members of their families. For instance, in *Nervous Conditions*, Babamukuru is the product of the British coloniser. He is among the first black African males who receive a western education. As a child of nine years, Babamukuru experiences racial discrimination at the mission school as he was set to work on the mission's farm by day and received his education by night. This discrimination Babamukuru encounters at the mission school engenders a negative effect on his acts and attitudes towards the female members of his family. His wife, Maiguru, and daughter, Nyasha, view his attitudes and behaviour towards them as a sort of colonisation. According to them, Babamukuru mimics the white coloniser in his ways of oppressing and subjugating the black African people. Consequently, within his extended family his authority should not be questioned and his rules and instructions have to be blindly followed.

In fact, the oppression and exploitation of African women continue even after the departure of the British coloniser. In the postcolonial era, the new African elites with a Western education are used by the former coloniser to serve their hidden agenda. They are viewed as the products of colonization who work for the economic interests of their former European masters. They can also be used as a whip in the hand of the colonialist to repress liberties. African women are the first victims of this repression. They are oppressed and subjugated within countries to which they actively contribute to their independence. Despite their high qualifications, these women are excluded from taking part in the political affairs of their nations. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe portrays African women as second-class citizens in postcolonial Nigeria. For instance, Beatrice, the female protagonist, is a victim of sexism. Although having a Western education, she has no voice in government meetings in which she is the only female member. All the decisions are made by the male members especially Sam, the president for life, who

represents the former coloniser's authority in the newly independent African state of Kangan.

The two writers, Achebe and Dangarembga insist on the importance of parents in the life of women. Parents can, directly or indirectly, play a pivotal role in the construction of women's identity and development. In Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, for instance, the psychological lessons the protagonist, Tambu, learns from her grandmother and mother in addition to her witnessing the patriarchal oppression of her mother were real motivations for her to continue her education and stand against male chauvinism.

In addition to the crucial role parents play in the process of women's development, the two writers believe in the power of friendship and solidarity between African women as efficient tools to support the less fortunate among them and to counter men's hegemony. Women should be conscious of the importance of solidarity and friendship in wrenching their freedom from their male oppressors. Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* portrays a good instance of women's solidarity when Beatrice, the female protagonist, organises a naming ceremony in her flat for Elewa's new-born baby after the death of her boyfriend. Another instance of women's solidarity is given by Dangarembga when Lucia spends several days in the homestead healing and supporting her sister, Mainini, after the sudden death of her son. Through friendship and solidarity, Achebe and Dangarembga empower their female characters with confidence and determination to voice all forms of subjugation that undermine their development and personal growth.

This study of the fictional representations of African women is an opportunity to discern the great interest given by both African writers, Chinua Achebe and Tsitsi Dangarembga, to women's issues in their selected postcolonial texts, as proof of the critical need for redefining the social and political roles of women in the postcolonial African society. The literary representation of women is a significant tool in creating and transforming new positive images of women in society. There is a wide recognition that African women writers have the faculty to

reverse the preconceived idea of women as victims and to make effective claim for recognition.

African literary production can play an important role in changing the perception of women in society. It is an empowering tool that aims at the emancipation of women and thereby provides them with a voice to act against their oppressors. Thus, African women writers and their fellow men should use their narratives to voice a protest against any kind of biased treatment and humiliation against women and to promote public recognition of new images of women in postcolonial Africa.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdel-Fadil, M. Cripps, F. Wells, J. (1977). *A new international economic order?* Cambridge Journal of Economics, 1 (2), 205-213.

Abrahamsen, R. (2003). *African Studies and the Postcolonial Challenge.* African Affairs, 102 (407), 189-210.

Achebe, C. (1958). *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann.

Achebe, C. (1964). *Arrow of God*, London: Heinemann African Writers Series.

Achebe, C. (1987). *Anthills of the Savannah*, New York: Anchor Books.

Adeyanju, C.T. Oriola, T. B. (2011). *Colonialism and Contemporary African Migration: A Phenomenological Approach*, Journal of Black Studies, 42 (6), 943-967.

Aegerter, P.L. (1996). *A Dialectic of Autonomy and Community: Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature, 231-240.

Agrawal, B. R. (2009). *Culture Clash, Confusion and Final Assimilation: A Study of Immigrant Experience in A Change of Skies by Yasmine Gunaratne, An American Brat by Bapsi Sidhwa, and Jasmine by Bharati Mukherjee*. In, Prasad, A. N. Kumar, A. *Commonwealth Literature in English (Past and Present)*. Jaipur: Sunrise Publishers & Distributors. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/FBE99E23D20B1730DE3DF33402CEE398. (August 30, 2020).

Agung, S. N., Wibowo, A. Wilujeng, T. T. R. (2016). *A Semantic Analysis of Denotative Meaning in Kidung Doa Song by Sunan Kalijaga*. Jurnal Tlmiah Bahasa dan Sastra, 3(1), 1-20. [Online] Available: https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/81496-EN-a-semantic-analysis-of-denotative-meanin.pdf. (June 20, 2020).

Ahmad, A. (1995). *The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality*. Race and Class 36 (3), 1-20.

Ako, E.O. (2004). *From Commonwealth to Postcolonial Literature*, CLC Web: *Comparative* Literature and Culture, 6 (2), 1-7. [Online] Available: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol6/iss2. (September 9, 2020).

Ali, I. (2015). *The Harem Fantasy in Nineteenth-Century Orientalist Paintings*. Dialectical Anthropology, 39 (1), 33-46.

Altwaiji, M. (2014). *Neo-Orientalism and the Neo-Imperialism Thesis: Post-9/11 US and Arab World Relationship.* Arab Studies Quarterly, 36 (4), 313-323.

Amoke, A.K. (2018). *Cosmologies of the Sovereign in Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah*, Research in African Literatures, 49 (3), 35-57.

Aning, J. Sanka, C.G. Kofigah, F.E. (2018). *The Mythopoetics of Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah*, International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies, 6 (1), 36-41. [Online] Available: http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.6n.1p.36, (August 1, 2022).

Arcana, J. (1979). *Our Mothers' Daughters*, Berkeley: Shameless Hussy Press.

Ashcroft, B. Griffiths, G. Tiffin, H. (1989). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London and New York: Routledge.

Ashcroft, B. Griffiths, G. Tiffin, H. (2002). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. Second edition. London and New York: Routledge. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/5EDAA415796793C7867141549DAF5404. (August 24, 2020).

Ashcroft, B. Griffiths, G. Tiffin, H. (2007). *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts.* Second Edition. London and New York: Routledge.

Ashcroft, B. Griffiths, G. Tiffin, H. (2007). *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Second edition. London and New York: Routledge. [Online] Available: http://staff.uny.ac.id/sites/default/files/pendidikan/else-liliani-ssmhum/postcolonialstudiesthekeyconceptsroutledgekeyguides.pdf. (September 17, 2021).

Ashcroft, B. Griffiths, G. Tiffin, H. (2013). *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Third edition. London and New York: Routledge.

Attridge, D. (2004). *The Singularity of Literature*. London and New York: Routledge. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/AE924F9C9B49A74066A408BF25CD929C. (June 23, 2020).

Baharvand, P.A. Zarrinjooee B. (2012). *The Formation of a Hybrid Identity in Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, African Journal of History and

Culture, 4 (3), 27-36. [Online] Available: https://academicjournals.org/journal/AJHC/article-full-text-pdf/2ACD99841024, (November 05, 2022).

Bahlieda, R. (2015). *Chapter 1: The Legacy of Patriarchy*, Counterpoints, 488, 215-67.

Balandier, G. (1966). *The Colonial Situation: A Theoretical Approach*. In Immanuel Wallerstein, *Social Change: The Colonial Situation*, 34–61. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Barbalet, J. M. (1985). *Power and Resistance*. The British Journal of Sociology, 36 (4), 531-548.

Barry, P. (1995). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 4th edition, Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/89D8A61C86B4DCBF2AAA4A0CDCCD92FE. (September 06, 2021).

Bayu, E.K. (2019). *A comparative analysis on the perspectives of African Feminism Vs Western Feminism: philosophical debate with their criticism and its implication for women's rights in Ethiopia context*. International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, 11 (4), 54-58. [Online] Available: https://academicjournals.org/journal/IJSA/article-full-text-pdf/C2CE88061829. (October 5, 2020).

Becker, M. (1999). *Patriarchy and Inequality: Towards a Substantive Feminism.* University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1999 (1), 21-88. [Online] Available: http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1999/iss1/3. (July 30, 2021).

Begum, S.H. (2007). *The concept of New Woman in Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah and Emecheta's Kehinde*, Marang: Journal of Language and Literature, 17 (1), 95-103. [Online] Available: https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA18167659_74.

Berndt, K. (2005). *Female Identity in Contemporary Zimbabwean Fiction*, Thielmann and Breitinger: Bayreuth African Studies 73.

Beza, J. (2000). *Rhodesia: A Lesson in African Self-reliance*, Lanham: University Press of America.

Bhabha, H.K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/534B5C02A5CBD2A197D4714708528D59(September 28, 2020).

Bhattacharya, K. C. (1954). *Swaraj in Ideas*. Visvabharati Quarterly, 20, 103-114. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/16E9620BC88313BD742CB0522BFD1CF8. (July 7, 2020).

Birnberg, T.B. Resnick S.A. (1975). *Colonial Development: An Econometric Study*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Boehmer, E. (1995). *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature, Migrant Metaphors*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Booker, M.K. (1998). *The African Novel in English: An Introduction*, Oxford: James Currey.

Borg Parnis, R. (2021). *Colonialism and its Impact on Women in Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions and The Book of Not*, Symposia Melitensia, 17, 81-94. [Online] Available: https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/bitstream/123456789/71889/1/SM%20Vol%2017%20pp.%2081-94%20Borg%20Parnis.pdf, (October 17, 2021).

Boyce-Davies, C. Adams, A. (1986). *Ngambika: Studies of Women in African Literature*, New Jersey: Africa World Press.

Brantlinger, P. (2007). *Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" and it's Afterlives*. English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920, *50*(2), 172-191.

Brittan, A. (1989). *Masculinity and Power*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Brochier, J.–J. (1980). *Prison Talk*, In, Foucault, M. Gordon, C. *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/3D261DF882B594E4DBD1A7EEDBA89766. (September 16, 2020).

Bryce, J. (1990). *Commonwealth literature: 25 years*. Wasafiri, 5 (11), 3-4. [Online] Available:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02690059008574197?journalCode=rwas 20. (September 8, 2020).

Burt, A. L. (1956). *The evolution of The British Empire and Commonwealth from the American Revolution*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/5CD59E5E47DAEE67425A8BB292230EAA. (August 29, 2020).

Bush, B. (2006). *Imperialism and postcolonialism, History: Concepts, Theories and Practice*. United Kingdom: Longman. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/F8324413703944094EC4806480CFC533. (August 25, 2020).

Butchart, R.E. (2010). *Schooling the freed People: Teaching, Learning and Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861–1876*, United States: The University of North Carolina Press.

Callaway, H. (1987). *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria*. London: The Macmillan Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/1424F88901406064AEDE3619E096535F. (October 7, 2020).

Carby, H.V. (1982). *White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood*. In, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*. London and New York: Routledge. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/ 57C9F7A7BCA91E0BA204E08267441498. (October 8, 2020).

Chekroun, S. Hamza Reguig Mouro, W. (2022). *"I Shall Go to School": Girls' Education and Displacement in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*. Aleph: Langues, médias et sociétés, 9 (3), 45-55. [Online] Available: https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/downArticle/226/9/3/198085. (August 24, 2021).

Childs, P. Jean Jaques, W. Patrick, W. (2006). *Post-colonial Theory and Literatures; African, Carribean and South Asian*, Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

Chinweizu, (1990). *The Anatomy of Female Power: A Masculinist Dissection of Matriarchy*, Lagos: Pero Press. [Online] Available: http://therawness.com/AFP.pdf. (January 26, 2023).

Chomsky, N. (2005). *There Is No War on Terror*, Interview with Geov Parrish. [Online] Available: https://chomsky.info/20051223/. (July 30, 2020).

Cixous, H. Cohen, K. Cohen, P. (1976). *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Signs, 1 (4), 875-893. [Online] Available: http://www2.csudh.edu/ccauthen/576F10/cixous.pdf, (August 09, 2022).

Clarke, G. H. (1927). *What Is Literature?* The Sewanee Review, 35 (1), 53-71.

Clayton, C. (1989). *Women and Writing in South Africa: a critical anthology*, Marshalltown: Heinemann.

Cochran, T. (2007). *The knowing of Literature*. New Literary History 38 (1), 127-143. [Online] Available: http://venus.arts.u-szeged.hu/pub/angol-amerikai/amerikanisztika/rozsnyai/talc/Recommended/38.1cochran.htm. (June 14, 2020)

Collins, P.H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*, Boston: Unwin Hyman. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/E7457EF52FB8559E474240FCCE60A77F, (September 15, 2021).

Conklin, A. L. (1997). *A Mission to Civilize, the Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895-1930*. California: Stanford University Press. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/EC91537A839236DCAB292DB076C45CE8. (July 22, 2020).

Cooper, B. (1998). *Magical Realism in West African Fiction, Seeing with a third eye*, London: Routledge.

Culler, J. (2007). *Commentary: What Is Literature Now?* New Literary History, 8 (1), 229-237.

Curtis, M. (2009). *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/C8076EDBA4276DA6E0D6FA7991FE1C80. (September 17, 2020).

Dailly, C. (1983). *The Novelist as a Cultural Policy-Maker*, Présence Africaine, 1er TRIMESTRE, Nouvelle série (125), 202-213.

Dangarembga, T. (1988). *Nervous Conditions*, Washington, Seal Press.

De Beauvoir, S. (1956). *The Second Sex,* London: Jonathan Cape. Translated by: Parshley, H.M. [Online] Available: https://newuniversityinexileconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Simone-de-Beauvoir-The-Second-Sex-Jonathan-Cape-1956.pdf. (August 24, 2022).

Desouza, P. R. (2017). *The Recolonization of the Indian Mind*. Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais, 114, 137-160. [Online] Available: https://journals.openedition.org/rccs/6809. (July 7, 2020).

Dirlik, A. (1994). *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Capitalism in the Age of Global Capitalism*, Critical Inquiry, 20 (2), 328–356. The University of Chicago Press.

Dommelen, P. V. (1997). *Colonial Constructs: Colonialism and Archaeology in the Mediterranean***.** World Archaeology, 28 (3), Culture Contact and Colonialism, 305-323.

Dubreuil, L. (2007). *What Is Literature's Now?* New Literary History, 38 (1), 43-70.

Eagleton, T. Jameson, F. Said, E. W. (1990). *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/811C8CE0855EDCE52029BBC0BF404B53. (July 23, 2020).

Echols, A. (1989). *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*, Minnesota: Minnesota Press. [Online] Available: https://docer.com.ar/doc/s0evsnn, (September 7, 2022).

Emenyonu, E.N. Uko, I.I. (2004). *Emerging Perspective on Chinua Achebe,* 2nd Volume, Eritrea: Africa World Press.

Emerson, R. (1969). *Colonialism*. Journal of Contemporary History, 4 (1), Colonialism and Decolonization, 3-16.

Erritouni, A. (2006). *Contradictions and Alternatives in Chinua Achebe's "Anthills of the Savannah",* Journal of Modern Literature, 29 (2), 50-74.

Fanon, F. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Présence Africaine. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/D0BD47C88260BD41F13571DE8539E6FB. (September 27, 2020).

Fonchingong, C.C. (2006). *Unbending Gender Narrative in African Literature*, Journal of International Women's Studies, 8 (1), 135-147. [Online] Available:https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1354&context=jiws, (November 12, 2022).

Forsgren, P. (2019). *Globalization as "The White Man's Burden": Modernity and Colonialism in a Swedish Travelogue*. Scandinavian Studies, 91 (1-2), 222-237.

Foucault, M. (1981). *The Order of Discourse*, In, Young, R. *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*. Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/E30F50AC3CBF198AFABF4CCE564240A4. (September 15, 2020).

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* New York: Vintage Books. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/9B3F0D44B32C24C68DCA765D334C2917. (September 15, 2020).

Fox, H. (1968). *Latin American Report: Chile: A Case Study of Economic Colonialism*. The North American Review, 253 (1), 2, 4-5.

Freire, P. (1970). *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Middlesex: Penguin. [Online] Available: https://envs.ucsc.edu/internships/internship-readings/freire-pedagogy-of-the-oppressed.pdf, (September 2, 2022).

Frye, N. (1957). *Anatomy of Criticism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. [Online] Available: https://monoskop.org/images/5/59/Frye_Northrop_Anatomy_of_Criticism_Four_Essays_2000.pdf. (June 22, 2020).

Gay, F. F. (1974). *Cultural Colonialism*. The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy, 5 (1), 153-159.

Gelfand, M. (1973). *The Genuine Shona: Survival Values of an African Culture*, Gweru: Mambo Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/9923E29EC897F660B5B758B8DC7B950E, (October 30, 2021).

Goonetilleke, D. C. R. A. (1998). *Salman Rushdie*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/4CC6825DD36BD55ED19E54BA95EE20B9. (September 6, 2020).

Gorle, G. (1997). *Fighting the Good Fight: What Tsitsi Dangarembga's 'Nervous Conditions' Says about Language and Power*, The Yearbook of English Studies, 27, 179-192.

Gottheil, F. M. (1977). *On an Economic Theory of Colonialism*. Journal of Economic Issues, 11 (1), 83-102.

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/ 4F9B36861E1B7BC68D3A7A0E605F2BE2. (September 24, 202).

Greene, G. Kahn, C. (1985). *Feminist Scholarship and the Social Construction of Woman*, In Greene, G. Kahn, C., *Making a Difference, Feminist Literary Criticism*, London: Methuen.

Grier, B. (1992). *Pawns, Porters, and Petty Traders: Women in the Transition to Cash Crop Agriculture in Colonial Ghana*, Signs, 17 (2), 304-328.

Guha, R. (1982). *On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India*. In, Guha, R. *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/2B1A75278657BCF48E046852F32BAEDC. (September 24, 2020).

Gunaratnam, Y. (2003). *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power*. London: Sage Publication. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/9D1D246787942DDE22FB923F9608FDEA. (October 9, 2020).

Haggis, H. (1987). *Gendering colonialism or colonising gender? Recent Women's Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism*. Women Studies International Forum, 13 (1/2), 105-115.

Haley, A. (1965). *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, New York, Grove Press. [Online] Available: https://antilogicalism.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/malcom-x.pdf. (August 02, 2021).

Hannam, J. (2007). *Feminism*. Harlow: Longman. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/AF4B127D224715F81A502B74373D8270. (October 3, 2020).

Harding, S. (1993). *Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is "Strong Objectivity"?* In, Alcoff, L. Potter, E. *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York and London: Routledge. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/10BEA9F351400E1F3501DBB27CEB4B52. (October 17, 2020).

Hayter, T. (1971). *Aid as Imperialism*. England: Penguin Books. [Online] Available: https://books.google.dz/books?id=cI3VAQAACAAJ&printsec=copyright&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false. (July 14, 2020).

Herr, R.S. (2014). *Reclaiming Third World Feminism: or Why Transnational Feminism Needs Third World Feminism*. Meridians, 12 (1), 1-30.

Hill, J.E. (1995). *Purging a Plate Full of Colonial History: The "Nervous Conditions" of Silent Girls*, College Literature, 22 (1), 78-90.

Hill Collins, P. (1996). *WHAT'S IN A NAME? Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond*, The Black Scholar, 26 (1), 9-17.

Holden, Ph. (2003). *Rethinking Colonial Discourse Analysis and Queer Studies*, In, Holden, Ph. Ruppel, R. J. *Imperial Desire: Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/5FF1388C96C1DBEC36DD28675C252FB4. (September 16, 2020).

Hooks, B. (1986). *Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women*, Feminist Review, 23, 125-138.

Horvath, R. J. (1972). *A Definition of Colonialism*. Current Anthropology, 13 (1), 45-57.

Jeffares, A. N. (1975). *Commonwealth Literature in the Modern World*. In, Maes-Jelinek, H. *Commonwealth Literature and the Modern World*. Liège: Revue des Langues Vivantes. [Online] Available: file:///C:/Users/GARE~1/AppData/Local/Temp/Maes_Commonwealth-Literature-and-the-Modern-World_1975.pdf. (September 2. 2020).

Kachiwanda, S.O. (2010). *Gender disparity in the acquisition of literacy in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Malawi*, Journal of Humanities, 22 (1), 24-43. [Online] Available: https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jh/article/view/153388, (November 06, 2022).

Kalu, A. C. (1994). *Those Left out in the Rain: African Literary Theory and the Re-Invention of the African Woman*, African Studies Review, 37 (2), 77-95.

Kalu, K. (2008). *Migration and institution building in Africa: Lessons from the Lagos plan of action*. In Falola, T. and Okpeh, O. O. Population

movements, conflicts and displacements in Nigeria, Asmara: Africa World Press, 133-153.

Kane, P. Ruzicka, L. (1996). *Women's education and the demographic transition in Africa*. Health Transition Review, Supplement to Volume 6, 101-113.

Karl, M. (1995). *Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision Making*, London: Zed Book Ltd.

Katrak, K.H. (1995). *"This Englishness Will Kill You": Colonial[ist] Education and Female Socialization in Merle Hodge's "Crick Crack, Monkey," and Bessie Head's "Maru"*, College Literature , 22 (1), 62-77.

Kgatla, S. T. (2018). *The decolonisation of the mind.* Missionalia, 46 (1), 146-162. [Online] Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327780206_The_decolonisation_of_the_mind_Black_consciousness_community_projects_by_the_Limpopo_Council_of_Churches. (July 7, 2020).

Kipling, R. (1899). *The White Man's Burden.* McClure's Magazine, 12 (4), 314-315. [Online] Available: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015030656113&view=1up&seq=314. (July 25, 2020).

Kök, S. Özkan, S. Şerbetçioğlu, K.K. (2017). *Masculine Domination on The Child Bride Body From Symbolic Violence To Bare Violence: The Case Of Kilis*, In Çevik, D.D. Taşkıran, G., *Current Debates in Labour Economics, Demography & Gender Studies*, London: IJOPEC Publication. [Online] Available: https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/180038/1/9781912503087.pdf, (August 19, 2022).

Kortenaar, N.t. (1993). *"Only Connect": "Anthills of the Savannah" and Achebe's Trouble with Nigeria*, Research in African Literatures, 24 (3), 59-72.

Lawson, C.W. (1988). *Soviet Economic Aid to Africa*. African Affairs, 87 (349), 501-518.

Lazarus, N. (2011). *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1958). *Race and History*. Paris: UNESCO. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/F5BA7FF5F49B73B668E1B5338383A432. (September 29, 2020).

Lewu M.A.Y. (2005). *Female Creative Writers and Social Changes in Nigeria, 1960-1985: A Historical Change*, Majass, 3 (1), 1-12.

Lockman, Z. (2009). *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/87EB8371760B9A1C7361373F91EFC785. (September 21, 2020).

Loomba, A. (2005). *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Second Edition. London: Routledge.

Ludden, D. (2001). *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia.* Delhi: Permanent Black. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/B5CF273DB54A3C7160E5D89DAFA0661C. (September 24, 2020).

Mao, Z. (1998). *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy***,** Beijing: Foreign Language Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/F256F59F1231A9B1593644AE5A5BA8AA. (September 12, 2020).

Marx, K. (2000). *The British Rule in India*. In, Macfie, A. L. *Orientalism: A Reader*. New York: New York University Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/372020E2B5829B439E1A26211DB9A8F3. (September 21, 202).

Matzke, C. (2007). *Tsitsi Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions: Food for Thought in Zimbabwean Writing*. In: Tobias, D. *A history of Postcolonial Literature in 12 ½ Books*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

Mbiti, J.S. (1970). *African Religions and Philosophy*, New York: Anchor Books.

McClintock, A. (1992). *The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Postcolonialism,"* Social Text, 10 (31-32), 84-98. [Online] Available: https://dept.english.wisc.edu/amcclintock/writing/Progress_article.pdf. (October 15, 2021).

McLeod, A. L. (1961). *The Commonwealth Pen: An Introduction to the Literature of the British Commonwealth*. New York: Cornell University Press.

McLeod, J. (2000). *Beginning Postcolonialism*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/678D52721EB03645E72FA48B3070DE4E. (August 25, 2020).

Mikell, G. (1995). *African Feminism: Toward a New Politics of Representation*, Feminist Studies, 21 (2), 405-424.

Mikell, G. (2005). *Feminism in Africa: An Interpretation*, In, Appiah, K.A. and Gates, H.L. (Jr.), *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, Second Edition, New York: Oxford University Press.

Miller, J. H. (2002). *On Literature*. London and New York, Routledge. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/0A9BD4063278392CBE2E8E36A7461D70. (June 16, 2020).

Millett, K. (1994). *The Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment*. New York: Norton & Company Ltd.

Mohanty, C.T. (1991). *"Under Western Eyes."* In, Mohanty, C. T. Russo, A. and Torres, L. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/98EF5FA1E2FFE516A580531FDB687BCE. (October 15, 2020).

Mohanty, C.T. (2003). *"Under Western Eyes" Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles*. Signs, 28 (2), 499-535. [Online] Available: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/342914. (October 17, 2020).

Montoya, I.P. (2008). *Gender-Based Discrimination as a Trigger for Cultural Hybridity in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, Proceedings 31st AEDEAN Conference, 645-655. [Online] Available: https://ruc.udc.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/2183/17078/AEDEAN_2008_31_art_60.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, (October 3, 2022).

Moore-Gilbert, B. (2009). *Postcolonial Life-Writing: Culture, Politics and Self-Representation*, London: Routledge.

Morris, P. (1993). *Literature and Feminism: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/12080B10D142EF2A0603C8F6988BC904. (June 14, 2020).

Mortimer, M. (1991). *African Journeys*, Research in African Literatures, 22 (2), 169-175.

Mortimer, M. (2005). *Edward Said and Assia Djebar: A Contrapuntal Reading*. Research in African Literatures, 36 (3), 53-67.

Nasta, S. (1992). *Motherlands: Black Women's Writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/276D2CEE6915E2567D7B80FC15B0FC74. (October 16, 2020).

New, C. (2001). *Oppressed and Oppressors? The Systematic Mistreatment of Men*, Sociology, 35 (3), 729-748. [Online] Available: https://ur.booksc.me/book/54882593/8c2041, (September 6, 2022).

Newell, S. (1997). *Writing African Women: Gender, Popular Culture and Literature in West Africa*, London: Zed Books.

Newell, S. Booth, Jr. (1978). *Tradition and Community in African Religion*, Journal of Religion in Africa, 9 (2), 81-94.

Niven, A. (1981). *British literary influence over commonwealth literature: parent or second cousin twice removed?* Journal of the royal society of arts, 129 (5301), 600-610.

Njozi, H.M. (2005). *Utilitarianism versus Universalism in Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, Nordic Journal of African Studies, 14 (1), 1-14. [Online] Available: https://www.njas.fi/njas/article/view/277/264, (November 11, 2022).

Nwankwo, C. (1991). *Soothing Ancient Bruises: Power and the New African Woman in Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah!* In Ehling, H.G. Critical Approaches to Anthills of the Savannah, The Netherlands: Rodopi, 55-65.

Ogunyemi, C.O. (1985). *Womanism: The Dynamics of the Contemporary Black Female Novel in English*, Signs, 11 (1), 63-80.

Okereke, G. Egbung, I. (2014). *Significant Others, Family Responsibility and the Freedom of the African Child in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5 (20), 2059-

2066. [Online] Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269954503. (August 24, 2021).

Omolade, B. (1994). *The Rising Song of African American Women*, New York: Routledge.

Omosade, A. J. (1976). *Sin and Its Removal in African Traditional Religion*, Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 44 (2), 275-287.

Osterhammel, J. (2009). *Colonialism*. Second Edition. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishing Inc.

Overbey, K. E. (2012). *Postcolonial*. Studies in Iconography, 33, Special Issue Medieval Art History Today —Critical Terms, 145-156.

Palmer, E. (2008). *Of War and Women, Oppression and Optimism: New Essays on the African Novel*. Eritrea: Africa World Press.

Panikkar, K. N. (2003). *Colonialism, Culture and Revivalism*. Social Scientist, 31 (1/2), 3-16.

Parry, B. (1987). *Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse*. Oxford Literary Review, 9 (1/2), 27-58.

Pearce, D. (1978). *The feminization of poverty: Women, work and welfare*, Urban and Social Change Review, 11, 28–36.

Peterson, K.H. Rutherford, A. (1986). *A Double Colonization: Colonial and Post-colonial Women's Writing*. Oxford: Dangaroo Press.

Petras, J. (2002). *9/11: One Year of Empire-Building*. Economic and Political Weekly, 37 (34), 3504-3513.

Pfeiffer, R.S. (1985). *The Responsibility of Men for the Oppression of Women,* Journal of Applied Philosophy, 2 (2), 217-229.

Pia Lara, M. (1998). *Moral Textures: Feminist Narratives in the Public Sphere*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Pinggong, Z. (2002). *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient— On Edwad W. Said's Orientalism*. Comparative Literature: East & West, 4 (1), 176-183. [Online] Available: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/25723618.2002.12015317. (September 18, 2020).

Prakash, G. (1990). *Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography*. Comparative Studies in Society and History, 32 (2), 383-408.

Prakash, G. (1996). *Who's Afraid of Postcoloniality?* Social Text, 49, the Yale Strike Dossier, 187-203.

Quayson, A. (2000). *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?* Cambridge: polity Press. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/032BAA1582B2AB40918C3C14FFCDF0E0. (August 23, 2020).

Rabinow, P. Dreyfus, H.L. (1982). Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/2153C8FA31DA83E930FAA6E0AA25B40C. (September 15, 2020).

Remeny, J. (1951). *The Meaning of World Literature*. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 9 (3), 244-251.

Riker, W. H. (1964). *Some Ambiguities in the Notion of Power*. The American Political Science Review, 58 (2), 341-349.

Robertson C.C. (1998). *The Feminization of Poverty in Africa: Roots and Branches*, The Brown Journal of World Affairs, 5 (2), 195-201.

Rodney, W. (1973). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications. [Online] Available: https://abahlali.org/files/3295358-walter-rodney.pdf, (October 16, 2022).

Rodney, W. (2011). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Baltimore: Black Classic Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/6D2524ECFF26D54032081FBF9CA4FAEF. (September 17, 2021).

Rowbothem, S. (1992). *Women in Movement: Feminism and Social Action*, New York: Routledge.

Rushdie, S. (1991). *Imaginary Homelands, Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. London: Granta Books. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/140AC584E3B031547DBEC2C8C63F1725. (September 4, 2020).

Rutherford, A. (1987). *Interview with Chinua Achebe*, Kunapipi, 9 (2), 1-7. [Online] Available: https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol9/iss2/3/. (September 13, 2021).

Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/5E49405B3FBBF04A0666A342CCAA9F97. (September 17, 2020).

Said, E. W. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York : Vintage Books. [Online] Available: https://janeaustensummer.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/culture_and_imperialism.pdf. (July 27, 2020).

Said, E. W. (1999). *Out of Place: A Memoire*. New York: Vintage Books. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/49DDDCEDBFD6B96EB6BAD1346CF61FBB. (September 18, 2020).

Said, E.W. (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Vintage Books. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/3DAB53F70D45540D5619EA924AC021E5. (September 21, 2020).

Sakhkhane, T. (2012). *Spivak and Postcolonialism, Exploring Allegations of Textuality.* England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Samuel-Mbaekwe, I. J. (1986). *Colonialism and Social Structure*. Transafrican Journal of History, 15, 81-95.

San Juan, Jr. E. (1998). *Beyond Postcolonial Theory*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Sánchez, G. H. (2012). *Ceramics and the Spanish Conquest: Response and Continuity of Indigenous Pottery Technology in Central Mexico*. Boston: Brill. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/7F96694BFC2875F9EB2D368CAC0818B3. (June 30, 2020).

Sankaran, C. (2012). *Diasporic Predicaments: An Interview with Amitav Ghosh*. In, Sankaran, C. *History, Narrative, and Testimony in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction.* New York: State University of New York Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/0407E75975DE096691F5F9282442F221. (September 8, 2020).

Senior, O. (1985). *Talking of Trees*, Kingston, Jamaica: Calabash.

Serote, S.E. (1973). *Meaningful Christian worship for Africa*. In: Becken, H-J. *Relevant theology for Africa*, South Africa: Lutheran Publishing House.

Sethi, R. (2011). *The Politics of Postcolonialism: Empire, Nation and Resistance.* London: Pluto Press.

Setiloane, G. (1978). *How the traditional world-view persists in the Christianity of the Sotho-Tswana,* Botswana Journal of African Studies, 1(1), 27-42. [Online] Available: https://pdfproc.lib.msu.edu/?file=/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/PULA/pula001001/pula001001003.pdf, (March 14, 2022).

Shamim, A. (2017). *Gynocentric Contours of the Male Imagination: A Study of the Novels of Chinua Achebe and Gũgĩ Wa Thio G'o*, New Delhi: Idea Publishing.

Sharma B.M. Sharma, U. (1995). *Women and Society*, New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers.

Sherman, H. J. (1964). *Introduction to the Economics of Growth, Unemployment and Inflation***.** The University of California: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Sherrill, C. H. (1926). *The White Man's Burden*. The North American Review, 223 (830), 64-67.

Shizha, E. Kariwo, M.T. (2011). *Education and Development in Zimbabwe: A Social, Political and Economic Analysis*, Holland: Sense Publishers.

Shohat, E. (1992). *Note on the "Post-colonial"*. Social Text, 31(32), 99-113.

Shriganeshan, K. (2009). *The Tamil mind and identity in Sri Lankan Tamil Short Stories in English: Representative or Lopsided?* In, Prasad, A. N. Kumar, A. *Commonwealth Literature in English (Past and Present)*. Jaipur: Sunrise Publishers & Distributors. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/FBE99E23D20B1730DE3DF33402CEE398. (August 29, 2020).

Slemon, S. (1990). *Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World*, World Literature Written in English, 30 (2), 30-41.

Spivac, G.C. (1994). *"Can the Subaltern Speak?"* In, Williams P. Chrisman, L. Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader. London and

New York: Routledge. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/1D87187DCA0F077E8A8C0687C1E8BA67. (September 24, 2020).

Spivac, G.C. (1996). *Subaltern Talk: Interview with the Editors*. In Landry, D. MacLean, G. *Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. New York & London: Routledge. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/33CFB9B658758FC898F22857B1E16312. (September 26, 2020).

Stecker, R. (1996). *What Is Literature?* Revue Internationale de Philosophie, 50 (198 (4)), l'esthétique / aesthetics, 681-694.

Stromquist, N. P. (1990). ***Women and Illiteracy: The Interplay of Gender Subordination and Poverty***, Comparative Education Review, 34 (1), 95-111.

Strong-Leek, L. (2001). *Reading as a Woman: Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Feminist Criticism*, African Studies Quarterly, 5 (2), 29-35. [Online] Available: https://sites.clas.ufl.edu/africanquarterly/files/Strong-Leek-Vol-5-Issue-2.pdf, (August 19, 2022).

Sudarkasa, N. (1982). *Sex Roles, Education, and Development in Africa*, Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 13(3), 279-289.

Talib, I. S. (2012). *Ghosh, Language, and 'The Hungry Tide'*. In, Sankaran, C. *History, Narrative, and Testimony in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction.* New York: State University of New York Press. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/0407E75975DE096691F5F9282442F221. (September 8, 2020).

Tembong, D.F. (2014). *The Ambiguous Status of Commonwealth Literature: A Critical Consideration*. International Journal of English and Education, 3 (3), 455-467. [Online] Available: http://ijee.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/42.184154025.pdf. (September 9, 2020).

Thiong'o, N. (1986). *Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature.* London: James Currey.

Thomas, K.J.A. (2008). *Return Migration in Africa and the Relationship between Educational Attainment and Labour Market Success: Evidence from Uganda*, The International Migration Review, 42 (3), 652-674.

Thornton, A. P. (1962). *Colonialism*. International Journal, 17 (4), 335-357.

Todorov, T. Moss, L. Braunrot, B. (2007). *The Notion of Literature***.** New Literary History, 38 (1), 1-12.

Treiber, J. (2002). *Strategic Fusion: Undermining Cultural Essentialism in Nervous Conditions*. In: Willey, A.E. and Treiber, J. *Negotiating the Postcolonial: Emerging Perspectives on Tsitsi Dangarembga*, Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.

Trivedi, H. (2010). *The Commonwealth and I*. Indian Literature, 54(6 (260)), 122-133.

Tyagi, R. (2014). *Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories*. International Journal of Language and Linguistics, 1 (2), 45-50. [Online] Available: https://ijllnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_2_December_2014/7.pdf. (October 5, 2020).

Tyson, L. (1999). *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. New York and London: Garland Publishing. http://library.lol/main/4B718100C3FCC9ADFBEEA87E696260D6. (September 12, 2020).

Uchem, R. (2001). *Overcoming Women's Subordination*, Enugu: Snaap Press.

Uchem, R. (2002). *Liberative Inculturation: The Case of Igbo Women*, Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology, 14, 86-101. [Online] Available: http://www.dspace.unn.edu.ng/bitstream/handle/123456789/6540/applico%202.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. (January 21, 2023).

Udumukwu, O. (2007). Nigerian Literature in English: Emerging Critical Perspectives. Port Harcourt: M & J Grand Orbit Communications.

Uwakweh, P.A. (1995). *Debunking Patriarchy: The Liberational Quality of Voicing in Tsitsi Dangarembga's 'Nervous Conditions'*, Research in African Literatures, 26 (1), 75-84.

Van Ells, M. D. (1995). *Assuming the White Man's Burden: The Seizure of the Philippines, 1898-1902*. Philippine Studies, Fourth Quarter 1995, 43 (4), 607-622.

Veracini, L. (2010). *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/E44ABA0CD154E3D9523897086C4103D5. (June 27, 2020).

Wa Thiong'o, N. (1986). *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature*, Portsmouth, UK: Heinemann. [Online] Available: https://www.uibk.ac.at/anglistik/staff/davis/decolonising-the-mind.pdf. (October 13, 2021).

Wa Thiong'o, N. (1993). *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom*, London, James Currey. [Online] Available: https://multiversityindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/moving-the-centre.pdf. (August 15, 2021).

Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/EAA1B9260B1CDB7F500A0D664C656699. (October 3, 2020).

Wellek, R. Warren, A. (1948). *Theory of Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. [Online] Available: http://sosinglese.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/theoryofliteratu00inwell.pdf. (June 20, 2020).

Westermann, D. (1937). *Africa and Christianity*, London: Oxford University Press.

Westermann, D. (1949). *The African Today and Tomorrow*, London: International African Institute.

Whisnant, C.J. (2012). *Foucault & Discourse*. A Handout for HIS 389. [Online] Available: https://webs.wofford.edu/whisnantcj/his389/foucault_discourse.pdf. (September 12, 2020).

White, B.W. (1996). *Talk about School: Education and the Colonial Project in French and British Africa, (1860-1960)*. Comparative Education, 32(1), 9-25.

Widdowson, P. (1999). *Literature*. London and New York: Routledge. [Online] Available: http://93.174.95.29/main/4DC4B25961AF8CFBD5AF53C6E40F06B9. (June 25, 2020).

Wilkinson, J. (1992). *Talking with African Writers: Interviews with African Poets, Playwrights and Novelists*, London: James Currey.

Willey, A. E. Treiber, J. (2002). *Emerging Perspectives on Tsitsi Dangarembga: Negotiating the Postcolonial*, Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.

Winnifrith, T. J. (1979). *Achebe, Chinua*. In, Vinson, J. Kirkpatrick, D. L. *Commonwealth Literature*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan. [Online] Available: http://library.lol/main/EA885C1BF528A1BBC6A936FA83088376. (September 2, 2020).

Wixson, K.D. (2002). *Women and Food in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, In: Willey, A.E. and Treiber, J. *Emerging Perspectives on Tsitsi Dangarembga: Negotiating the Postcolonial*, Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.

Woolf, V. (1929). *A Room of One's Own*, [Online] Available: http://seas3.elte.hu/coursematerial/PikliNatalia/Virginia_Woolf_-_A_Room_of_Ones_Own.pdf. (August 19, 2021).

Wyk, J.V. (2007). *Political Leaders in Africa: Presidents, Patrons or Profiteers?* Occasional Paper Series, 2 (1), 3-38. [Online] Available: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/100047/op_2007_1.pdf, (October 16, 2022).

Young, R. J. C. (2016). *Postcolonialism: A Historical introduction.* United Kingdom: Wiley Blackwell.

Ypi, L. (2013). *What's Wrong with Colonialism*. Philosophy & Public Affairs, 41 (2), 158-191.

Zambakari, C. (2019). *A Discourse on the Legacy of Colonialism for Women in Africa*, Africa Policy Journal, Cambridge, 14, 45-54.

ملخّص

تهتم هذه الأطروحة بتحليل التمثيل الأدبي للمرأة في روايتين ما بعد الاستعمار لكاتبين إفريقيين مشهورين : *كثبان النمل في السفانا* للكاتب تشينوا أتشيبي و *ظروف عصبية* للكاتبة تسيتسي دانڤارامبڤا. بإستعمال طريقة التحليل النصي، تقوم الدراسة الحالية بفحص الاضطهاد المزدوج للمرأة من قبل النظام الأبوي والاستعمار في إفريقيا وكيف تقوم هؤلاء النساء بمكافحة هذا النوع من الإضطهاد. كشفت الدراسة أن حرص الشخصيات النسائية في كلتا الروايتين على الحصول على تعليم جيد يعكس أهمية التعليم كأداة تمكن المرأة تغيير وضعها الاجتماعي والسياسي داخل الأسر و المجتمعات الأبوية. أشارت الدراسة كذلك إلى أنه إذا أتيحت للمرأة المعاصرة الفرصة لتطوير إمكانياتها الشخصية ، فيمكنها أن تتولى بنجاح أدوارًا اجتماعية وسياسية رائدة في المجتمع الأفريقي الجديد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب الأفريقي ما بعد الاستعمار ، المرأة الأفريقية ، الأبوية ، الإستعمار

Résumé

La présente thèse analyse la représentation littéraire des femmes dans deux romans postcoloniaux de deux écrivains africains bien connus : *Fourmilières de la savane* de Chinua Achebe et *Conditions Nerveuses* de Tsitsi Dangarembga. Au moyen d'une analyse textuelle, l'étude examine la double oppression des femmes par le patriarcat et le colonialisme dans l'Afrique postcoloniale et comment ces femmes luttent contre elle. L'étude révèle que l'empressement des personnages féminins, dans les deux romans, à obtenir une éducation décente reflète l'importance de l'éducation en tant qu'outil d'autonomisation des femmes pour transformer leurs statuts sociaux et politiques au sein de leurs familles et communautés patriarcales. L'étude indique en outre que si les femmes modernes ont la possibilité de se développer personnellement, elles peuvent assumer avec succès des rôles sociaux et politiques principaux au sein de la nouvelle société africaine.

Mots clé: Littérature africaine postcoloniale, Femmes africaines, Patriarcat, Colonialisme

Summary

The present dissertation analyses the literary representation of women in two postcolonial novels by two well-known African writers: *Anthills of the Savannah* by Chinua Achebe and *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga. By means of textual analysis, the study investigates the double oppression of women by patriarchy and colonialism in postcolonial Africa and how these women struggle against it. The study reveals that the eagerness of the female characters, in both novels, to get a decent education reflects the importance of education as an empowerment tool for women to transform their social and political statuses within their patriarchal families and in communities. The study further indicates that if modern women will be given the opportunity for personal development they can successfully take up leading social and political roles within the new African society.

Key words: Postcolonial African Literature, African Women, Patriarchy, Colonialism